



Providing funds and fun for your child

## 2014 Survey Results

All Escrick School parents and carers were asked to complete an online survey in May 2014. The request was sent by email from school. The aim of the survey was to seek views on the future of the PTA providing two options to consider for the future. The PTA is in crisis and cannot continue to operate in its current format due to a lack of voluntary support to undertake the committee roles which have become vacant following the resignation of key posts after several years in the role. The outcome of the survey will be reviewed by Mrs Brooks and the current PTA committee in order to agree a new approach.

45 replies were received with respondents representing 58 pupils at the school.

The two models which were presented as options in the survey were:

### Model 1- Class representatives

The PTA continues to have a committee which organise both fundraising and community/social events. The core committee is supplemented by each class putting forward at least one parent representative. These parents would support the existing PTA committee to run fundraising and community events. It is envisaged that each class representative would take on the role for a minimum of a term during which time there would be one or two meetings and the reps would help organise that terms activities.

### Model 2- £15 voluntary contribution

All parents will be asked to make a voluntary contribution each term (suggested amount £15 per family each term). This would raise approximately the same amount that is made annually by PTA. The fund would be used to purchase items/experiences for the school (e.g. text service, education city, subsidised trips, sports kit and Riding Lights show) as well as to organise community events . The school would rely on the good will of members of the committee and parents to organise the community events

## Key Findings/ Conclusions

- The preferred model is Model 1 (class reps) which was chosen by 63% (26 individuals) of those who responded. Model 2 (£15 voluntary contribution) was the preferred option for 37% (15 individuals).
- Although Model 1 is more popular, securing parent representatives may not always be easy as over one third will not do this and another 22% are not sure.
- If Model 1 is adopted, support to help in an ad hoc way would be offered by three quarters of parents who responded. Feedback noted that not all parents were aware of the need for help at specific events and may help if more aware of what was needed in good time.

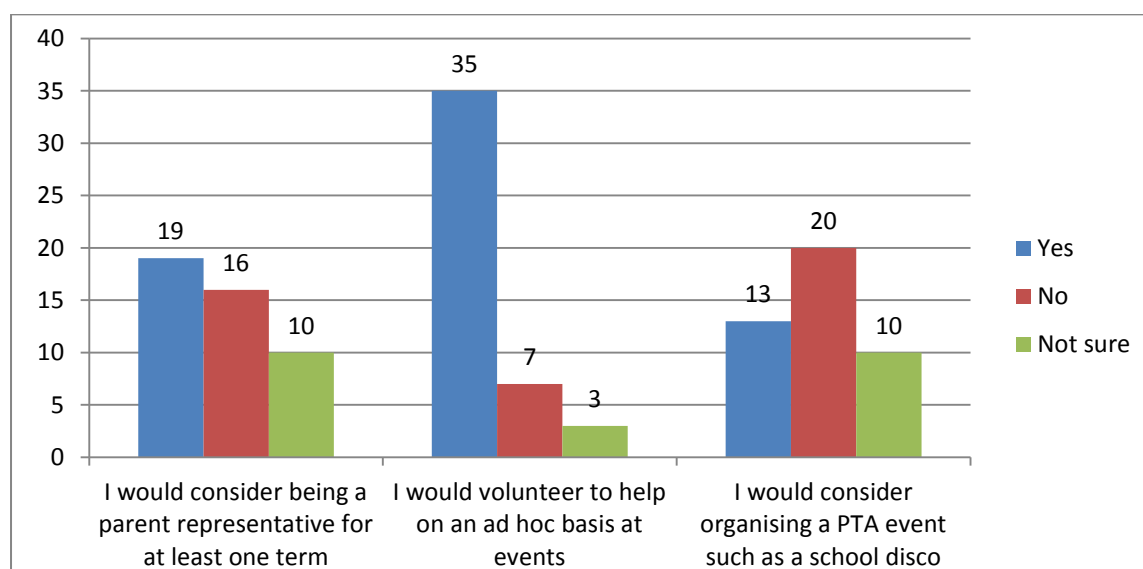
- Overall there was a general positive support for adopting Model 1 but many people just are not able to help in a practical way due to work commitments.
- Model 2, although the first preference by fewer individuals was still supported by a significant number of parents.
- If adopted the financial level of £15 appears to be the optimum although consideration for varying amounts for different numbers of children could be considered
- Those who did not choose Model 2 as their preferred option also on in many cases felt reasonably negatively about this option. If this is adopted it may have a significant proportion of people who do not support this approach and feel actively unhappy about it.
- If Model 2 is adopted the enthusiasm for providing additional voluntary support at ad hoc events is lower than that seen in Model 1 and securing help for the committee may continue to be difficult.
- Timing of meetings during the day and lack of notice/ information about meetings may be limiting participation for some parents and a range of times with good advance notice may improve attendance.
- There was several comments noting that the PTA efforts are appreciated but not all parents have been fully aware of the need for help at specific events and the PTA need to find a way to get this message across more clearly to all the membership.

## Detailed Survey Findings

The preferred model is Model 1 which was chosen by 63% (26 individuals) of those who responded. Model 2 was the preferred option for 37% (15 individuals). Four people did not answer this question.

### Opinions on Model 1

If this is adopted parents were asked how they would be likely to get involved with the PTA in the future.



If this model is adopted 42% would consider being a parent representative with a further 22% not sure about this. 36% would not do this. Assuming that the representative changed each term, 15 - 21 representatives would be needed throughout the lifespan of a class moving through the school.

Considering the class sizes and preferences of the parents indicated in the survey, those who would be prepared to take part would probably need to undertake the role once or twice for each child they have in the school.

Providing support on a more ad hoc basis is more popular with the majority (77%) suggesting they would do this. The comments linked to this question indicate that for many they would be happy to help but do not feel that the ask for help has always been as clear as it could be. It is encouraging that there is a willingness to help and in the new model we must make sure that requests for help are published widely and with plenty of time to respond.

Almost one third of respondents said that they would consider leading the organisation of an event. 44% will not do this but the potential and willingness to get more people involved is very positive and shows that support may be there if this model is adopted.

### Themes and Comments

- The general responses were positive but a lack of time was the key factor for not being able to help
- Several parents commented that they would like to be more involved but there is a lack of time due to work commitments.
- Two noted that they felt that having the rep only being in role for one term would not make it easy to organise anything and a longer role be considered.
- It was suggested that those who have other roles at school such as governors should not be expected to also take on the class rep role
- There were many encouraging comments but the lack of time due to work commitments limits the ability of many to be actively involved
- Timing of events and meetings when during the day were noted as a factor which was stopping some from getting involved
- One suggestion was that the PTA roles should be undertaken by KS2 parents so that KS1 can be free to enjoy their child's time at a new school

### Typical quotes

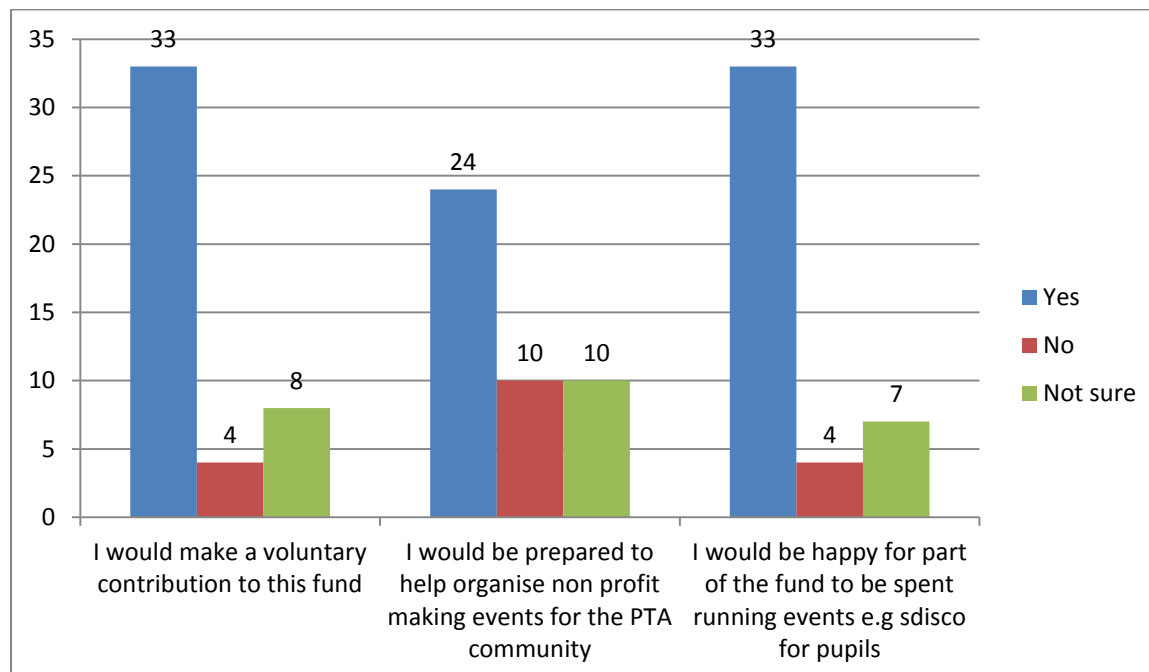
"As a parent working full-time, assisting to any great extent within this model is simply not possible but appears to be a good proposal with a sufficient number of parents who are able to give some time."

"I think getting one parent from each class is a good idea as it gives a point of contact for people and other people are more likely to get involved if they are approached by someone they know. I would consider helping organise an event along with others."

"When deciding on class representatives, I wonder if some dispensation should be offered to parents (who want to take it) who already contribute to the school in different ways, eg through parent forum, regular volunteering in class or who sit on the Governing body. Otherwise it may fall to people who already offer significant amounts of their time to the school already"

## Opinions on model 2

If this model is adopted parents were asked how they would be likely to get involved with the PTA in the future.



9% of parents would not make a contribution to the voluntary fund and an additional 18% are not sure. However, the majority (73%) would contribute.

Support to run non profit making events would be given by just over half of parents who responded to the survey but with 45% saying they would not help or are not sure, it appears that there would be a lower inclination to get actively involved compared to Model 1.

The majority of parents would be happy for the fund to be used to run events in addition to purchasing items requested by the school.

### Themes and comments

- A financial commitment may not be possible for all
- How will we make sure that as many as possible do contribute so it is fair
- Asking directly for more money on top of trips etc seems a lot to expect and several noted they would not like this
- An appealing option for working parents
- Feels a shame to lose an active PTA
- This model may be an issue when needing to justify how the money is spent as people will have different expectations when they have contributed so directly
- A fixed payment changes the ethos – some views that it doesn't feel right

### Typical quotes

“At the present time, many parents are struggling to stay afloat financially and whilst £15 per term seems fairly modest, it may hit some families hard”

“This option may make some people feel uncomfortable if they can't afford it and being asked directly for money may make them feel embarrassed. It would also be a pity if some of the events didn't happen as they are popular and generally well attended. They are maybe also more likely to make more money if they are the only fund raising events. Asking parents to contribute may lose some of the goodwill towards other events.”

“£15 a term seems a large amount of money on top of school dinners, milk money and trips”

“Some services like text service/ sports kits naturally lend themselves to using PTA funding. Can't see point though in providing a contribution for it to be used to subsidise trips/ shows/ discos - just change those who use these features.”

“Personally I feel PTA funds should not be raised in this way. I feel psychologically there will be far greater expectation on what the funds are spent on by parents. fairness, personal opinions, views and hear say are all going to be potentially huge issues when it comes to spending...and who would decide??? and what criticism might they face??? at present if you don't contribute to PTA event financially/labour - morally you have little right to comment. with a fixed DD method every parent has a valid voice to be heard rightly or wrongly – “

### The level of funding

If this model is adopted parents were asked to comment on the level of funding required. Two thirds agreed that £15 per term is ‘about right’ with only one saying it is too little. 20% felt it is ‘a bit too much’ (2 commented that £10 felt the right level) and 10% ‘far too much’ suggesting that this would be an appropriate level if adopted.

“I wonder if there could be a slight differential between payments per number of children. I don't think there should be a payment per child, but there should be a difference in contribution between single and multiple children at school, otherwise parents with only one child at school are playing disproportionately more than parents with 3 children. For example the payment could be £15 per term for parents with one child at school and £25 (say) for parents with two or more children.”

“I think the level of funding should be borne out by how much needs to be spent - based on things that benefit the parents and the children. Things that benefit the teachers in my opinion should be provided by the LEA.”

### **General suggestions relating to the PTA**

- A lack of awareness of what the PTA does was commented on and a termly newsletter and freely available minutes were suggested
- Schedule meetings at times which enable working parents to also attend to provide wider opportunity for involvement
- Make sure that the request for help for each event is made as clear as possible and widely communicated. Class reps were noted as being helpful with this.
- Ask for donations for specific things
- Concentrate on a smaller range of good events