

## Helping Hands of Rosa Street

### AGM Report

We launched Helping Hands as an official committee on the 30<sup>th</sup> January this year. At this meeting the following roles were allocated:

Chair – Kate Tarling

Treasurer – Lynda Kelley

Secretary – Lynsay McIvor

Communications Officer – Joanne Wakes

All other parents present agreed to be members of our committee. We had help from Durham Community Action to write an official constitution (which are a set of rules) for the group and they have supported us with some training on recruiting volunteers.

These are some of the activities that we have been involved with in school since that meeting:

#### The Helping Hands 'brand'

Following a competition in school we decided on a new name and logo for our group to replace FORSSA. The competition winners were given small prizes paid for by our funds.

We set up a new Facebook Group and have tried to encourage parents to follow us through advertising in the school newsletter, word of mouth and the whiteboard. As of Friday, 106 people are following us!

We also have a list of interested people on email that we contact with information about meetings and who get copies of minutes and agendas from meetings. Several of these parents work full time but we appreciate the help they still give at after school events.

We have changed our account name at the bank and are all sorted with a new cheque book and paying in book.

#### Fundraising events

**Discos:** Last academic year, we organised and supported the Halloween, Valentines and Summer term discos in school.

**Shows:** We sold sweets at the Christmas performances in the Town Hall and then at the end of year performances in school.

**School Fair:** We sold sweets, second hand uniform and indoor refreshments at the school fair for Helping Hands funds and also supported the school in labelling up tombola prizes, pricing up toys, organising year 6 games, gathering raffle prizes and putting together the wine and water stall.

**Bags to school:** We organised a collection of second hand clothes for weighing in.

### **School events we have supported or organised:**

Parent open afternoons

Easter Treasure Hunt event for the children at the end of the Spring Term.

Helping prepare Easter crafts events

Lost property sorting

School sports day refreshments (also a fundraiser)

Year 6 Leavers disco at the end of the academic year that we paid for and organised.

We also thank the staff in school by providing a buffet for them at the end of the summer term and buying each a mini bottle of wine.

### **Volunteering and Information sharing**

It was brought up at meetings this year that some parents really struggle to find out information about events coming up in school. The app seems to have improved communication a great deal but there are still some that can't access it at all or only can when they have enough data allowance on their phones.

For this reason we asked Dave the caretaker to make us a special Helping Hands whiteboard to use in the yard at home time. This has generally been well received although the children often 'helpfully' rub the words off as they go past!

We would love to encourage more parents to come into school and volunteer their time to help the children. Many opportunities have been identified. This year's challenge will be to make more parents and carers aware of how they could help in school and establish a watertight support system for those wanting to offer their time.

Opportunities include:

- Helping at breakfast club one morning a week
- Listening to children read in school
- Helping with classroom displays
- Helping with cutting and preparations for Christmas craft and Easter craft events
- Encouraging conversation with small groups of children by sharing about your own job or skills.

This is a work in progress and has been difficult to achieve with such a small group of already busy parents.

### **Future projects**

As chair, I feel we have a great opportunity as a committee to build connections between the school staff and the school community. I would love to see an event this year that provides a social opportunity for parents and children at an evening event in school. We have also considered inviting people who used to attend Rosa St to a pie and peas supper and a tour around the school. It would be great to make the most of our school's rich history! Any ideas are warmly welcomed!