



Friends of SMPS

Welcome Booklet

Friends of Summerseat Methodist Primary School

Charity Number – 1108654

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1. Introduction

1.1 Welcome to our school

Welcome to Summerseat Methodist Primary School (SMPS). It can be strange and a little daunting starting at a school and there always seems to be so many questions to ask. This booklet aims to provide you with information about **Friends of SMPS**, which forms a major part of school life.

1.2 Why do we have **Friends OF SMPS**?

Friends of SMPS is an integral part of the school community. In its time, **Friends** has raised thousands of pounds, which has been spent on equipment and resources to enhance our children's education experience and the school's facilities.

However, **Friends** is about much more than simply fundraising. **Friends** exists to provide closer links between home and school and it is an excellent way to bring staff and parents together socially in support of the school, working towards a common goal. It's fun too - just ask any of the Committee members or **Friends** helpers.

All parents and members of the school community are welcome to get involved, even if they only have a small amount of time available. All families are automatically members of the **Friends** when their child joins school.

Friends is extremely conscious of the ethos and diversity of our school, and we try very hard when organising and planning events to respect this. Not all of our events are fundraisers, we hold regular social nights out and family walks.

2. Charitable Status

Charity law requires voluntary organisations such as ours with an annual income in excess of £5,000 to register with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. As a charity we must abide by the Charity Commission rules and regulations and we are bound by a governing document referred to as our Constitution. Our Constitution sets out the rules about how we operate as **Friends** and how we conduct ourselves.

Being a registered charity enables the **Friends of SMPS** to:-

- receive charitable donations from local and national companies
- apply to grant-making charitable trusts; most charitable trusts will give grants only to groups formally recognised as charities
- receive donations made through payroll giving and company matched giving schemes.

3. Friends Of SMPS history

We can trace our **Friends of SMPS** history back some twenty years. Many of the people, who were committee members previously still help us out in a number of ways today, so you can see we are a very close knit community.

3.1 Links with Local Businesses

We have, over time, developed links with the local community and are always well supported by both residents and businesses, for which we are very grateful. Many of our local shops are very generous providing donations for raffle prizes, auction items, etc.

We are also extremely grateful to the local businesses who have participated in charity matched giving schemes. This has made a huge difference to our fundraising efforts.

4. Role of the Committee

Our **Friends** Committee consists of four officers: Chair, Vice Chair, Treasurer and Secretary. We also have ordinary committee members to make up the full Committee.

The Committee meet on a regular basis usually once or twice per term, with smaller working groups meeting as necessary when we are planning larger events.

A list of current **Friends** committee members is at the back of this booklet. Updated lists are sent out each year after the AGM. If you are interested in joining the committee or would like to volunteer occasionally to suit you, please do not hesitate to talk to a member of the Committee.

Some **Friends** volunteers are help regularly and others help at specific events when they are able. Every little helps, so just one hour assisting at an event is invaluable

4.1 Annual General Meeting (AGM)

Our Annual General Meeting is held at the beginning of the academic year and provides an opportunity for all parents to come along and hear in more detail about the work of the **Friends**, the events we have run, the funds we have raised and how the money has been spent. This is the occasion when we elect our new committee members.

5. PTA UK

Friends of SMPS is a member of PTA UK, which is a national charity and membership organisation providing support and guidance for all home school associations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Our association is one of over 13,000 members in current membership of the NCPTA. We pay an annual membership fee to PTA UK which gives us lots of member benefits including comprehensive insurance cover for all **Friends** run events, support and advice on running the **Friends**, plus fundraising ideas and good practice hints and tips. PTA UK also provides us with the opportunity to meet and communicate with other **Friends**/PTAs, to discuss and share experiences. We receive termly publications, and guidance to ensure our events are legal and safe. In addition, we have a valuable resource at our fingertips – www.pta.org.uk.

6. How we raise money

Like most PTAs, the majority of our funds are raised through the events that we run. Some of our most popular events are:

- Christmas Fair
- Easter Fair
- Quiz Night
- Cake Sales

There is always something going on. We always try and respond to the children's requests; it is great to see them having fun at the events or enjoying using a piece of new equipment that the **Friends** has donated.

We raise money in other ways too. Donations from parents are extremely important. You can donate time, money, items for sale, raffle prizes and auction lots or offers of services and skills.

6.1 Company Matched Giving

Company matched giving is very simple. Companies or businesses pledge to donate to a charity, such as ourselves, an amount of money relating to the amount that an employee(s) donates or fundraises for us. We have been helped enormously in the past by this type of donation, and there are several benefits to both the company and ourselves:

- employees' morale is boosted by having their efforts supported by their employer
- the company benefits from having charitable donations written off against taxable profits
- the company can endeavour to get publicity for their giving
- **Friends** benefits from receiving perhaps double what we have raised at an event.

If you think that your employer has a matched giving scheme already in operation, or if you would like some more information about charity matched giving or setting up a scheme in your workplace, please talk to one of the **Friends** committee members, or ask in the school office.

7. How we spend the money we raise

Following a fundraising event the money is banked straight away. It is at our **Friends** Committee meetings that the decisions on how to spend the money is agreed.

Usually, the Head Teacher will have a 'wish list' of items that the school would like the **Friends** to consider funding. Sometimes this will be as a result of the children asking for something, like wet break books and games so they can keep entertained at break times due to bad weather. At other times it will be for resources to improve a particular area of the curriculum or school environment.

The **Friends** funds are spent on the 'extras' that are not provided by the school's budget, thus making our children's learning experiences so much more fulfilling and exciting. **Friends** funds are not generally spent on improving the fabric of the school building as this is the responsibility of the school Governing Body.

We always endeavour to spend our funds in ways that will benefit all our children across all areas of the school and curriculum.

The money we raise is usually spent fairly quickly, that way, you can be sure that in supporting our school, your own child/children will feel the benefit, along with everybody else.

Of course, there have been times when we have been fundraising for a large project. In the past, we have supported the following special outdoor project: The playground area called 'Copse Corner' with all new play equipment, flooring, planting and storage.

The **Friends** have also bought and paid for the following:

- Computer Software and hardware (ipads)
- Coach travel for trips and theatre visits
- The new library shelving

However, whilst saving for these, we have still managed to find funds for smaller items thanks to the generous and continued support of our parents.

8. How we get information to you

Friends send out regular newsletters, which include information on forthcoming events and dates plus requests for assistance when we are planning large events. Following a **Friends** event, we always let you know how much was raised, and if we can, we tell you what the money will be spent on.

Friends newsletters and posters are posted on the school notice boards which are situated in the playground near the office.

We are currently trying to establish a list of parents' email addresses, so we can contact you this way. Please let the **Friends** Secretary have your email address if you wish to be added to our distribution list. The list is maintained by **Friends** who will not distribute or divulge your email address.

9. How you can get involved

There are many ways you can help and support your child through the **Friends**.

Offering to help before events or at other times during the year is so valuable. It doesn't matter if you can't help on a regular basis, or even if you cannot come into school. There are always jobs that can be done from home if you have half an hour to spare e.g. wrapping gifts, preparing raffle tickets etc. We really could not achieve what we do without the behind the scenes help that we receive.

If you would like to be more involved with **Friends** you could volunteer to be a Committee Member or you could simply support the AGM and give us your ideas for fundraising events. This is also a good time to ask questions or voice your opinion.

You can help by letting us know if you have any contacts or skills we could use, everything is potentially valuable to us.

Finally, we are always extremely grateful to receive donations as mentioned before.

There is brief questionnaire at the back of the booklet to fill in and return if you are able to help in any way, no matter how small. Don't forget to include an email address if possible.

10. Testimonials

Friends involves the whole school community so we thought you would like to know what others think about us:

Claire Dagg, mum to Maicy and Ella

SMPS **Friends** is a great way to get to know all your children's **Friends** and their parents whilst doing activities that all the family enjoy, and at the same time raising money to create even a better school life and environment for our children.

Joanne and Anthony Threlfall, parents of Iona and Gabriel

We joined the **Friends** to help raise funds to improve our daughter's education and were surprised, but delighted, to make new **Friends**. On another level I have made a good friend of another parent who I would probably not have spoken to before **Friends** and have met other parents of children in different years who you would not normally meet in normal school situations. I was also pleasantly surprised how much some parents are prepared to put the time in to help, organise and run the **Friends** committee to a very good standard. A wide range of parents joining the **Friends** means a good range of ideas from all sorts of people from different walks of life/occupations etc.

Natalie Marshall, mum to Charlie and Ruby

For me **Friends** is a good way of getting involved in school life so you don't feel like an outsider, also I was new to the area so it was an easy way of meeting people. **Friends** do some brilliant fundraising to help support the school with what's needed and this has benefited my children. On the social side I have had some great nights out arranged by **Friends**!

Vickie Butcher, mum to Grace and Emily

Hi, I am Grace Butcher's mum, I was new to the village as we only moved here 3 years ago and I did not know anybody. I decided to go to **Friends** of Summerseat. I was very sceptical but I was welcomed and introduced as Grace and Emily's mum. Emily left 2 years ago. I explained I would like to help, and after the meeting I had made new **Friends** and also had a good laugh. When I went into the playground, parents from **Friends** came over to me and made me feel like part of the school and it was very much a family experience, not only attending the meetings but I also felt I was giving something back to the school, not financially but time.

From the Governing Body

The **Friends of SMPS** is an essential part of our school. All parents and carers are members and everyone's contribution is highly valued. The work of the **Friends** underpins the whole school. Financial support enables us to create a richer learning environment for our children e.g. the development of our new library. These could never have been installed so quickly without the incredible support of our **Friends**. Numerous curriculum resources have been provided which children throughout the school are able to enjoy. The wide variety of social functions, allow us all to get to know one another in a more relaxed setting. The children see their parents and the school staff working together for their benefit. They appreciate this united effort and it adds to their feeling of security. Our school would not be the lively and welcoming learning environment it is without the enthusiasm, commitment and hard work of our **FRIENDS**. All of us in school are very grateful to them.

From the children

"The adventure playground is a fun and safe way to enjoy playtimes."

"The coaches help us to enjoy learning outside of school."

"The picnic bench stops us from getting bored at playtimes."

From our Head teacher,

"I am totally overwhelmed by the support and dedication of the **Friends of SMPS**. **Friends** activities not only provide us with exciting social events, but also raise funds which help to give the children such an enjoyable education, through new resources. The **Friends** contribution to the school community provides a collective of professional skills, innovation and new ideas, creativity and collaborative working practices. Our **Friends** has achieved so much, and I look forward to continuing this valuable partnership in the coming

Thank you for taking the time to read our booklet and we hope you now know a little more about **Friends of SMPS**. If you need any more information or you feel you could help us in any way, please speak to a Committee member.

Andrea Horrocks
Chair Of **Friends of SMPS**

11. Appendices

11.1 Current List of Committee Members

Chair	Andrea Horrocks
Vice Chair	Lanette Robinson
Treasurer	Alex Sellers
Secretary	Laura Woodhams

11.2 Parent's Questionnaire

All families of pupils at our school are members of the **Friends of SMPS**. The **Friends of SMPS** runs regular fundraising and social events for the whole school community. Our fundraising efforts have enhanced the education and experience of all the children at the school and will continue to do so with your support. We would like to know a little bit about you and the events and activities that interest you. The **Friends of SMPS** Committee would appreciate it if you would take a few minutes to complete this questionnaire:

Name:

Contact telephone no:

Child's name and class:

Email:

1. What sort of events would you enjoy attending, e.g. quiz night, ladies night, family disco?

2. Do you work for a company that has a company matched giving scheme for employees, such as a bank or building society? If you don't know, would you be prepared to ask them?

3. Would you be interested in supporting the committee to help plan and organise events as a **Friends** volunteer?

4. Would you like more information about joining the committee, the roles and responsibilities and the time commitment involved?

6. Is there anything specific you would like the **Friends Of SMPS** to fund? Please give details: