



LAIRA GREENSHOOTS COMMUNITY FORUM - INFORMATION AND WELCOME BOOKLET

A FORUM SET UP BY THE PARENTS OF CHILDREN AT LAIRA
GREEN PRIMARY SCHOOL AND GREENSHOOTS PRE-
SCHOOL

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1. Introduction

Welcome to our school.

This booklet has been compiled by Laura Greenshoots Community Forum, which is a group of parents who are working on behalf of the school and pre-school to build on and strengthen relationships with the community and to raise funds. If you are a new family joining our school community we realise it can be strange and a little nerve-wracking and there always seems to be so many questions to ask. If you already have children at the school joining the Forum can seem like a daunting prospect. This booklet aims to provide you with information about Laura Greenshoots Community Forum, which is an important part of school life, and will hopefully answer all your questions and concerns.

If you have any questions that remain unanswered, please contact one of the committee members, your class teacher or the school office.

2. Why do we have a Parents Forum?

We are fortunate at our school to have a Parents Forum that is an integral part of the school community. Laura Greenshoots Community Forum has been running for a year but has already raised over £7000, some of this has been spent on equipment and resources to enhance our children's education experience and the school and pre-school's facilities. The Forum is also holding some monies raised for larger ongoing projects.

Our Forum is about much more than simply fundraising. The Forum exists to provide closer links between home and school and it is an excellent way to bring staff, parents and the community together socially in support of the school, working towards a common goal. It is fun too - just ask any of the Committee members or volunteers. Obviously, as in any organisation, we have experienced some challenges but with the continued support of parents and staff, our Forum has always succeeded in its efforts.

All parents and members of the school community are encouraged to get involved, even if they only have a small amount of time available, for example helping out at some of our events.

The Forum is extremely conscious of the ethos and diversity of our school and the local community, and we try very hard when organising and planning events to respect this. The main aim of our events is not just about fundraising but about ensuring that families attending have a great time and feel part of the Laura community.

3. Charitable status

Laura Greenshoots Community Forum is registered as a charity with HM Revenue and Customs (HMRC) Charities division, which provides formal recognition of charitable status.

Being registered with HMRC enables our Parents Forum to:

- apply for Gift Aid
- qualifying to receive charitable donations, grants from charitable trusts and other benefits such as company matched giving schemes
- exemption from the payment of tax on most income, provided it is applicable and used for charitable purposes only

Laira Greenshoots Community Forum is in the process of applying for charitable status now that our income has exceeded the required £5000.

4. Links with local businesses

We have, since the Forum was set up, developed good links with the local community and are always well supported by both residents and businesses, for which we are very grateful. Many of our local shops are very generous providing donations for raffle prizes, etc and some members of the community have taken part in our Christmas and Summer fairs. Laira Greenshoots Community Forum is still very new and there are ongoing plans to further develop community links.

5. Role of the Committee/Forum members and volunteers

Laira Greenshoots Community Forum has a committee, which consists of 5 members and 1 co-opted member. The Committee has a Chair, Vice Chair, Secretary and Treasurer. The Committee meets on a regular basis during term time but more frequently in the lead up to the Christmas and Summer Fairs. Meetings are normally held during school hours, at the school, and are organised on the basis of ensuring the majority of members can attend. Parents are welcome to bring their children to the meetings. In addition, the Committee uses emails/texts to keep up to date between meetings and to ensure members who are unable to attend a meeting are fully informed through minutes. Committee members take on as many or as little tasks as able and each member supports each other. Many parents, staff, families and community members support Laira Greenshoots Community Forum by volunteering their time at our events, which is invaluable.

The Committee holds an Annual General Meeting (AGM) in September and all parents are invited to attend to hear in more detail about the work of the Parents Forum including how funds have been raised and spent and about the events organised. In addition, we elect a new committee.

A list of current Laira Greenshoots Community Forum committee members is at the end of this booklet. Updated lists are sent out each year after the AGM and are on the Laira Green Primary School website. If you are interested in joining the committee or volunteering at an event then please do not hesitate to talk to a member of the Committee or let the school office know.

6. Support from NCPTA (National Confederation of Parent Teacher Associations)

Laira Greenshoots Community Forum is a member of the NCPTA, which is a national charity and membership organisation providing support and guidance for all home school associations in England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Our association is one of over 13,000 members in current membership of the NCPTA. We pay an annual membership fee to the NCPTA which gives us lots

of member benefits including comprehensive insurance cover for all Forum run events, support and advice on running the Forum plus fundraising ideas and good practice hints and tips. NCPTA also provides us with the opportunity to meet and communicate with other PTAs to discuss and share experiences. We receive termly publications, which are displayed on the NCPTA notice board and we receive guidance to ensure our events are legal and safe. In addition, we have a valuable resource at our fingertips – www.ncpta.org.uk.

7. How we raise money

The majority of the Laira Greenshoots Community Forum funds are raised through the events that we run. Some of our most popular events are:

Summer Fun Day

Termly Discos

Mufti Days

Christmas Fayre

Pancake Day/Foody Fridays

Bags2School – clothes donations

Donations from parents are extremely important. You can donate time, money, items for events and services and skills. Any support that parents can provide is invaluable to the ongoing success of the Forum and in turn the support we can provide the school and pre-school.

All our events are detailed on the school website.

8. How we spend the money we raise

Following a fundraising event the money is banked straight away. It is at the Laira Greenshoots Community Forum Committee meetings, that the decisions on how to spend the money are agreed.

Usually, Miss Bailey (Headteacher) will have a 'wish list' of items that the school and pre-school would like the Forum to consider funding.

Sometimes this will be as a result of the children asking for something, for example through the schools council the pupils had asked for basketball hoops and the Forum was able to fund this.

At other times it will be for resources to improve a particular area of the curriculum or school environment. The Forums funds are spent on the 'extras' that are not provided by the school's budget, thus making our children's learning experiences so much more fulfilling and exciting.

Forum funds are not generally spent on improving the fabric of the school building as this is the responsibility of the school Governing Body. Our Constitution commits the *Forum* to spending money on things that will benefit the children directly.

We always endeavour to spend our funds in ways that will benefit all our children across all areas of the school and curriculum. Many of the resources purchased have a direct link to the School

Improvement Plan. The money we raise is usually spent fairly quickly. That way, you can be sure that in supporting our school, your children will feel the benefit, along with everybody else.

Of course there will be times where we are fundraising for a large project. For example the Forum is currently working with school in looking at developing the KS1 (Infants) playground.

Details of the money raised and how this has been spent so far are on the Laira Green Primary School website and details are sent out in the Laira Greenshoots Community Forum newsletter.

9. How we get information to you

All Laira Greenshoots Community Forum letters, newsletters and flyers we send home are printed on *green* paper – so they are easily recognised. The letters include information on forthcoming events and dates plus requests for assistance, when we are planning large events. Following a Forum event, we always write to let you know how much was raised, and if we can, we tell you what the money will be spent on.

Forum information is also posted on the school website and newsletters are sent via Parentmail.

10. How you can get involved

There are lots of ways you can help and support your child through the Forum.

Offering to help before events or at other times during the year is so valuable. It doesn't matter if you can't help on a regular basis, or even if you cannot come into school. There are always jobs that can be done from home if you have half an hour to spare e.g. wrapping gifts, preparing raffle tickets etc. We really couldn't achieve what we do without the behind the scenes help that we receive.

If you would like to be more involved you can volunteer to be a Committee Member. Or you can simply support the AGM and give us your ideas for fundraising events. This is also the time to ask questions or voice your opinion.

You can help by letting us know if you have any contacts or skills we could use, everything is potentially valuable to us.

And finally, we are always extremely grateful to receive donations as mentioned before.

11. Laira Greenshoots Community Forum - Current Committee Members and contact information

Chair - Hayley Short

Vice Chair – Janie Paxton-Yeo

Secretary – Emma Lynch

Treasurer – Katusha Edwards

Ordinary Committee Members – Phillippa Charles

Co-opted Member – Michelle Smith

The above members can be contacted by leaving a message with the Laira Green Primary School Office or at Greenshoots Pre-school.

In addition, please take some time to visit the Laira Green Primary School website (www.lairagreen.com) and look under the heading for Laira Greenshoots Community Forum where you will find our news and copies of Committee meeting minutes. You can also "Have your say" on the Website so please send us your ideas and comments.

Thank you for taking the time to read our booklet. We hope you now know a little more about **your** *Laira Greenshoots Community Forum*. On behalf of all the pupils we would like to thank you for your very valuable support which enriches their learning experience and makes their time in school so enjoyable.

From the Laira Greenshoots Community Forum Committee

AUGUST 2011