



# The Golden Ball



## How We Created The Golden Ball

The Golden Ball on 27th April has been made achievable for two reasons:-

- Blenheim Palace has kindly offered us their elegant Orangery for the evening at no cost and
- Exceptionally generous local businesses have offered significant sponsorship allowing ticket prices for the event to be kept to an absolute minimum.

Simply put, without both of these incredible opportunities, there would be no Golden Ball. We are immensely grateful to all of the above for making this exciting celebration possible.

We know that some people might be disappointed about the limited availability for tickets for the ball, and that potentially some parents who would like to come will be unable to. So we wanted to be really transparent about how we came to the venue, the format, the ticket price and the availability, as well as our decision to make it a ballot.

The initial brief for the Golden Ball was to 'organise a spectacular celebration event to remember.' An event that would touch many parts of the community and celebrate the school at the centre of it. We wanted to organise a Ball for staff, parents, governors and a small handful of 'VIPs' who work closely and tirelessly with our school (this includes Adrian Daffern and Alice Venning). T

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This audience - you will appreciate - is a very large. The school itself has about 320 children, with many parents and carers.

When we looked at a suitable venue (and format) to cater for this group, the event became untenable: the school hall couldn't cope with an appropriate volume of people for a Ball; a marquee in the fields wouldn't have been suitable because of noise and cost (you simply wouldn't believe how much a marquee is!), and we wanted to host the event in Woodstock itself.

We dared to wonder if Blenheim might be able to help. When we approached Blenheim Palace, they graciously offered their venue (the elegant Orangery) with no venue cost, on a Friday night in peak wedding season (which would normally be hired at getting on for £20k!). We were surprised and thrilled at the same time. What an opportunity! This immediately offered us a high quality, local venue for a very large number of people, although one that does have a limited number of seats.

The challenge we then had was that their menu costs started at £55 per person (and this didn't include arrival drinks or wine on the table). We wanted a band, some entertainment, some decorations....nothing excessive but enough to make it a special night. We also considered format at the event, but even a disco, or a buffet style meal, made little difference to the numbers allowed in this venue.

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So, how could we make this event work for the largest possible group of people? Looking at the initial brief (which included for the event to be a community wide opportunity), we decided to approach some local businesses to see if they would sponsor the event. This would allow us to not only offer tickets to a large group of parents, but also at the most accessible price possible.

Amazingly, we have raised significant sponsorship funds from a group of exceptionally generous local businesses. The headlines sponsors are the ever wonderful Flowers, ITB, Owen Mumford, Wise Investment and Woodstock Car Sales (as well as event sponsors including Darke and Taylor and Keble homes).

As a result we are delighted to be able to offer tickets at just £30 per person. This will include a prosecco drinks reception; a 3 course, seated dinner; wine on the table; an excellent and super talented live band and DJ and other high quality entertainment during the evening. We hope you also feel that's huge value! If you were to attend a similar event at Blenheim or a similar venue (although Blenheim is undeniably unique!), tickets would be marketed at a minimum of £100 - £150.

Our final challenge (and this is the one that has kept us awake at night!) has been to decide how we offer the available tickets to parents. Do we offer them on a first come, first serve basis via The Office? But then what about those parents who just can't get to the school at the times when tickets are on sale? All these conundrums have been considered with exceptional scrutiny. As you can imagine, we have considered all eventualities to create a memorable, fun, accessible community event.

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We consulted with staff, our schools senior management team and Lisa Rowe. As a result we decided to organise a ballot for tickets. This will start with each parent / carer being given the opportunity to submit the form below: an Expression of Interest form. This will help us gauge how many people would like to come to the Golden Ball. If the requests for tickets supersedes the number of tickets available we will draw names from a hat. From the above mentioned group that was consulted, this was deemed to be by far the most fair option. We do hope - considering all of the above - you will agree.

For parents who aren't lucky enough to be able to attend there will be some nice surprises nearer the time, as well as a free and un-ticketed event on Saturday 28th April. Full details about The Golden Weekend will follow. And you can contact us with any questions on [wpsgoldenball@gmail.com](mailto:wpsgoldenball@gmail.com)

The Golden Girls

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