

# NEWSLETTER

Supporting Music at the RGS



## How have FOM funds been used?

Over the last two years alone Friends of Music have provided funding of £17,500. The money has been invested in the following:

Refurbishment of Room 12

Refurbishment of the Music Tech Room

Supporting music lessons

Purchase of:

20 clarinets,

upright piano,

double bass

bass clarinet

percussion

stage matting

portable PA system

and the repair and refurbishment of too many instruments to mention.



## *A Message from the Chairman*

Hello and welcome to the summer newsletter of the RGS Friends of Music. Firstly, I hope that you and your family and friends have remained safe and healthy during these challenging last few months.

I had expected to be writing our summer newsletter looking forward to celebrating with Year 13s at the Leavers Concert, notifying you of our traditional year end Jazz in the Quad, and wishing Mr Vennell a happy and well-earned retirement at his own "Leaver's Concert", which we will definitely still make happen (turn to Page 3 for a personal message from Mr Vennell). Alas, this has not been possible. The Annual Music Competition, which brought the very best out of all those involved, seems a long time ago. However, looking forward the School is planning a full musical calendar for next year and I for one can't wait. Friends of Music have been busy, and the funds we have raised, have been put to good use. We're particularly proud of the work that has been commenced to refurbish the Music Tech Room (see pictures overleaf).

## *FOM Subscriptions*

I fervently believe that being involved in music at the RGS develops skills that will stay with our sons throughout their whole lives. I am very proud to be involved with the Friends of Music and would ask you to please continue your membership or join up for the new school year.

## Dates for the Autumn Term

Currently planned for the new Autumn term;

### **27th September 2pm**

Concert and AGM

### **21st October**

The October Recital

### **19th November**

The November Concert

### **14th December**

Christmas Carol Service

## To look forward to in 2021!

The School Musical

The House Music Competition

Jazz in the Quad

Mr Venvell's Big Bash Leaving Dol

## Contact Us

To get in touch with FOM, please email the RGS at [admin@rgshw.com](mailto:admin@rgshw.com) and ask them to forward on to the FOM.

Chairman: Paul Hill



*Latest photos of refurbishment to the music rooms.*

The COVID pandemic has meant that our normal fundraising events have not been able to take place and therefore we need your support more than ever.

This year we are encouraging parents to subscribe £5 per month by direct debit. Payment details can be found [here](#). One off donations can be made [here](#). In both cases please select Friends of Music as the cause you are donating to.



## ***AGM- with a difference!!!!***

I know that you are thinking that AGMs are boring, but FOM AGMs are different. Whilst we do incorporate a few boring bits, the bulk of the event is entertainment and fine dining (nibbles and drinks). In a departure from previous years, Mr Mullaly has arranged for our AGM to be combined with a mini Jazz in the Quad. The proposed date is Sunday 27th September at 2pm. Trad Jazz, chamber music, BBQ and drinks and all in an environment where we can maintain safe distancing. Please do put the date in your diary. If the weather is too inclement, we will make alternative arrangements.

## ***FOM Committee***

Finally, we are looking for new members to join the committee. In particular we are looking for a new Secretary having just wished a fond farewell to our outgoing Secretary, Sonia Bowker.

We're also sadly saying goodbye to Andy Hudson another stalwart of the Committee. I hope we will still see both Sonia and Andy at future RGS events and I'd like to thank them both for their support.

If you are interested in joining the Committee, please do let me know. We really aren't that demanding; we meet one evening per term to plan forthcoming events and wax lyrical about how brilliant the previous terms events were.

### *Personal Message from Mr Venvell*



When I first became a Head of Department in 1987, at Kingston Grammar School, I was fortunate to have an excellent Head, Tony Creber, who, though not a musician, understood the importance of support for all extra-curricular activities, and suggested I start a parent support group, along the lines of Hampton School's Friends of Rowing, where he had seen it work well. And so the KGS Music Society was born, and as soon as I came here, I was obviously looking to do the same. So, in the summer term of my first year (May 1995), I invited an unsuspecting group of parents of musical boys to my house, and by the end of the evening, they were the first ever committee of the RGS Music Society! A few years later this was rebranded to be the Friends of RGS Music, as the sports groups were all jumping on the bandwagon and creating their own "Friends" groups. Since then, RGS Music has been wonderfully supported by an

active committee of interested parties, and I can only say that it has been an absolute pleasure to get to know the members of the various committees over the years, and it has been a major plank in the structure of the RGS Music Department. I am so grateful to all the committees over these past 25 years, not just for raising many thousands of pounds, which have enabled the Department to purchase all sorts of costly items, for the benefit of the boys, but also for their constant presence at all RGS Music events, making them sociable occasions, with pleasant and often imaginative refreshments, giving the whole music scene at RGS a sense of style. Some of the most notable efforts have been in the context of



musicals, when we have had “Mindy’s Cheesecake” to go with *Guys and Dolls*, or barrows of fruit to go with *My Fair Lady*, and all the committee members dressed to look like the filthy poor in *Les Mis*, and many summer barbecues have ended the musical year with a bang, with a variety of food and drink available to accompany the terrific music.

It would take far too long to list all that has been purchased over the years with FOM money, but highlights include the “new” Queen’s Hall Kawai piano in 2000, the marimba, various xylophones, the Hall staging, computer screens for the two main teaching rooms, numerous percussion and brass instruments over the years for class use, many saxophones and clarinets and flutes of all shapes and sizes, oboes, bassoons, double basses, and a host of music technology items.... In fact, a list full of all the things that a state-funded school in Buckinghamshire over the past 20 years simply has had no hope of buying in the normal way. At various times, the FOM have also enabled decoration and improvement to take place in the Music Department much earlier than having to wait its turn in a maintenance budget that is always firefighting, and that has most recently resulted in the 6<sup>th</sup> Form Music Room (known as Music Tech for historical reasons!) and the Percussion Room being properly redecorated and carpeted.

This has all happened due to the generosity of time and money of you, the parents, led by the enthusiastic Committee. It has always been heart-warming to see the community of RGS coming together for all sorts of reasons, but the FOM certainly more than plays its part in this and helps to make RGS the place it is. Thank you for all your support over the years, it has been a privilege and honour to lead RGS music for the last 26 years. It should not be forgotten that one of the reasons RGS is such a great community is that you, the parents, provide us with fantastic raw material to work with, in the shape of the RGS students, many of whom have turned into terrific musicians, but most importantly of



all, always turn into lovely young men who are a credit to you and the School. I am thrilled that I am leaving the Department in the capable and energetic hands of Francis Mullaly, as I have no doubt that RGS music will continue to flourish under his leadership, and it is, of course, doubly reassuring that the School is led at the top by a musician Headmaster who really wants RGS music to flourish, and, importantly, understands what it takes to make it do so!!

I do not plan to leave the area in retirement, so I look forward to watching the RGS Music Scene continue to flourish, but from a distance, enabling me to have just a few more hours in the week than I have had for 25 years to practise the piano, grow tomatoes, read books, and dandle my grandsons on my knee!!

My good wishes to all at the RGS, and especially the RGS Music Department and its wonderful “Friends”.