

School gets its wheels after Advertiser appeal



Pupils at the Orchard School, Newark, say thank you for donations of £4,000. The figure was the final money needed for the school to buy a new minibus.

Pupils, staff and parents this week said a massive thank you to everyone who helped their special school raise the final £4,000 needed for a new minibus.



Celebrating with Orchard School pupils are, from left, Mrs Caroline Rossin, Mrs Rita Crowe, Mrs Sharon Manley, Rachael Chambers and Mrs Debbie Reesby.

The Advertiser backed the appeal by the Friends of Orchard School, Newark, and the target was smashed within two weeks.

Newark and Newark Castle Rotary clubs on Tuesday each gave £1,000.

The chairman of the Friends group, Mrs Sharon Manley, said they had been overwhelmed by the response with donations from the public ranging from two cheques for £1,000 to loose change.

“We wanted to reach the target by Christmas, so to achieve it in two weeks has been amazing,” she said.

The head, Mrs Margo Tyers, said it was fantastic news. She said the bus would be used extensively for trips for pupils, including to a hydrotherapy pool at Fountaindale Special School, Mansfield.

“I would like to say a huge thank-you to the Friends and the Advertiser for their help,” she said. “When this first started, the £17,000 target seemed such a long way away.

“It has been a lot of money to find, but we have had some fantastic donations — and thanks to the Rotary clubs we have got what we need.”

The chairman of Newark Rotary Club community services committee, Mr Keith Elliott, read the appeal for help in the Advertiser and thought the clubs should be involved.

“It is a Newark appeal and something that both clubs can be involved with,” he said. “It is such a good cause.”

There was unanimous agreement from both clubs to support the appeal.

The president of Newark Rotary, Mrs Rita Crowe, and the president-elect of Newark Castle Rotary, Mrs Caroline Rossin, visited the school to present the money.

'We never thought it would happen so quickly'

Mr Elliott said he was delighted so many people had taken the appeal to their hearts and donated.

“This has been Newark at its best,” he said.

The Friends group vice-chairman, Mrs Debbie Reesby, said fundraising started 18 months ago.

She said it had been difficult to find enough time for it and come up with new ideas, so they had struggled to raise the last £4,000.

“It is amazing that the money has been found,” she said.

“We never thought it would happen so quickly.”

Group member and teaching assistant Rachael Chambers said: “It’s like Christmas come early.”

She said a reliable new bus would make a big difference to pupils.

The tail-lift on the old vehicle does not always work because of wear and tear. On one occasion, pupils were stranded on board at Fountaindale because it had failed.

A new 17-seater bus with a tail-lift will be supplied by Variety, the Children’s Charity, which provides Sunshine Coaches to schools and organisation for children with special needs.

Now the Friends have raised £17,000, Variety will find sponsors to meet the balance of the cost.

Business manager Mrs Clare Stokes said donations were still coming into the school and any money not needed for the minibus would go to other projects for the children.