



Friends at Balfour - FAB Chairman's Report, 2017-2018

2017-2018 was a difficult and challenging year for both the school and for FAB...but despite this we still had quite a lot of fun running the FAB events. We bought a fantastic new shelter for KS2, outdoor play equipment for KS1, as well as many other things that the pupils at Balfour will benefit from and enjoy, and all of which are a fantastic reminder of why we all put in the time we do.

We continue to operate with the focus always being to 'enhance the educational experience' for pupils at Balfour – this is our key criteria when assessing where and how the funds we raise get spent.

A massive thank you to everyone involved in FAB! Special thanks on behalf of the whole committee to Laura Batten who stepped aside as Secretary last year. Her energy, input and support for the 2 years she was in the role have been greatly appreciated. A big thank you to Ros Allen who stepped up to be our interim Secretary for 6 months and although we have lacked a secretary since January we have more than benefited from Ros's inputs and talents for organizing both the Tea towel and Christmas Card fundraising initiatives.... You make these events just happen – it's like magic and I don't have to worry about them! A big thank you to Louise Poole for stepping up to be our volunteer coordinator and not only coordinating all our parent volunteers before, during and after events... but also, by giving us all a big kick up the arse to get FAB stuff done... you are awesome too!!

A massive thank you to everyone else involved in FAB over the last year – you are all fantastic and we wouldn't be able to put on the events we do if it wasn't for our small, but capable band of FAB members.... And I do mean a very small band of FAB members especially compared to the size of the school, there's about 19 of us who do a variety of jobs, big and small, to keep FAB on track and raising funds for the school. With over 840 kids on roll at the school and saying approximately families contain 2.4 kids it means that there are about 350 families in the school and so our 19 FAB do-ers equate to about 2% of the parent school community!

What FAB did

The (extremely thorough!) Treasurer's report outlines all the facts and figures about what was raised last year and where the money was spent. So, in my report here I shall touch on what we did and how it worked.

Quiz nights

For the last couple of years, we have had two quiz nights per year – one in the autumn term and another in the Spring term. They are always good fun (and the only events FAB run where kids aren't involved!) and as much as anything they are a good way for new parents to the school to get involved, socially. The usual format of fish and chips dinner, bar and a whole variety of questions has meant a fun night for all.

Last year we broke from the tradition of having Bardsley's deliver Fish & Chips to us at the event and instead went for a parent owned business – Olly's Fish Shack. The food is cooked on site, it's fresh and has home-made mushy peas, tartare sauce and coleslaw... and is delicious... however there have been a few teething problems like getting the food out on time and all together – but I feel we can overcome these problems especially as we can use the kitchen heater cabinets – which we did at the Spring Quiz. A massive thank you to the awesome Ben Goode and Daryl Newman who are our resident, dedicated quizmeisters... without you guys – the Quizzes would probably get cancelled.

➔ **Christmas Cards**

This was the fourth year for this initiative and it was the first year that the fundraiser was run out in all classes in both Key Stages. In past years the fundraiser was run only in KS1 classes where each child had the opportunity to design a Christmas Card in class that their parents could buy. However, in past years, for KS2 children, the card templates were sent home and children/parents/carers could choose whether to make a card design or not.

Due to problems in the previous year, we changed companies, and so did the choice of items parents could buy – mugs, bags and other items are now offered in addition to the usual cards.

Ros led this initiative, and the school teaching staff and it resulted in £2.2k profit being raised – an awesome amount and double the amount raised previously – so well worth the effort of having cards designed in class at KS2 as well. This year Ros kicked off the initiative in July, greatly aided by Sally, it hit the ground running in September, cards were received back last week and parents/carers have until Friday to place orders... by using the early bird discount we can generate an extra pound per item on each sale... so hopefully raising more money.

➔ **Fireworks Night**

The first big event of the calendar year was slightly wet and cold... just the way we are used to it!! This year the event was a bit of a flop compared to previous years and there were many confounding factors that could have caused this: Firstly there was a free Council Fireworks Display in Preston Park at the beginning of November, secondly, we only sold tickets online or on the day at the gates – there were no pre-sales tickets sold outside school during the weeks before – mainly due to a lack of volunteers to help sell tickets; and thirdly our event was a week later than usual on the 18th November! In addition, for the last few years we have always had a memorial for Niamh at the Fireworks, however as her year group cohort had left the school in the Summer, and because we purchased the Snowdog in her memory, we decided with her family that it would be best not to do anything this year; the fireworks was also between Ofsted and the result being announced... so it was just a weird time in many respects and so any one of these factors could have caused the evening to not raise as much as in previous years.

This year, like the previous year had no access to the school buildings and we also tried making people exit via the field rather than the carpark. Both these changes have meant less tidying up of the KS1 hall on the Sunday and also ensuring the grass Foundation Stage area is not reduced to a mud bath for the whole of the winter. We save money on not hiring protective surfaces for both the hall and grass area whilst also reducing manpower and time setting up the protective mattings.

Special thanks to the 80 plus people who turned up to help and got soaked in the process that afternoon, and a MASSIVE thanks to both Ben Goode for stepping up to be the Lead on the event and to Ben Marle for his adaptability on the day.

The possibility of running the event on a Friday night has been in discussion for a number of years and should probably be discussed by the committee later this evening.

➔ **FAB Swimming**

The Balfour Swimming Club is another fundraiser that has operated for decades and 'just seems to happen'. It has been run with huge commitment and perseverance by Jaimme Webb for over 10 years... this is her 11th year and the second year where she doesn't have any kids at Balfour! Balfour Swimming Club has become a staple part of income for the FAB year and provides an enthusiastic and friendly series of classes for young swimmers of all capabilities from beginners upwards to develop their swimming skills.

This year Louise joined the 'Swimming admin team' to help Jaimme with all the admin and we had a couple of new coaches join the teaching team as well. Over the past couple of years, we have managed to tighten and speed up the time people take to pay and have also revised the available numbers in each class; as a result, swimming typically raises a good amount each year and after a rocky start it managed to raise a healthy amount this year as well.

This summer, Dorothy Stringer who manage the pool, have changed the regulations for helpers on the poolside. Now all helpers have to be qualified to at least level 1 STA Swimming teacher level. In the Summer term we ran a sponsored swim, raising just over £1.7k which went towards paying for the qualifications of two helpers: Jaimme and Zed – who helped teach with me and Ben in previous years... unfortunately Zed's college timetable clashes with Thursday Swimming lessons and so we are hoping to train up another helper in the near future. Zed is a standby teacher who can help out when and if needed.

The long-term operation of the swimming club is still uncertain as finding a suitable replacement for Jaimme, when or if she retires, remains the foremost challenge... Jaimme has agreed to run the swimming club until July 2019 and possibly beyond.

➔ **Christmas Fair**

The Christmas Fair was once again a truly wonderful event. I led the event, ably supported by an immediate supporting cast of Jane Davison, Marco Holt, Louise Poole, Helen Bland and many, many more. The food committee comprising of Emma Winder and Fiona McLelland has made a massive difference at our events for the past few years and provide excellent quality reasonably priced hot food for a range of dietary requirements. In addition, the awesome Raffle team of Beth Warner and Claire Allen made a massive difference and they blagged some whopping prizes!!

Like Fireworks, the Christmas Fair failed to raise the profits it had in previous years... This again could be due to a number of factors: Firstly money was 'lost' from one stall, secondly the event was hot on the heels of the Ofsted Result, and only a few days after parents and carers were notified that the headteacher was off work until January... as a result there was definitely a feel of loss and unknown within the school community on the day.

Aside from the planning efforts of the few leading up to the event, a further 100+ volunteers on the day helped out to share setting up, running stalls and clearing up afterwards. We also rearranged stalls and made more use of outside space than we have done previously – and got lucky with the weather...



Easter Egg Hunt

As I say every year, this is probably one of my favourite events as it only lasts an hour and is pretty easy to organize! It's also known as the most entertaining afternoon of 'organized' madness. The Egg Hunt runs on the penultimate Friday of the Easter term and this year we were blessed with a lovely spring afternoon whilst 600+ children took part in the Easter Egg hunt in the school grounds. The kids love it as they all take home a chocolate egg... and for pure energy, excitement and joy, there was no better place to be. Going into Asda and buying 600 eggs is always a lot more eventful and a lot more fun than it should be!

Art Exhibition

Another regular in the calendar, the school got into the spirit of the Brighton festival in May when the pupils' artwork was exhibited at the school Open House. The theme this year was 'One World' and each year group chose a sub-theme of their own. The Great Balfour Bake Off was yet again another flop event for the year – usually we have tables and tables covered in cakes... this year we had three! Yep the three you can see on the screen! Luckily Higgidy Pies have supported FAB this year and gave us a whole load of free rolls and quiches to sell on the day.

The future of the Great Balfour Bake off is also in doubt for the upcoming year due to the lack of cakes, the lack of volunteers on the day, and the extra time and effort put on our already busy FAB members.

Summer Fair

At the risk of getting repetitive, this turned out to be another wonderful afternoon for everyone on the second Saturday in July.

Realising early on that there was a possible clash of a World Cup Quarter-final England match during our Summer fair – we were able to anticipate it and were ready to change plans, get a tv licence for the school, extend the event and show the footie on the big screen! And it all worked like a dream with England winning and beer flowing!! A big thank you to Emma, Fiona, Hadj and Alison again for sorting out all the delicious food... and another big thank you to Beth and Claire for sorting the raffle and silent auction. And a big thank you to everyone, especially Louise, for having to deal with the last minute changes, the extended timings and finding volunteers and also a massive thank you to those who had to sacrifice watching the footie to be out on the field.

As with the Christmas Fair, the success of this event was down to the team of volunteers leading up to the event to make it happen and a small army of volunteers on the day who made it all run like clockwork. Parents and staff all contributed fantastically.

Tea Towels

Ros Allen stepped up and organized this popular FAB tradition in the summer term. Ros decided to extend the initiative beyond just KS1 classes and so for the first time ever Year group tea towels were produced for all seven year groups in the school. Another excellent idea and thus making more profits for FAB in doing so!

Year 6 hoodies – An idea from former year 6 pupils which was started the year before and for the first was half funded by FAB, Leavers Hoodies are a great hit with the kids. This year we decided to see if the Year 6 cohort could raise the full amount themselves (approximately £1.3k). They rose to the challenge and managed to raise just over £1.2k with FAB donating a mere £70... well done kids! The kids do all the admin – so it's a good learning skill for them.



Reverse Advent Calendar – again another idea from a former Year 6 student. Louise organized the fundraiser this year and together with Ben Marle's help, a whopping 500kg of food donations were collected and donated to the Whitehawk Food Bank just before Christmas. The idea is that each day of advent a child in each class brings in an item to donate to the food bank. Wheels are in motion this year...



Online Ticket Sales/Payments

We continued with online ticket selling last year and extended it to both Fireworks and Tea towel sales... so now you can buy tickets for all events online as well as via FAB boxes.

The online system reduced the amount of admin for these events significantly and in most cases over 95% of people bought tickets online. The option to pay by cash and cheque was also offered to anyone who wished to pay via these methods through the usual means ie FAB boxes. The Ticketor system allows a database of users, customers (with email addresses) and ticket buyers to be produced – ticket buyers can print out tickets or show phones. We printed out details of all ticket buyers but we can also use a tablet/phone database if we so wish to do so for future events. We have also linked ticket buying to our 'new' website for ease of use.

Fees are nominal and have meant 30p to 50p to be added to tickets... which didn't distract anyone!



New initiatives that FAB were involved in or that raised money for FAB...

T-Shirt designs

In the spring, Hadj came to FAB with the idea of designing t-shirts and selling them via Teemill to make funds for FAB. He took the initiative on himself and together with Lark Agency created a load of awesome designs that can be bought online with a certain amount of the profits go to FAB. In the last few months the Tshirts have raised XXXX – a massive thank you to Hadj and Lark Agency for taking this project on.



100 Club

In the summer months we kicked off the 100Club with the aim of having the first draw at the Summer Fair, however, the numbers joining were low and so we decided to delay the draw... the first draw took place at the wine and cheese evening in September this year. We are hoping that as winners start to be announced that more people will join the draw. People pay £5 for a number and have a chance of winning half the prize fund – 1st prize = 25%, 2nd prize = 15% and 3rd prize = 10%... FAB receive 50% of the prize fund each month.



Poverty Proofing

During the Summer term, I had a meeting with the Poverty Proofing coordinator from Brighton & Hove Council and she was impressed at how we as a PTA helped people who couldn't afford our events... however we only knew of one family that we could help and we have helped them at each event for the last few years. In the Summer Term, the committee took the decision that we should try and extend our help to others – but of course we are not allowed to know who the families are and so have been working with the school's SLT to work out ways to give free tickets, Christmas cards and tea towels available to families who can't afford them ie Pupil Premium families. There are approximately 70 Pupil Premium children at the school of which approximately 60 are entitled to free school meals.

For this upcoming term, the committee have decided to offer free Christmas Card packs and Quiz Night tickets to families receiving Free School Meals, free Fireworks tickets to Pupil Premium families and free Santa's Grotto and Grinch Cave tickets to Pupil Premium families... It's a test, learn and review process at the moment as we always have the option of offering discounted tickets for Pupil Premium families or possibly charge amounts that just cover our costs.

Christmas Cards cost us £3 per pack so the maximum this will cost us is £180 this year, Quiz Night is more expensive with food costing £7 per head – so this is definitely a test and review option, Firework tickets cost us nothing as people can watch from the road or their home if they want, and the Grotto and Grinch only cost us a £1 per present... so again the cost for these are minimal and hopefully if people come to the events they may spend some cash whilst there.

As a matter for the records, and declaring a conflict of interest, since August I have a Pupil Premium child at the school and do not want any free items or tickets from FAB, however, as this initiative is primarily led by the school and via emails from the SLT – I haven't asked to be not included as I reckon with an insider Pupil Premium family - FAB can suss out how it is working... but as I've just admitted that in front of the SLT - I'm sure the process will work well for me!! At the moment, I will be paying FAB £5 at the next committee meeting for the free Christmas Card pack that I should receive!! And as a Pupil Premium parent, I will be abstaining from any votes regarding poverty proofing our events and fundraisers.



Our new website

We have just launched our new website – it has been two years in the making... but we've got there! The aim is that it is a one-stop shop for all things FAB related!! Please take a look at it and all comments are welcome about it's usability.



Looking forward to 2017-2018

We plan to run a programme similar to last year.... The events work well and we can practically organize them with our eyes shut. Plans for Fireworks night are already under way and the Christmas Fair follows closely behind in December. We have Ben Goode and Daryl Newman writing the Quiz questions for next Friday and Ros sorting out the Christmas Cards... so the ball is rolling...



I believe the working relationships between committee members is awesome at the moment, not least due to the involvement of the 'acting' heads - Dawn Loader and Sandra Mulholland, and the tireless support of Ben Marle; but also, due to the involvement of a few more parents taking on minor roles and jobs in the lead up to major events.

Focus for fundraising: we've made big strides in the last 36 months in relating fundraising initiatives (e.g. specific events) with where the money will be spent. We gave parents a chance to vote on what to spend the money on last Spring and we will probably do this again in the near future...

We have also focused further on 'Match Funding' - splitting the cost of items between us and the school or an external club... we split the cost of the KS2 shelter between FAB and the school and also we split the cost of the outdoor equipment for KS1 between FAB and the school. Outside funders should also be sought especially with the cuts to school funding – there are many routes that can be explored... it's just a matter of who has the time?

We have continued extending our fundraising from not only benefitting the school and pupils but also extending out a helping hand to facilitate children led initiatives that benefit either themselves (ie the hoodies) or the wider community (ie the food bank). I personally like these types of initiatives that have originated from pupils and hope that this year I am inundated with many more!!

As always – if you have an idea for an event and fundraiser and are willing to take on organizing it (like Hadj did with the T-shirts) then it would be awesome to hear from you.



Most immediately, there are a number of committee positions that need to be filled – well really only one NEEDS to be filled - but the other are desirable too...

- **Secretary** – a massive thank you to Ross and Ben for being our interim and interim, interim secretaries... but we really need a new person to take on this lead role and help lessen the work load of others in the committee.
- **Communications**... Daryl has done an awesome job taking on the role of writing the FAB bit for the biweekly school newsletter – a big thank you for taking on this role and long may you continue! However, the communications team we set up at the last AGM did the same as the year before and faded into the distance before the New Year and as a result, much of the comms fell on my shoulders. Consequently, we are in dire need of more people to help in the communications team – in particular - we need a **poster designer** to help lessen the role for those involved... or more specifically me!!
- **100 Club Administrator** – we need someone to check emails and help run this fundraiser behind the scenes. What it involves... mainly checking emails, replying to people and allocating numbers to participants... and generally keeping an excel spreadsheet of the info up-to-date
- **Website Administrator** – to keep our website up-to-date – you don't need to be website savvy as we use WordPress and Louise and myself had a crash course in the pub over the summer and managed to do it – so really anyone can!! What it involves... adding a bi-weekly blog (basically copying and pasting the newsletter content), adding, minutes, agenda's, events and photo's etc.
- **GDPR Administrator** – to keep our charity GDPR Compliant. What it involves... well everything is set up and policies are already in place. Probably involves simply making sure we do what our policies say and delete details etc in the time frame we said we would.

General helpers are also much sought after... whether you can photocopy a poster over 800 times for bookbags, go shopping – either online or down the high street, or some other special talent that you could offer?!? For example, Marco is our resident Grotto maker and he sets up the grotto every year and packs it away into his loft... his children will be leaving the school in 2020 and so we only have his much-appreciated talents for another couple of fairs... if this quirky job is something you would be interested in then please let us know. You also may have a talent for Serving mulled wine at the winter events, face painting, hair braiding, be Santa (in a couple of years) or the Grinch?!?! Man the

FAB desk, help get raffle prizes, or are you crafty - have you got some cheap ideas – or are willing to troll through pinterest??



In summary

It's been a difficult year for the school and for FAB and although we stressed a lot about different things – we still had a lot of fun. It has been hard work at times but is always rewarding. We have some excellent foundations in place, but we always need more people to help keep the show on the road, make the events successful and ensure our children are the ultimate beneficiaries, both in terms of enjoying events we run and making school life even more enjoyable and inspiring for them at Balfour.

I believe FAB is in a good place at the moment, we've benefitted from changes in our administration that have made life a lot easier and straightforward for existing committee members as well as for people who join FAB in the future. There is a frame of reference for all events that will hopefully simplify future events and make them better.... Or at least easier to run!

Being Chair has been more fun and more rewarding than I'd ever expected... only kidding – Greg wrote that a few years ago so I just keep it in for a laugh!! But having said that I would like to say one last big Thank you to Ben Goode for being my side kick, to Haley for being an awesome treasurer and to Louise for organizing the shit out of us all and nagging us to get stuff done!



FAB is only as good as the people who volunteer, so if you can help in any way, from joining us on the committee, helping out with preparing for events or even volunteering to help out on the day, we'd love to hear from you and would love you to co-opt as many fellow parents as you can to help out too.

Thank you

Amanda