



Friends of Ashley (FOA) OPen House

5th March 2025 – Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Helen Platt (HP), Cristy Amponsah (CA), Clare Birks (CB), Lizzie Grillo (LG), Sarah Parker (SP), Nick Caplan (NC), Katy Furber (KF), Andrew Strain, Emma Waggot

Apologies:

Mrs Ratcliff, Louise Wilson

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

AGENDA

3. Events & Activities - Previous and Upcoming
4. Processes and safeguarding at FOA Events
5. Spend Requests Update
6. AOB
7. Thank you!

MEETING NOTES

1. Welcome

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

Mrs Ratcliff sends her apologies that she was unable to attend at short notice, but she wants to pass on her thanks to the FOA and parent volunteers for their support of our events since the meeting.

We will look at events since the start of September, and also what we have to look forward to in the calendar.

2. Why do we need the FOA?

(CA) 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

3. Events

a. Previous – September 2024 - February 2025 (CA)

Ashley Fireworks (3rd November 2024)

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.

Feedback *You said: food was overpriced / we are looking at also running a parent-staffed BBQ*

You said: more management of queues / we are looking at change the age-range for the rides so that there are more for older children to do

Christmas Bazaar (30th November 2024)

Leads: Cristy Amponsah and Sarah Cracknell

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

Feedback: Steam train was a very popular addition to this year's bazaar! *You said: Teddy Tombola ran out quite early (100 teddies) / Will look to increase the number of teddies available at future events. You Said: raffle ticket system was too complicated on teddy tombola / Will review and simplify but still ensure that there are a range of suitable teddies to tempt the kids to play. You said: there needed to be clearer guidance and signage on the bottle tombola / we will ensure that the No Under 18s signage is more prominently displayed at future events.*

Santa's Grotto (17th December 2024)

Leads: Emma Waggot and Sonia Kalsi

FOA funded this lovely event. Led by Emma and Sonia, 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.

Feedback: *A very good Santa, great with children of all ages. FOA to look at re-booking for this year once the date from school is known. Process - expenses to be passed back via Leads to Treasurers, so that Santa Gifts and Christmas Bazaar decorations / items come in separately.*

Year 3 / 4 Disco (7th Feb 2025)

Leads: Elise and Aimee

A FOA sponsored event, was a parent run school disco for the Year 3 and 4 classes. Thank you to Elise and Aimee for organising such a fun session. Discussion about future events for other year groups should there be interest and of course leads for these sessions. **Feedback:** *Consider whether to ask for voluntary contributions, there was feedback from some parents that they would be happy to pay towards the event.*

b. Upcoming – January - July 2025 (CA)

Quiz Night (28th March 2025)

Lead: Cristy Amponsah

To be held at St Mary's Church Hall, teams of 6 will use their wits to answer the Quiz Masters' general knowledge questions. There will be the opportunity to pre-order pizza. Adult only evening.

Sign up here: <https://buytickets.at/thefriendsofashley/1609312>

Ashley Sundowner (17th May 2025)

Leads: Helen Platt and Sarah Parker

Celebrate at the Cobham Hilton with buffet, bbq and music. Auctions and the chance to socialise with other parents, and dance! Tickets available: <https://www.tickettailor.com/events/thefriendsofashley/1544617>

Summer Fete (7th June 2025)

Leads: Suzie Ashworth and Lucy S

A wonderful fun time for the school community. Thank you to the amazing leads for stepping up and we look forward to some summer fete fun!

Big Picnic (19th July 2025)

Leads: Tracey Stone

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 (28th April 2025)

This is where we parents donate bags of usable clothes, shoes and accessories and the school gets money based on the weight of the items. Regular donation dates are 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 MASSIVE thank you to **Julia Jones** and **Jané Piper** for all their support. Without the time and dedication of these individuals we would not have these two popular monthly stalls.

Elisabeth O'Connor and Joanne Hay have kindly agreed to take over the running PreLoved.

4. Processes and safeguarding at FOA Events*

Throughout the year the FOA run many events and in light of recent feedback we would like to share a summary of some of the back-office work that the committee undertake:

Risk Assessment and Safe-Guarding

- In-depth risk assessments are created for every event
- Budgets are agreed with the Committee to ensure proper use of funds
- First Aid available on site via St John's Ambulance
- Event leads, bar and BBQ leads, and security leads do not drink alcohol before or during the event
- Any Event leads names will be posted on the notice board outside the school
- To clarify - a committee member in hi-vis does not necessarily mean they are an event lead. However whilst wearing hi-vis it means they are working in some capacity and will follow the above rules
- A gentle reminder that children are always the parents responsibility at the event

Tokens and Cash at Events

- Cash floats are provided to areas that need it, and cash is collected throughout the event by designated team members. All cash movement is recorded on a finance spreadsheet supervised by two committee members and stored in a secured area
- Cash is banked within a few days of an event
- Tokens are sold before events and at the events themselves, and are non-refundable
- Tokens are counted prior to Token Sales, and logged by Treasurers
- Tokens are collected throughout the day by designated team members, and accounted for on the finance spreadsheet
- Tokens purchased at one event can be used for other events, as the token values don't change (green = £1, yellow = 50p).

Feedback: raised during the meeting

Refund policy on tokens in not clear and difficult for parent volunteers to handle - more communication and guidance prior to and during events from FOA team

Free Ticket Entry for some?- there are no free entry to events for those who are volunteer for a class stall or are involved in set up before the event. Tickets are allocated to manage overall event capacity. Discussion on having a dedicated Gate Lead for events.

Token Sales not to be taken on Bottle Tombola - more clear briefing and signage on this stall to ensure that no sales to under 18s or Tokens are taken

***the notes taken at this meeting, and some feedback received since has been very much appreciated, and the committee are now finalising these procedural documents and will share with the school community when approved**

If you have any questions on the above, or anything that the FOA team can help answer in relation to FOA events please email via: thefriendsofashley@gmail.com

5. Spend Request (CA/CB/LG)

Current agreed spends still to be actioned

- I pads, in progress (£7,900)
- Play equipment for playground (£450)

Mrs Ratcliff flagged some additional items that the school will look to ask FOA for funds:

- replacement wooden semi-circular planter outside KS1 area used for gardening classes, looking for half of the cost to be covered
- beekeeper training of parent volunteers (school to cover teachers' training costs)
- trim trail - school currently getting three different companies to quote

Feedback: raised during the meeting

Raising the profile of FOA donations - it was suggested that items donated could be presented at school assemblies or create photo opportunities so parents could see how funds that have been raised are spent. Suggestion of a fundraising barometer in the school playground.

6. AOB

Community Fundraising Stall proposed (TS)

On the back of last summer's class fundraisers, could there be a year-round table that could be booked for more ad-hoc fundraising - loom band or cake sales - by the children. This would have to be managed centrally - and who would do this was TBD.

Awareness on FOA for incoming parents (KF)

Suggestion of putting a flyer in the book bags that are provided to each new child in Reception that highlights the FOA calendar and opportunities to be involved

Events - general comment about volunteer slots on stalls (EW)

Would be helpful if most stalls at events had the same duration - 30 / 45 mins it varied and made it difficult to line up if volunteering across various class stalls. Committee to feed this into the general event guidance.

FOA Website (TS/AS)

Andrew Strain has kindly offered to look at the FOA current website - and to help create a more user-friendly replacement - he will liaise with Bryan Stone in the first instance.

7. Thank You!

(CA/HP) Thank you to attendees, and to Mrs Ratcliff for her continued support of the FOA.

FOA contact: thefriendsofashley@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 Leads: Elisabeth O'Connor and Joanne Hay