

Dear Parents/ Carers/ Extended Families and local friends,

We have made it through a very busy half term with much excitement and an awful lot of fundraising! We are so lucky to have such dedicated and passionate staff at our lovely school who have gone above and beyond to create a safe and lovely learning environment for our children. We are very lucky!

Because of your incredible support we have raised a RECORD BREAKING amount of money for our school £6566.93! As far as I'm aware we have NEVER raised this much in a whole year let alone in a term. We're flabbergasted this has happened, especially during a global pandemic! You have been so generous and we honestly can't thank you enough!

We have so many of you to thank! Our fundraising sheet has all the details of monies raised to date. We have had extremely generous donations from families at school and from the wider community. Sadly our annual Christmas Fair (our biggest fundraiser of the year) couldn't go ahead but with the imagination and support of many we managed to go ahead with lots of different activities for the children whilst raising funds for the school:

- Catherine and Lucie put together donated items to replace the creative activities at school in lovely bags personalised for every child at school. Thank you to Thomas and Fay from Chapter Two for the stunning bookmarks as well.
- The online Raffle was extraordinary and drawn live via Zoom. Thank you to Lisa, Sophie and Sarah for generating so many incredible prizes and to Dan for being our compere.
- Sarah and Holly Class organised a Crazy Hair Day for the children at school linking in with the Firle Village Christmas Tree star decorations.
- Sam organised the ever popular Tea Towels with self-portraits drawn by the children
- Annemarie, Finn, Helen and Barry made the first ever Friends Of Firle School calendar filled with pictures of the children and local residents across our beautiful villages.
- Residents of Firle and Glynde Villages led by Fay, Katrina and Beth have also organised a Trail Of Lights across both villages with beautiful maps and goody bags over the holidays from which FOFS will benefit which is wonderful!
- Father Christmas managed to make an early delivery to the school and the children will all come home with a gift on the last day of term.

Alongside these festive activities Firle Estate has kindly given us a space for a clothing bin in the village car park and in the interim Sarah organised a clothing recycling collection. Huge thanks to everyone who donated a very special thank you to Hugh and Carro for donating some of Anne's clothing. It was lovely to know that Anne was still a part of fundraising for the school this year.

We were taken aback and humbled by Robert and Ami from Firle Stores suggestion (well insistence) that Friends Of Firle School receive any donations for gifts they may receive from the local community as they retire. We can't thank them enough for all their support over the years and would like to formally say how much we will miss them and all their help, advice and support.

So that's this year but we're always thinking ahead and have big plans for 2021!

- We have been applying for Charitable Status with a view to applying for grants to fund a stunning new outdoor space and learning area at school in 2021
- We are VERY ambitious and have some of the best designers on board for the playground - the children! They have been asked to design their Dream Playground and in New Year their designs will be submitted for a final decision and the design companies will visit Firle school to let us know our fundraising target to make it a reality! Thank you Jess for volunteering to help us make a "fundraising thermometer" so we can track our progress from there.
- We will also be using our charitable status to apply for funding for learning resources including laptops.
- We need volunteers to fill in grant forms once our Charitable Status is in place. We will be asking families to see if their workplaces can match fund and asking local businesses to sponsor a 'piece of playground equipment'. With Charitable status we can ask you to enquire at work if they would match fund any monies raised and see where we get to. Thank you to Nessie, Flora and Florence for volunteering already.
- We realise it's an entire year away, but we'd love your help planning our 2022 calendar! Each month we would like you to send seasonal photos to friendsoffirleschool@gmail.com which will be entered into a monthly draw to be added to next years calendar. They don't have to be just photos... they can be local drawings, paintings, sketches etc (all with copyright given for image use please).

For what has been a pretty shocking year all round, we are so proud of how we have all rallied together to support not only our local school, but our school community too.

We would like to say the biggest thank you to all the staff at school who must be utterly exhausted after such a grueling year – you are all utterly amazing and please have a well-deserved break over the Christmas holiday.

Thank you! Here's to a less dramatic 2021!

Best wishes

Helen, Fay and FOFS Team