



Friends of Ashley (FOA) AGM
16th September 2026 – Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Mrs Ratcliff, Mrs Scott, Helen Platt, Cristy Amponsah, Clare Birks, Lizzie Grillo, Sarah Parker, Nick Caplan, Sarah Parish, Darren Malone, Katy Furber, Olivia Edwards, Laura Garrod, Aleksandra Sowe, Robert Amponsah

1. Welcome
2. What is the FOA?
3. FOA Committee Structure

AGENDA

4. Finance Update
5. Spend Requests
6. Events 2026/2027
7. New Committee for 2026/2027 - Introductions and voting
8. AOB
9. 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 and Mrs Scott for attending and the school's continued support of the FOA and our events over the last year.

2. What is the FOA?

(HP) The Friends of Ashley is the PTA for Ashley CofE Primary School. Every staff member, parent, and carer is a valued member of the FOA. 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 can get together to help support events, meet parents of children in different year groups and work alongside each other while raising money for the school.

At the Annual General Meeting each year, a committee of parent volunteers is elected to run the FOA for the coming academic year.

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. FOA Committee Structure

The FOA is a registered charity, and our governance follows the model constitution which can be found online at ParentKind – a resource for UK based PTA.

Our Constitution stipulates how your committee is elected:

Nominations for election to roles on the committee may be made by any member of the association and seconded by another. Such nominations must have the consent of the nominee. Nominations should be made in writing to the Chair at any time until the election process has been completed. If no nominations or an insufficient number are received before the AGM, any members present may nominate a person, with their consent, and that person may be appointed by a majority vote of those present.

The structure of the committee is as follows:

- 2 Co-Chairs
- 2 Co-Secretaries

- 2 Co-Treasurers
- 2 Co-Comms
- 1 Fundraising Initiatives Lead (this is a new role introduced for 2026/2027)

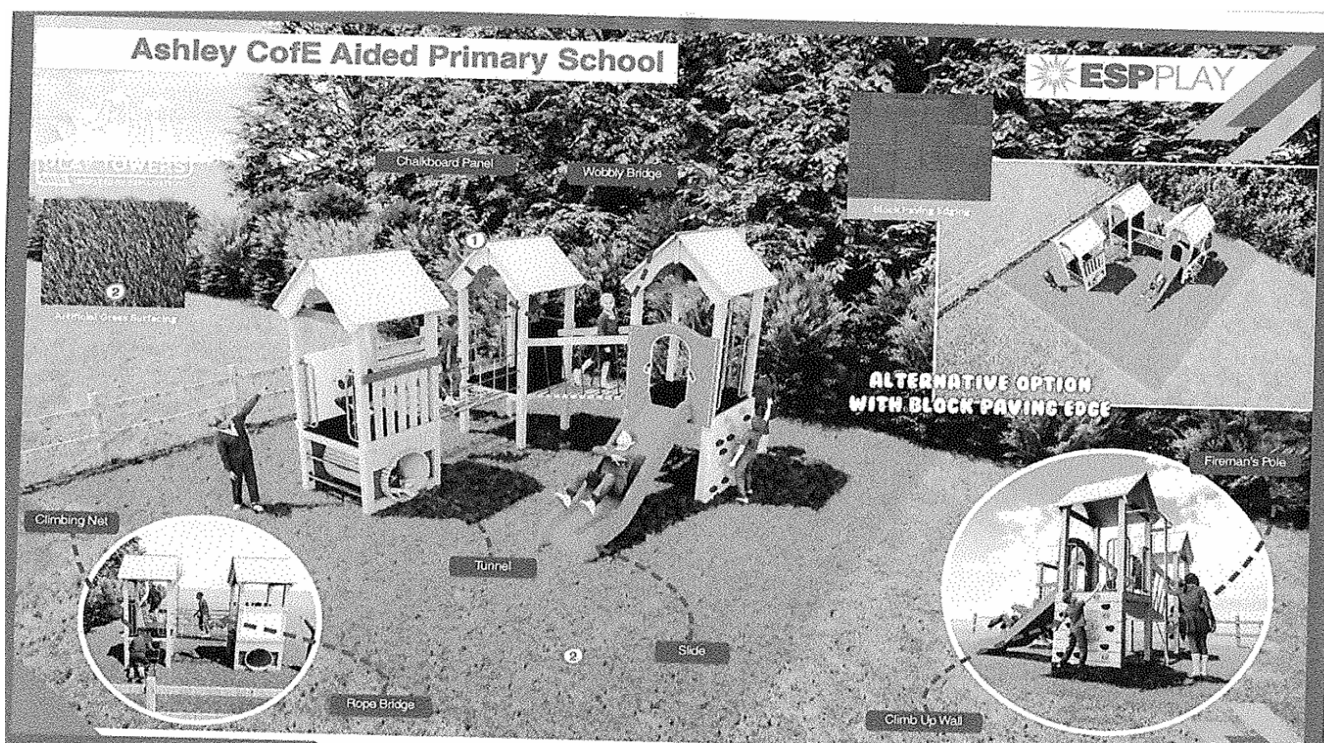
4. Finance Update

(HP/CA) Just under **£25,000** has been raised over the last academic 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.

- Fireworks
- Christmas Fayre
- Quiz Night
- Summer Fete
- Happy Bags
- Pre-Loved Sales
- Christmas Cards
- Class Fundraisers

All the above activities contributed to our ability to hit our target and fund the KS1 playground equipment that is scheduled to be installed over the coming October half term.

The new play structure will be positioned out on the field in the fenced area used by KS1 – with the sand pit area to be refreshed as well. The existing castle is being investigated on whether it can be kept, and if it can be adapted for use with the KS1 when supervised by an adult. This new structure is much more age appropriate for KS1 children.



Additionally, each year the FOA funds:

- Tech equipment for enhanced learning
- Beekeeping at Ashley
- Reception bookbags
- Y3 ties
- Y6 Leavers events
- Santa's Grotto
- Enrichment experiences across all year groups (such as workshops and fun activities)

Current FOA Account status (CB):

Opening Balance	42,162
Event Profit	23,169
Preloved	1,171
General Costs	-1,815
Interests & Commissions	261
Spend Requests	-42,366
Closing Balance	22,581

Trim Trail	29,000
Tech/iPads	7,407
Beekeeping	499
Yr3 ties	380
Reception bookbags	360
Yr6 Leaver events	1,711
Santa's Grotto	1,840
Yr3/4 disco	420

The KS1 play equipment contribution will bring these funds down to just a small operating fund – which means lots of fundraising to be done this year! The accounts for previous years have been submitted to the Charity Commission. Clare Birks reminded everyone that full accounts are available for perusal by anyone interested in reviewing.

5. Spend Requests

- **A visualiser for each classroom - estimated £8,000**
- **Additional playground equipment - estimated £1,000**
- **New iPad - cost to be determined by fundraising**
- **Beekeeping suits – estimated £5,000**

Mrs Ratcliff talked through the value of each of the resources applied for through the spend requests.

Visualisers

Each classroom would have access to a device that works like a camera/video recorder – that is portable and can attach to the class computer. It works as both a way to enlarge and share content from the screen but also can be used to share physical objects more easily with the wider class or record best practice in handwriting so that the children have a clear model to follow. Modern equivalent of an overhead projector (OHP).

Playground Equipment

This is a request for additional playground equipment – with 600 children in the school they do wear down the school playtime offerings quite quickly and these need to be refreshed on a regular basis.

iPads

Although the school is keen to reduce screen time as much as possible, the iPads are used to deliver the computer skill curriculum. At present there are 20 iPads across the entire school, but the aim would be for there to be 15 across each year group.

Bee Keeping Suits

The school would like to broaden out the bee keeping to the whole school. At present it is focused on KS1. With the purchase of additional suits in sizes suitable for both adults and older children – the KS2 pupils will also be able to include this activity alongside their curriculum.

Questions from the audience

~ **has the school looked at places that share refurbished or second-hand iPads?** Yes, the school already work with donations of laptops from parents via their businesses and would be interested in any refurbished donations. Any contact details for businesses that routinely refurbish and share devices to schools would be very welcome.

~ **do they need to be iPads?** Yes, as the existing technology is iPads the IT team who support the school recommend keeping to the same devices (for support and keeping the consistent experience for the pupils).

~ **does the school access existing funding via Church status?** Yes, the school applies for all and any funding available from local and national sources as soon as it appears. The installation of the polytunnels on the school grounds (to allow whole class year-round learning via growing/making food from the produce) is an example of receiving local council funding. Suggestion from the audience that these grants and donations be highlighted in the school newsletter to make parents aware of other ways they can support the school through their own connections. Many businesses have a charitable donation / social outreach programme.

~ **it is great to have these smaller items to work towards when fundraising across the school and have a tracker set up so we can celebrate them as they are ticked off (FOA suggestion).**

The above spend requests were approved by those present and will be the focus of this year's fundraising across the school community.

6. Events 2026 / 2027

Welcome Tea (3rd October 2026)

Leads: Year 1 Classes

A school community event to welcome Reception families to Ashley, as well as any parents and children who have joined the school in other year groups. Year 1 classes working with the FOA deliver an afternoon on cake and cuppas on the field (weather on our side hopefully), very much a gentle social event.

Ashley Fireworks (5th November 2026)

Lead: Helen Platt

A great event with 2 shows, vendors, and some fun fair rides! This will be our first year that we run this event mid-week with the additional support of a private security team which will help immensely with entrance and crowd management.

Please note this is the last year that this event will be led by Helen, and it is important to have a handover so that we don't lose this vital fundraising event. The Fireworks brings in around £9,500 and therefore is one of our biggest fundraising opportunities. Anyone interested in supporting this or future events please contact the FOA committee to learn more.

Christmas Fayre (5th December 2025)

Leads: TBC – could this be you?

The Christmas Fayre is a magical afternoon for the school community with various stalls, fun zone games and crafts. *If you think you or a small group could lead this event, please reach out to the FOA Committee.*

Summer Fete (TBC – may move to Spring Term)

Leads: TBC – could this be you?

The Summer Fete – after the event voting by the school community will big a big tent circus show, which could also include some stalls (depending on how the lead/s shape the event) . *If you think you or a small group could lead this event, please reach out to the FOA Committee.*

Big Picnic (TBC – July, usually last weekend before end of school year)

Leads: TBC – could this be you?

A whole school community event to celebrate the end of the academic year. Picnics, stalls, and music.

Other Fundraising Activities

Happy Bags continued throughout the year. This is where we bring bags of usable 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. This raised around £1,100 this 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 **Elisabeth O'Connor** and **Joanne Hay**.

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!

Event Guidelines – a reminder

- Event leads will always be easy to identify as must be in hi-vis for the entire event. No one else is in hi-vis to avoid confusion.
- Event leads must not consume alcohol prior to or during an event.
- The only people to whom cash may be passed is the FOA committee members or event leads.
- Bar leads are always approved by a licensed publican as per our license.
- Please remember that the safety of the children and the community is always our first priority.

Questions from the audience

~ are external vendors allowed at Christmas Fayre? Yes, external vendors are allowed at events, we charge a pitch fee – however it is down to the lead to decide if they will be part of any given event. The only challenge of external vendors is that they divert money away from our own fundraising pot.

~ will there be a quiz again? General feeling – and the Quiz Masters were present – that this event will run again. It was very popular; however, we are limited in terms of size in relation to a suitable space. Cost and availability are challenges – this is very much a community rather than a fundraiser. No plans to sell alcohol, as this has licensing implications, but BYO would continue.

~ **why does the church charge us full price for the use of their church hall given our relationship with St Mary's?** The church are unable to give us special treatment and therefore continue to charge us the same rate as everyone else.

~ **what has been done with the Mini Marathon funding?** Mrs Ratcliff confirmed that the money had already been allocated to new playground and sports equipment which is being appreciated by the children. The school is already looking to sign up to both ballots for next time.

~ **event feedback – would it be an idea to put up boards (as we did before for community voting) to capture a wider group for post event feedback?** This is with the FOA Committee to review and decide if they can take up as an action. It was acknowledged that often the online surveys only seem to garner the more negative rather than constructive feedback.

~ **do we need the wrist bands given out to children to wear at events? These seem to cause a lot of littering.** The littering problem was acknowledged. The positioning of bins at exits, or sourcing bands that do not have small bits coming off as you use them are being investigated. The bands are offered to parents and are optional, but a key safeguarding tool. Additionally, bands do need to be used at Fireworks to manage crowd numbers and safety.

7. New Committee for 2026/2027 - Introductions and voting

PROPOSED COMMITTEE CHANGES

Leaving

Sarah Parker is stepping down from her Co-Communication's role, and **Katy Furber** from Co-Secretary. A very big thank you to both for the last few years of providing brilliant support to the committee as well as helping to deliver events.

Changes

Cristy Amponsah is stepping down as Co-Chair and will be moving into the vacant **Communications** role. Cristy has already contributed so much to the FOA and the school events. She will continue to support working alongside Nick Caplan.

Sarah Parish has decided to step up to become **Co-Chair** (previously she held a co-Secretary role) and work alongside Helen Platt in this coming academic year.

Lizzie Grillo has stepped down as Co-Treasurer (thank you for all your work around events) to focus on a new role – **Fundraising Initiatives**. This role will help us make the most of grants and sponsorship, as well as supporting small fundraising opportunities.

Joining

Darren Malone has kindly volunteered for the vacant **Co-Treasurer** role. He will be working alongside Clare Birks to manage the financial side of running the FOA and events.

Committee members proposed and seconded as follows:

- Helen Platt re-elected as Co-Chair - proposed by Nick Caplan, seconded by Robert Amponsah

- Sarah Parish elected as Co-Chair- proposed by Sarah Parker, seconded by Laura Garrod
- Claire Birks re-elected as Co-Treasurer – proposed by Katy Furber, seconded by Olivia Edwards
- Darren Malone elected as Co-Treasurer – proposed by Lizzie Grillo, seconded by Aleksandra Sowe
- Lizzie Grillo elected as Fundraising Initiatives lead – proposed by Mrs Ratcliff, seconded by Laura Garrod
- Nick Caplan re-elected as Co-Comms – proposed by Cristy Amponsah, seconded by Olivia Edwards
- Cristy Amponsah elected as Co-Comms – proposed by Helen Platt, seconded by Aleksandra Sowe
- Co-Secretary x 2– Katy Furber and Sarah Parish stepping down - this position is now vacant

If anyone would be interested in understanding what is involved in the Co-Secretary role, please contact the FOA - thefriendsofashley@gmail.com

Non-elected positions:

- Quartermaster - vital and performed by a group of parents - responsible for maintenance of event equipment and a very much needed to support event set up. **New joiners are always welcome!**
- Compere – James Scott and James Ashworth, **currently recruiting for some more to support the enouncements/music at school events**
- Preloved lead – Joanne Hay and Elisabeth O'Connor, **please let them know if you can help at sales**
- Eco Stall lead – **this position is vacant; we do hold a small amount of stock we look to sell on at events**

8. AOB

CA: quick clarification on questions to be brought to FOA meetings and channels, versus directly to school email or SLT.

The FOA is very much involved with the school community to fundraise to deliver enrichment for the children through equipment, events and experiences. If anyone has questions around the operational school-related activities these should be directed to the usual email, or attend one of the drop ins scheduled by the Senior Leadership Team:

25th Sept – SEND

16th Oct – Behaviour Policy

27th Nov – Enrichment and School Clubs

~ what are Quartermasters? There are a lot of equipment own by the FOA – BBQs, Marquees, Fencing, sheds – that requires on-going maintenance. Additionally, each event requires a team on site to help with set up – the Quartermasters are the invaluable team of volunteers who help with these activities.

~ will there be class fundraising again? Yes, absolutely there will be a return of the class fundraisers, especially now the official FOA Just Giving account has been set up. This is likely to be linked to an event such as Summer Fete in terms of timing.

~ at the last Open House meeting there was discussion of a school-led FOA Focus group, what was the outcome? Mrs Scott and Jackie Kennedy led this and co-ordinated with the FOA Committee to review processes and structure. Some changes have come out of this process – such as the Fundraising Initiate Lead and the idea to gain community feedback and engagement via the Event Boards.

~ after a very successful run as Co-Chair, Helen Platt wanted to remind everyone she will be stepping down at the end 2026/27 academic year. It will be her daughter's last year, and they want to enjoy all that Ashley Events have to offer together.

9. 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. Alongside some amazing fundraising.

With the recent fundraising resulting in the construction of the new trim trail, enjoyed by the KS2 children very much – the school is very appreciative of all the work that goes on across the community to deliver these results. KS1 Children are already looking forward to having something similar. These enrichments make school life much more fun for everyone.

FOA contact: thefriendsofashley@gmail.com

NEW COMMITTEE STRUCTURE:

Helen Platt (Co-Chair), Sarah Parish (Co-Chair)
Clare Birks (Co-Treasurer), Darren Malone (Co-Treasurer)
Nick Caplan (Co-Comms), Cristy Amponsah (Co-Comms)
VACANT x 2 (Co-Secretary)



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Fill in our anonymous contact form:

