



**Friends of Ashley (FOA) AGM**  
**25th September 2024 – Meeting Minutes**

**Attendees:**

Mrs Ratcliff (JR), Helen Platt (HP), Cristy Amponsah (CA), Clare Birks (CB), Lizzie Grillo (LG), Sonia Kalsi (SK), Sarah Parker (SP), Nick Caplan (NC), Katy Furber (KF), Edwin Lamptey, Jorge arozho, Lucy Pilati, Rob Ampsonsah, Laura Allen, Andrew Strain, Sam Pope, Danielle Oliver, John Oliver, Emma Waggot, Rachel Lockhart, Suzie Ashworth, Kate Mills, Nerea Aldunate, Elise Eltis, Olena Oykalo

**Apologies:**

Louise Wilson

1. Welcome
2. Why do we need the FOA?

**AGENDA**

3. Events and Other Fundraising Activities - Previous School Year (23/24)
4. Summary of 2023/24 main FOA funds spent
5. Finance Update
6. NEW Spend Request
7. New Committee for 2023/2024 - Introductions and voting
8. Upcoming Events and Activities – 2024/ 2025
9. AOB
10. Thank you!

## **MEETING NOTES**

### **1. Welcome**

(HP) Welcome to all - a thank you to those parents / carers / staff attending for their time.

Thank you also goes to Mrs Ratcliff for attending and her support of the FOA and our events over the last year.

We will look at the last full year since this is the Annual General Meeting and the FOA year runs to 31 August.

### **2. Why do we need the FOA? (HP)**

(HP) The FOA helps provide a bridge between the school and the parent community by raising money to help provide the best possible future for our children and our school.

There's also a social aspect to the FOA: parents are able to get together, meet parents of children in different year groups and work alongside each other while raising money for the school and supporting its aims.

#### **Who runs the FOA?**

Everybody! The FOA is not just run by a small committee, it relies on an amazing team of volunteers from across the school community! A big thank you to all the helpers.

**There is always a warm welcome for anyone who wants to run or support FOA activities.**

**If you are interested in learning more, please contact via: [thefriendsofashley@gmail.com](mailto:thefriendsofashley@gmail.com)**

### **3. Events and Activities – Previous School Year (HP)**

#### **Welcome Tea (7<sup>th</sup> October 2023)**

Primarily for Reception families, but also for any new families. Hosted by Y1, at school. Pre Loved stall will also be open

#### **Ashley Fireworks (5<sup>th</sup> November 2023)**

**Lead: Helen Platt**

A great event with 2 shows, vendors, and some fun fair rides! Thank you to everyone who supported and volunteered at this event and made it such a success. A big thank you to the quartermaster for helping set up, and the security team.

#### **Christmas Bazaar (3<sup>rd</sup> December 2022)**

**Leads: Sonia Kalsi, Louise Wilson and Katy Furber**

An Ashley Christmas Carol was the theme of this Christmas Bazaar that saw various stalls, fun zone games and vendors create a magical afternoon for the school community.

### **Santa's Grotto (17<sup>th</sup> December 2023)**

FOA funded this lovely event. Led by Helen Platt, with a committee of volunteers to turn the Harmony Centre into Santa's Grotto. Big thanks to all who helped set up and clear down and all our volunteer elf helpers. Each class had time with Santa and received a gift.

### **May Ball (18<sup>th</sup> May 2024)**

#### **Leads: Helen Platt and Sarah Parker**

Theme was Diamonds Are Forever and held at Sandown. Exciting and fun community event. Feed

### **Summer Fete (8<sup>th</sup> June 2023)**

#### **Leads: Steve and Demet Tanghe**

This year saw the return of the circus – three fully booked sessions – as well as a small fun zone, BBQ and bar plus some external vendors and sports zone. A wonderful fun time for the school community. Thank you to the amazing leads and all those who volunteered and supported the Summer Fete.

### **Big Picnic (13<sup>th</sup> July 2023)**

#### **Leads: Helen Platt and Cristy Amponsah**

A festival-feel community event designed to bring Ashley families together on the school field and celebrate the end of another school year.

### **Other Fundraising Activities**

**Happy Bags** continued throughout the year. This is where we bring bags of useable clothes, shoes and accessories and the school gets money based on the weight of the items donated. There will be regular donation dates scheduled again throughout the coming year.

Held every first Friday of the month, the well-run **Pre-Loved Shed** and **Eco Stall** provided another income stream, as well as helping to recycle our school uniform. A big thank you to **Julia Jones** and **Jané Piper**. The children's artwork made into Christmas Cards managed via the capable **Elisabeth O'Connor** in the run up to the festive season also brought in funds to the FOA. Thank you!

## **What the community raised through these events - £25,320**

### **4. Summary of 2023/24 main FOA funds spent (HP)**

Throughout the year the FOA funded many items that added value to the children's school experience, some of the main items that we funded in 2023/24 were:

**Reading Dens   Hive Kitchen   Bird Hide**

## 5. Finance Update (LG/CB)

Just over £25,000 has been raised in the year, which has an enormously positive impact on the school's ability to enrich education and experience for pupils. Huge thanks to all who have supported us through running or attending events, donating prizes and time.

Financial year 1/9/2023 – 31/8/2024

### FOA Finance Update



<b>Opening Balance</b> 1/9/2023		<b>56,868.96</b>
<b>Inflows</b>		
Events		25,320
Commissions, Interest & Donations		980
Eco & Preloved		1,487
<b>Outflows</b>		
Spend Requests		-16,009
General Expenses		-2,394
<b>Current Closing Balance</b> 31/8/2024		<b>65,029</b>
<b>Approved Spend Requests</b>		
Reading Dens		-3,300
Reading Books		-3,495
iPads		-7,900
Outdoor Play Equipment		-3,000
Cirriculum books		-3,860
TOTAL		-24,132
<b>Funds for the year starting</b> 1/9/2024		<b>43,474</b>

CB reminded everyone that full accounts are available for perusal by anyone interested in reviewing.

Finance summary – events tend to raise around 20,000 per year and raised £25k over the past year. Spend requests tend to vary year on year based on the school needs. New acquisition is the new card payment machines – this makes it much easier to track sales, and reduces the amount of cash at events. It would be nicer to move across to less money at events which lowers our risk of theft or fraud. The interest of the saving accounts offset the cost of the machines while we have had a healthy bank balance. Question on how we pay for the card machines, the machines are pay as you go (pay per transaction rather than a monthly membership/cost + slightly lower transaction fee's). General feedback is that it makes Preloved and other sales much more straightforward.

An independent auditor is assessing our accounts/Call out for support on this point in the future.

## 6. NEW Spend Request (HP/JR)

### Playground Resurfacing – cost £35,500 (JR)

Thank you to those who turned up this evening and a massive thank you for the fundraising, when budgets are getting tighter the school has to prioritise any funds on staffing. Therefore, all the extra funds raised through the events and activities are very much appreciated by the staff and the children. What makes Ashley special is how everyone pulls together to deliver these experiences and creates a wonderful sense of community.

There has been a long-term plan to improve the overall outdoor spaces around the school grounds – space nearer the classroom, as well as the fields. They are so important to have good areas to play alongside learning.

At present Ashley has a very small playground for 630 children. The field is enormous but when the weather is wet the children are contained to a much smaller area. Therefore, the spend request is to pay for an extension of the current playground area (with a soft rubber surface) from the current end of playground up to where the hive building is located. This will give 300 sqm extra playground space.

This will also create a link between the school and the 1 mile a day walk path / hive area – and later the plan is to add some outdoor equipment such as a trim trail which will be fundraised by the school children.

There may be future calls on FOA fundraising. The school is in a period of consultation with the children on what play equipment they would like to see in that area.

### Questions & Answers with AGM attendees:

*Q: How does the school get money for maintenance or funding?*

A: (JR) The money the school gets goes to infrastructure for roofs and guttering. The school has gone out to charities and are always looking for collaborations or opportunities to provide experiences for the children at no cost – for instance the school gained a free wildlife garden via the RHS relationship.

*Q: Concern about timing and impact on children whilst work is being completed.*

A: (JR/HP) If the school get the go-ahead the new surface will be laid in the next half term – so when the children come back in November there will be this new space. Possibility of any overrun impacting on Fireworks, that it will squeeze the access to the way down to the field, but the plan for it to be done in time.

*Q: What are we giving up if we go ahead with the playground funding?*

A: (HP) If we approve - we will have £15-20K left in the bank account. This does mean that we may need to pause some smaller things like iPad replacements. We make 20-25k per year in fundraising and it is good to see that money being used. Concern about having funds available for deposits for future events were addressed – HP confirmed that it would not. In addition, in the planning for this year's Fireworks we have agreed with the main supplier to hold costs as of previous years and use a different ticketing system which has saved money. HP and CA have been renegotiating sponsorship as well to bring more financial support in for our events.

(JR) Play outside is of as much importance as iPads in the children's school day..

**Q: Question on maintenance and life of the playground beyond the 10-year guarantee?**

A: (JR) The surface will last at least 10 years, but the supplier has stated that they have never had to go back to a school to maintain – and other schools consulted have only laid their surfaces in recent years. It is maintained through sweeping, it should last.

**Q: What is the consequence of waiting?**

A: (JR) It is work that needs to be done, and the cost will just move to another year – it will cost more money in the future to do this work, as labour and materials are increasing.

## **7. New Committee for 2024/2025 - Introductions and voting**

Sonia Kalsi is stepping down from her Comms role, a very big thank you for the last 5 years of providing brilliant messaging to our community as well as helping to run events.

Committee members proposed and seconded as follows:

- Helen Platt re-elected as Co-Chair – proposed by CB, seconded by KF
- Cristy Amponsah elected as Co-Chair- proposed by CB, seconded by NC
- Katy Furber re-elected as Co-Secretary – proposed by HP, seconded by SK
- Louise Wilson elected as Co-Secretary – proposed by HP, seconded by KF
- Claire Birks re-elected as Co-Treasurer – proposed by CA, seconded by SP
- Lizzie Grillo re-elected as Co-Treasurer – proposed by CB, seconded by NC
- Sarah Parker re-elected as Co-Comms – proposed by HP, seconded by SK
- Nick Caplan elected as Co-Comms – proposed by HP, seconded by RA

Non-elected positions:

- Quartermaster not an official committee role but vital and performed by a group of early years parents.
- Preloved lead – Julia Jones (**although is stepping down so a new person is required to lead**)
- Eco Stall lead – Jané Piper

## 8. Events and Activities – Upcoming (HP)

If you haven't already, please add the below dates to your diaries!



## Events 2024/25

**12th  
Oct**

**New Families Welcome Tea**

Leads: Year 1 supported by FOA

**17th  
May**

**May Ball**

Lead: Sarah Parker/Helen Platt

**3rd  
Nov**

**Fireworks**

Lead: Helen Platt

**7th  
Jun**

**Summer Fete**

Lead: TBC

**30th  
Nov**

**Christmas Bazaar**

Leads: Cristy Amponsah/Sarah Cracknell

**17th  
Dec**

**Santa Visit**

Lead: TBC

**12th  
Jul**

**Big Picnic**

Lead: TBC

### Christmas Cards

(HP) Elizabeth O'Connor has kindly volunteered to organise this again for 2023. Many thanks to Elizabeth.

### Preloved and Eco Stall

#### Preloved

(HP) Julia Jones will be stepping down end of school year 2025, if you are interested in leading or being part of this team please contact the FOA - [thefriendsofashley@gmail.com](mailto:thefriendsofashley@gmail.com)

Held the first Friday of each month at school pick up, donations of clean good condition school uniform can be left in the green marked bin near the steps to the school office.

#### Eco Stall

(HP) Jané Piper continues to lead. The stall is also on the school playground on the first Friday of each month and offers soaps, eco products and more!

#### Happy Bags

(HP) This is a great vehicle for recycling clothes and shoes, and earning money for the school. Next collection date is 28th January 2025.

## **9. AOB**

*Q: Are committee meetings open to all?*

A: (HP) confirmed that some committee meetings are closed but there are several open meetings in the year, in the second half of each term, open to all. Some discussion of having the next Open House sooner or an additional meeting between AGM and late March.

(HP) Thanks to outgoing Co-Comms Sonia Kalsi and presented a gift of a yoga mat. (Note for record: gifts funded by committee members not from FOA funds.)

## **10. Close**

(JR) Thank you to the FOA, one of the things that prospective and new parents are interested in is a sense of community, and that is what the FOA provides for the school.

**FOA contact:** thefriendsfashley@gmail.com

**COMMITTEE:** Helen Platt (Co-Chair), Cristy Amponsah (Co-Chair)

Clare Birks (Co-Treasurer), Lizzie Grillo (Co-Treasurer), Nick Caplan(Co-Comms), Sarah Parker (Co-Comms), Katy Furber (Co-Secretary), Louise Wilson (Co-Secretary)

**PRELOVED Lead:** Julia Jones

**ECO STALL Lead:** Jané Piper