

FOSM End of Year 2023/24 Chairs Report

Greetings to all from the Friends of Swanton Morley chair and committee. Welcome to the start of a new year with Swanton Morley VC Primary. We are excited for everything the new year will bring.

2023/24 have been successful and productive years so far, and we look forward to new projects and the involvement of the school community. We would like to extend our thanks and gratitude to the entire FOSM committee for their dedication, time and enthusiasm. Thank you also to every teacher who has assisted us with their time and energy, and to all those wonderful parents who have been involved as well. We could not complete any venture without you all. Finally, we have been very grateful to receive support from external sources and companies. Tesco have been generous with their provision of a book sale space and easter hamper donation. Bawdeswell Garden Centre donated seeds for the gardening club. A large variety of companies donated Christmas and Easter raffle prizes for which we are extremely appreciative. Dereham Round Table Santa sleigh donated a generous amount, and Sinclair International gifted us two laptops which are already immensely useful.

This has been our first year with our new committee structure. It has been a learning curve but we have all enjoyed the challenge and are proud of what we have achieved for the children so far. We have been busy all year with some wonderful fundraising events that have been enjoyed by the school as a whole. Some of our first events included those last Christmas, with a drawing competition that blew us away with the number of beautiful entries. We also held a festive bake sale, thank you so much to all those who donated baked goods, it was a wonderful success due to your endeavours! Wonderful creativity shown by all. The whole school was able to attend the pantomime at Norwich Theatre Royal due to FOSM covering all ticket prices, and everyone seemed to have fantastic time!

From Christmas onwards we have also had our usual enjoyable discos. Christmas, Easter and Summer were all marked by these entertaining events that seemed to be very much enjoyed by all the children as much as we enjoyed volunteering for each evening. There was also a whole school maths day early in the year with an external company hosting the event within the school. This was fully funded by FOSM and seemed to be very much enjoyed by the children.

Arriving at Easter, we had a modest after school event that was still a wonderful fundraiser thanks to the generous donations of tombola prizes from so many parents, and to the people who gifted us their time in running the five or six stalls we were able to produce.

In June, we hosted our first community event with the village yard sale. This had a very positive response and uptake with 20-30 houses taking part, and further sellers on the

school playground. This was also our first foray into weekend events, and is definitely something we would like to consider again in the future. We had a kind donation from a collector of sell-by date foodstuffs of a large supply of Greggs food for this event, which was very much appreciated as an addition to the bake table there. Unfortunately, a brief but intense downpour of rain cut the event short, but it was still a remarkably successful fundraiser that we would like to look into again in the future, or consider a variation of. Thank you also to Mr Richards for being a remarkably good sport in being drenched even before the rain, in the school stocks! We feel like he should definitely not be concerned about how popular this was with the children.....

During the year, representatives of FOSM met with the School Council to determine what the children would like us to work towards. The outcome of this was an expressed wish for additional seating and covered space for the older years, and outdoor play equipment for the younger childrens playground. This is what we are working towards as our main goal, to further their wellbeing and educational entertainment.

In June the school completed their annual sponsored walk. This was postponed by a week due to weather. Thank you for bearing with us with this postponement, we feel like it very much paid off in an afternoon of glorious sunshine for the walk. This, plus the ice lollies, music and bubble machines, led to many parents expressing how much they enjoyed the summery feel of the event as a whole. Thank you again to those parents and staff who gave their time to help with this, and a huge congratulations to all the children for their efforts. This was another very successful fundraiser for the school.

The warm weather also lent itself to the opportunity for ice lolly sales after school on a number of days. This was a low effort fundraiser, which provided much enjoyment for the children, and all money raised went directly to the school council to fund prizes for Time Table Rock Stars. We would like to do this again in the summer.

As mentioned previously, through our efforts of fundraising we have been able to pay for the entire school to attend the Christmas pantomime at the Theatre Royal in Norwich. This was so successful as a school outing that we have again covered full ticket costs for a repeat trip this December. We very much look forward to this.

A special thanks needs to be extended to our FOSM secretary, Glenn, for his intense dedication of time, skill and energy over the summer to create ten beautiful benches for the school, with all materials purchased by FOSM. This was done with the assistance of the Swanton Morley Mens Shed so a huge thank you needs to go to them as well for their time, work space and tools. We hope very much to work with them again on future projects.

The playground has already been much improved with the assistance of the school Site Manager Mr Haynes. He has assisted with the bench creation, re lined the playground games and has been involved with discussions for future developments. He is also

always on hand for any heavy lifting with all events, and they would not be as successful without his involvement!

In regards to these future playground developments, the most imminent that we are very much excited for will be the addition of a large wooden play boat for the lower school playground, paid for by FOSM funds, thanks to all your wonderful contributions to our events across the year. One of the main ideas raised for FOSM to concentrate our efforts on was the lack of external play opportunities for the lower school compared to the available trim trails and play tower for the older children. Mr Haynes has repositioned a wooden play train on the lower playground, and we believe the addition of this new boat should be very appreciated by the children too. We are all excited for its arrival, watch this space!

It has been a busy, but immensely rewarding year. We have been very pleased to welcome several new volunteers and would love to hear from anyone else who would like to be involved or has any ideas they would like considered. Thank you to everyone for all your help with our first year as the FOSM committee.

Kind regards,

Mary and Amber, Co-Chairs

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