

Hi all,

This is what I would have hoped to present to an AGM as my end of year chair report for the first year of the Smart community. I hope there is an opportunity for this to be shared.

My vision for the Smart community was simple. One parent group. A structure that was inclusive. A group that was intrinsically linked to the aims of the BOT and principal. A structure that meant every parent could contribute in ways that suited them. A structure that supported individual teams to do what they needed to do. A structure where “organisers” were able to operate with a measure of freedom. A group that valued transparency. A group that worked according to the values that we try every day to teach our children and a group that valued community spirit. A group that communicated all of this with the whole school community. A group that was ...at the risk of sounding corny..” Smart..er” Lofty? Hell yes. Set your sights high I say.

I hope in my time in transitioning what we had under two separate structures of PTA/fundraising Society to what we have now was that I also included my own values. I understand that everybody has different motivations, ideas, and ways of doing things. I understand that the Smart Community is a volunteer group and members have other commitments and lives to lead. I never wanted anyone who contributed to feel criticised or unsupported.

I am not sure I have been able to live up to my lofty vision but I am immensely proud of what has been achieved since the AGM in May that established the Smart community. Such as the success of the baking/meals database. All my interactions with this fab group of people are that they are happy and willing to help parents in need and support events. Key to this is the wonderful organisers. If you haven't met or thanked Alison Lowe then please do. The communications, Daan's skills made a huge impact and has been so positive for how we are perceived. The disco!! This event I think was key as it really raised the school community up...a wonderful feel good collaborative effort. Without the organiser (Go Erin!) this would not have happened. The working bees...the work that goes in to our physical school environment cannot be underestimated. And on top of this we pulled off calendars and cards, a **massive** Fiesta, sunshades, playground painting, library shelves, a fabulous Smart celebration and the end of year graduation for our amazing yr 8 kids. Behind the scenes there was an enormous effort that went into transitioning the legal/practical aspects of creating a whole new group. Julie and Jane our treasurer are to be applauded. The other behind the scenes work is the use of technology. We have only just started on this road and we have a website to launch and a digital environment that means all processes and documents are readily available and “handover- able” to ensure the success of everyone in the future of this group. The skills of Ildica, Daan and Conor Boyd have been leading this change in the way we do things. The more people we have with these skills that are willing to help, the better!

None of the achievements of this group are down to me as chair. It's all down to you and all the people that have volunteered time and effort. If you felt tired by the end of the year I don't blame you!! The Smart community started with a massive hiss and roar because so many of you wanted to get stuck in and get stuff done.

This year will be different. In my personal experience, every year is. Work commitments, personal commitments, family situations..change is the only constant! If you are stepping down then I offer you my thanks for the work you have done. If you are wavering because things didn't go how you

imagined, then please think about the reasons why. Was it a process that irked you or was not clear? Did you say “yes” when you really needed to say “no” and you thought you couldn’t? Did you share the load enough? Did you think you didn’t have the support you needed or nobody was listening? Did you think what you did was not valued enough? All of those things are valid, but give a thought to how new the Smart community managing committee is, how you might change things for the better, do something a bit differently, or think about things in a different way.

You all have an opportunity to shape how this committee runs in the future. You actually do. My philosophy that I took from the PTA has been “Do what you can realistically do with the people that turn up.” So don’t apologise if you can’t do everything. Don’t take on what you aren’t happy to do, but please don’t underestimate your contribution or the impact your leadership has. If the organisers are there and are prepared to lead then the do-ers will come. And if someone doesn’t like something, don’t take it as a personal affront to your efforts, let them say what they don’t like and maybe we can learn from it. Above all I urge you to think the best of people. Every single person that involves themselves has engaged in the common goal of making St Martins a fabulous school to be involved in.

It’s worth it.

As it was for me and my family.

Cheers

Amanda Mc