

# The Friends of Lancaster Royal Grammar School

## Annual Report: Academic Year 2019-2020



In preparing the annual report for the Friends of LRGS, it is no surprise to anyone that this has been an extraordinary year. The effects of the COVID-19 Pandemic, the continued lockdown measures, and the social restrictions imposed on our society have had a serious and detrimental effect on the Friends' activities and our fundraising for LRGS, yet our spirits have not been dampened.

The Friends continue to support the school and strive to offer opportunities for fundraising. This is currently limited to the income from the School Shop, plus the contributions from the Friends of LRGS 500 Club and Easyfundraising.



As a group, we have been unable to formally meet since February 2020. The initial lock down meant the cancellation of the Spring Festival, which was scheduled for March 2020. Since this time the Friends have been able to meet on one social occasion, with appropriate distancing measures, at Williamsons Park in June. We said thankyou and farewell to outgoing members, Helen Edge and Gill Bishop

Nonetheless, the Friends also wish to thank Dr Pyle and the entire school staff community for their support for our children during the pandemic, and for their hard work and preparation to ensure that school life happily recommenced at the start of the Michaelmas Term, 2020. To see and hear the school site once more brimming with busy pupils, laughter and energy, was surely one of the most remarkable milestones of our times. As the recurrent pandemic challenges continue, let us take strength by reflecting on the high points of the Academic Year 2019/ 2020.



After the initial lockdown restrictions in March, the Friends were happy to support the school and our community during by donating supplies to the onsite NHS keyworkers, and to show our appreciation by providing baked goods to those away from home who were residing at School House. Thank you to all for their gestures of goodwill.





Prior to this, in September 2019, we started the school year with our annual **Supper Run** which was well supported by pupils, staff and families, returning home for chip butties, gingerbread men, and a party atmosphere at the finish line. Thanks go to Chartwells Catering for their kind sponsorship of the event; Mrs Mossop in Food Tech, and the Maths Department for their skilled organisation, as well as Sister Moghadden for her first aid cover, and LRGS CCF for providing

hydration stations. Race HQ manned by the teachers and sixth form marshals was invaluable, but the runners were really awesome and a healthy start to the year was achieved in terms of enthusiasm and motivation.

**Sebastian Gallardo Barton**, a talented pianist from Chile, visited LRGS in October, providing a piano masterclass, inviting our pupils to showcase their talents. His own piano recital was spellbinding, attracting a large audience who were served canapes and drinks by the Friends.



### **A Night with Eddie the Eagle**

In November, the Friends transformed the Assembly Hall into a Calgary 1986 Olympic ski village, to welcome Eddie the Eagle for a family fun night. Packed to capacity, guests were treated to live performances from school rock bands Attacama and

Lidocaine, after

which Eddie gave an inspirational account of his success and chatted to pupils and families. Guests enjoyed a hot supper and drinks from the Friends "Praesis ut Prosecco" apres ski bar, making this a gold medal event in our school calendar.



Our regular events in supporting the **Year 7 Welcome evenings, LRGS Groundforce Day, Speech Day, Mince Pie Baking Day** and the **LRGS Festivals of Carols** as winter approached, kept the Friends busy throughout the autumn. All events were well attended by the LRGS Community. This year an additional carol service in the Priory at night enhanced the Advent spirit.

### **Burns' Night Celebrations**

The Friends held our annual Burns' Night Celebrations in January. Guests were welcomed by the Friends and 6th Form Students at Lancaster Town Hall. Piping of the haggis, and the Burns "Address to the Haggis" was followed by a traditional Burns Night supper from Newfields Catering, a ceilidh from Northern Frisk, a charity raffle, and a whisky tasting quiz. The celebrations continued into the night with the endless dancing of reels. As ever, this event was our major fundraiser of the school year and ticket sales reached capacity. This year the finances included a donation from the bar profits to Lancaster City Council, agreed by the Friends.



### **Sourdough Bread Baking Day**



In March, we were delighted when parent and Friend, Peter Sorton, kindly hosted a fundraising sourdough bread baking day in conjunction with the Food Tech team. A small number of Friends and LRGS staff learned skills from making a starter, proofing loaves, and baking delicious sourdough bread. Friends left with a hot, crusty loaf and one to put in the oven at home! Peter has kindly offered to host similar events in the future when the time is right. Thank you to Peter and to all who baked!

### **LRGS School Shop**



After the summer break we were delighted to open the school shop, with a high demand for pre-owned, quality uniform items. Although closure of the shop limited our spring activity, a surge in interest occurred in September when lockdown measures were eased and families

prepared to return to school. Thank you to our School Shop volunteer team for their exceptional measures in maintaining a safe, Covid-free environment, and managing the donations of uniform accordingly.





### **The Kinamba Community Project, Rwanda**

The Friends of LRGS have maintained our partnership with the Kinamba Community Project in Rwanda. Here, children in need of education proudly wear LRGS colours from donated surplus sportswear from our school shop. They now have several rugby teams for boys and girls!

### **Staff acknowledgements**

The Friends would like to thank **Ray Thomas, Director of Finance and Support Services** for his support and assistance to the Friends over the years. We wish Ray a very happy retirement from December 2020 and wish him well.

The Friends were saddened to hear of the passing of **Mr Richard Furlong Brown, RIP**. His contribution to LRGS was phenomenal. We will remember him as the Start Marshall for our Fun Runs, and for his foodie experience in judging the LRGS MasterChef competitions. Our thoughts and condolences go for to his wife, Rose at this time.



### **In looking ahead....**

As yet, there has been little opportunity to plan ahead and there are limits to the hosting of Friends meetings.

I am able to note the following areas for attention when opportunities permit:

- **Friends' Account and Pledges:** Anne-Marie has kindly managed the finances and accounts in the absence of the Friends meetings, and will present an annual report in parallel to the Secretary's report.
- We patiently await happier days and have been able to make an **interim pledge** to purchase **outdoor equipment** to improve the school site, necessitated for pupil use and to maximise safe, outdoor space availability.
- **School Shop stock** may be required and sourced via the School Shop Team in liaison with Anne-Marie.
- **500 Club:** Helen, as an outgoing parent / Friend is handing over the 500 Club running to a parent volunteer and is in liaison with Anne-Marie regarding the draws, prizes and finances.
- **Roles of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer:** Without an annual AGM taking place this autumn, the roles of Chair, Secretary and Treasurer need to be confirmed. While Chris Pyle continues as Chair, and Anne-Marie Waddingham as Treasurer, Michelle Whitton (Upper 6th parent) is outgoing as Secretary, but will informally continue to assist until spring 2021, when handover arrangements may be confirmed.

This year has shown more than ever, that the Friends continue to be an active, valued and vital group within the LRGS community. Thank you to all who contribute to the Friends, to those who have supported our initiatives and fundraising events, and to all who continue, in absentia, to support LRGS during the COVID-19 pandemic. Social media platforms and the termly newsletters remain a positive source of communication with the school community, while membership of the Friends of LRGS Facebook page continues to grow.

Praesis ut Prosis.

**Michelle Whitton**  
**Secretary to the Friends of LRGS**  
**Autumn 2020**