

Chairs Report 11TH February 2026

I'm not going to sit here and list every PTA success during my time as Chair — year after year we've provided so much that our children have benefited from, and honestly the evidence speaks for itself as you walk around the school. Suffice to say... we've done a good job and deserve a pat on the back — or at least a sticker on the sticker chart for the school's value of UNITY.

I somewhat unwittingly became Co-Chair of the PTA after the pandemic — at a meeting I wasn't even present at! Anri very kindly nominated me after a brief conversation about me and another parent joining forces for the role. What I didn't realise at the time was that it would become one of the most fulfilling and rewarding things I've ever done.

I am incredibly proud of what the PTA has achieved over the past five years — the highs and the lows, because it hasn't been without its mishaps! There have been plenty of fires to put out along the way — in one case quite literally, when the skip caught alight in November and had to be doused with a wheelie bin of water from a neighbour's hosepipe. We've had the year of the forgotten cheese slices, another year of uncollected vegan sausages, an upside-down gazebo rescued from the trees, the curious case of the 'missing' tables, and the stolen banners that were never recovered. Many cars and trucks stuck in the muddy field or on grass verges, and the year I arrived at 8am on event day to discover that Back Lane had been closed overnight by KCC nearly finished me off. And let's not forget the year Yoshi trekked off to Prague for firework weekend!

Despite all that, no one has found me rocking back and forth in a dark corner — though I've threatened it several times.

None of those moments come close to outweighing what has been — personally and as a school community — a truly awesome chapter. The obvious highlight, of course, being the Morris Dance performance from myself and Mrs Daters.

Since announcing that I'm stepping down, there's been a lot of discussion about what the Chair role involves, and whether there's a job description. I'll admit — I probably should be able to answer that question! But for much of the past five years I've been learning on the job and mostly winging it. Along the way, I've definitely dropped the ball on certain aspects of the job, I've not had the time to keep on top of paperwork or the technical aspects of the role, but I have leant into the event co-ordination, and I learned a lot along the way, namely effective communication, manipulation and coercion.

Joking aside, I promise the PTA was built on enthusiasm, not intimidation. We all chose Shipbourne School because we liked the idea of a small village school, that felt more like a family than an education setting. After Covid, the PTA was essentially rebuilt from scratch by parents who barely knew each other. That group of near-strangers went on to achieve something pretty special — simply because this school holds a very special place in our hearts, and we all wanted to do our very best for our kids, and enhance their learning opportunities.

A question raised ahead of tonight is: what does being part of the PTA involve? The honest answer is — the parents and teachers that attend the meetings decide what it should involve. Weekend socials, after-school events, grant applications, or larger fundraising events — it's a collective choice. But those discussions need to start happening now, Easter is just around the corner and the initial summer fete planning meetings will be on the cards very soon. Being on the PTA doesn't require taking a laminator to the pub on a Friday night — that part is optional and apparently just a 'me thing'.

I do want to be honest about the fireworks event. It is not a typical fundraiser for a school of our size. It's a major public event that the wider community really values — but it requires a huge workforce and serious planning. Booking the firework and medic teams happens immediately after each firework event, weekly planning meetings from end of August until November. If it continues, it

needs a strong team. If the support isn't there, it's better to make the difficult decision not to run it than to struggle through and it be unsuccessful. But that isn't my decision.

Looking ahead, Sophie has bravely stepped forward to lead the PTA. She hasn't had her arm twisted! But her success will depend on engagement and involvement from families across all year groups. A PTA Chair is really just someone coordinating a team of willing people with the same goal — raising money and opportunities for our children.

If you're thinking you don't have time — I understand. But I'll say this: if I can juggle being a single mum, working full time across three jobs, and still contribute to the PTA, then it *is* possible. Meetings sometimes include younger siblings (or in my case child minded children) in attendance, occupied with snacks and toys on the floor, and a bit of chaos — and that's fine. It's about participation, not perfection.

Being part of the PTA has shaped my experience as a school parent, but also had an impact on my children's school experience too. Seeing them proud of my involvement has meant more to me than I can really express. Jacob asked me tonight not to leave the PTA. I'm not going anywhere — at least not in spirit. I may be moving house soon, but I won't be far away.

Finally, I want to say some specific thank-yous. Many of you have supported me emotionally as well as practically, but special mention must go to my Co-chair Yoshi, Secretary Alison, Treasurer Tori and Brendan for all round epic and outstanding contribution. It's been an absolute pleasure working with you all, and it's with mixed emotions that I now sign off.