

## Derwen News June 22

### School Budget and FODS

Good afternoon,

I hope you are all keeping well. I wanted to use this issue of Derwen News to share some information about the school budget and also to ask for support in restarting our PTA (Friends Of Derwen School). This news was due to be shared with parents next week once the budget had been officially agreed by Governors and then shared with Flintshire CC.

Like any other school across Wales, Ysgol Derwen is subject to the same financial demands and pressures, especially during the current economic downturn. As the cost of living affects each and every one of us, school budgets are also facing huge cuts. You may read in the news that the government are allocating millions towards education but the reality at a school level is very different.

This year the school has had the toughest budget I have had to manage since I became Headteacher 15 years ago. I, along with a dedicated Governor Finance Committee, have managed the school finances successfully throughout that period, even in the years of austerity. Global, together with domestic issues has resulted in the school going from a reserve of £80,000 at the close of the 21/22 financial year, to £40,000 at the end of the 2023 financial year, to no reserves by the end of this financial year. As you can imagine, this situation has caused me many sleepless nights and resulted in me focussing 100% over the past couple of months on trying to find a solution that does not impact greatly on the provision we can offer at Ysgol Derwen.

Although Ysgol Derwen continues to be a successful school with pupil numbers remaining constant, and a Finance Committee who monitor very closely school finances and spending, recent budget allocations have been putting considerable additional strain on school resources. Two low classes in Year 3 and 1 are also having an impact on school budget allocation, therefore if you know of anyone thinking of moving schools/relocating into the area who have children in these age groups, please ask them to contact me for more details.

The staff at Ysgol Derwen are the most important resource the school has and I along with the Governors have been doing everything in our power to ensure

we do not have to make cuts with regards to teaching staff as this would have a direct impact on how we plan to deliver the curriculum. i.e less staff equates to higher pupil / adult ratios. Over 92% of the annual school budget is usually spent on staffing with the remainder having to pay for every other aspect of school life e.g. heating, buildings, grounds maintenance, refuse, electricity, water to name just a few. This year, staffing accounted for 100% of the school allocation with all other expenditure being met through school reserves.

When all invoices have been paid there is a very limited budget remaining for pupil resources. This is where the work of FODS has been invaluable over the years in supporting the school.

Prior to the pandemic, FODS had a small active committee who helped raise much needed funds for the school through a calendar of events. Parental involvement in FODS had been falling in the years leading up to the pandemic with most events being organised and run by the school staff.

I have heard that there are now a number of parents willing to help out with fundraising through FODS and I would love to have an active committee in place by the end of this school year so that FODS can start planning for the Autumn Term and beyond. Events could include discos, Christmas Fayres, Summer Fetes, etc. With a new group being established I would hope that fresh exciting ideas may be suggested.

FODS does not need a large committee to operate but will need a lot of parents who are willing to help out when organising and running certain events.

In the past FODS helped raise funds for:

- The old outdoor learning environment for Years 1 and 2
- New book bags for all children on entry
- Reading books
- Schemes of work
- IT equipment
- Kitchen for pupils to undertake cookery lessons
- Sports kits
- Sports equipment
- General equipment / resources for classes
- To help subsidise certain school visits

- To fund whole school treats e.g. visiting theatre performances,
- The trim trail that is still in use on the school field
- Along with 101 other things

As we are expecting a number of parents into school for the "Meet the Teacher" session on Monday July 3, I would like to invite any parents who would like more information about FODS to meet with me in the school hall at 4pm, after the session with teachers has finished. Any parent who cannot attend this session and would like to help out with the new FODS can also email me and I will compile a list of names ready for the group.

I will thank you in advance for your support in this initiative and look forward to having an active FODS back in place for years to come.

Kind regards

R Jones