



Friends of Ashley (FOA) Open House Winter Term
13th November 2024 – Meeting Minutes

Attendees:

Mrs Ratcliff (JR), Helen Platt (HP), Cristy Amponsah (CA), Clare Birks (CB), Lizzie Grillo (LG), Sarah Parker (SP), Nick Caplan (NC), Julia Jones (JJ), Tracey Stone (TS)

Apologies:

Louise Wilson, Katy Furber

AGENDA

1. Welcome
2. FOA intro
3. Events & Activities - Previous and Upcoming
4. Spend Requests Update
5. AOB

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 recent fundraising activities, and future events.

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

3. Events & Activities - Previous and Upcoming

Welcome Tea (12th October 2024)

An annual event, primarily for Reception families, but also for any new families. Hosted by Year 1 parents in the Hive / School field and supported by the FOA. A thank you to all the parents who baked or brought cakes, the event was well attended. Once more some lovely hosting by our Year 1 parents. Thank you also to Cristy and Helen for support on that day from the FOA.

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. And to Helen for leading another wonderful event. We're estimating £7k income for fireworks.

Christmas Bazaar (30th November 2024)

Leads: Sarah Cracknell and Cristy Amponsah

We are all gearing up for another wonderful Ashley Christmas Bazaar. There will be various stalls and fun zone games run by our school classes to create a magical afternoon for the school community. This event relies on volunteers across the school community, your time and donations are very much appreciated!

Santa's Grotto (17th December 2024)

Leads: Sonia Kalsi and Emma Waggot

FOA funded this lovely event. Led by Sonia and Emma, a committee of volunteers turn the Harmony Centre into Santa's Grotto. This is a surprise for those children new to the school, and each class has time with Santa and receives a gift.

Parents May Party (10th May 2024) - Hilton Cobham, £60 per person

Leads: Helen Platt and Sarah Parker

Theme is Summer Sundowners Exciting and fun community event for parents/carers only!

We have agreed a price with a new venue at the Hilton Cobham. Tickets to be reduced to £60 for this year. Hilton has agreed we need to meet a minimum head count of 100 people.

A recent community survey indicated that we have 146 interested in attending and 42 maybes. If we get 100 people confirmed when tickets release, this would cover our costs. Perhaps Pippa (who did the auction last time) might do it again. Auction based on last year's results would be a money maker we intend to repeat. Feedback was that people want more live auction prizes.

The plan is to go ahead - and announce it to the school community after Christmas Bazaar. FOA will cover venue deposit for now and ask parents to make a ticket deposit in Q1 next year. We will do this via Paypal Fundraiser so that if a refund is needed, it's easy to manage - **however the deposit will be non-refundable.**

As a cheaper option for 2026, the committee is also looking at a Pub Take Over event. We just need to make sure it is inclusive.

Summer Fete (7th June 2025)

Leads: TBC

We do need a lead/s for this event to run - please contact the FOA Committee who will support and answer any questions.

Big Picnic (19th July 2025)

Lead: Tracey Stone

We will need key volunteers for this event, please do contact the FOA Committee or Tracey if you would be able to support Bar, BBQ etc.

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.

Next Happy Bags date: 28th January 2025

PreLoved and Eco Stall

Held every first Friday of the month, the well-run **Pre-Loved Shed** and **Eco Stall** provides another income stream, as well as helping to recycle our school uniform. A big thank you to **Julia Jones** and **Jané Piper**.

Unfortunately, 75% of stuff donated to FOA for pre-loved cannot be used. Please only clean and undamaged items please!

We will be looking to change pricing structure at pre-loved to simplify it. Minimum price of £1 and new logo is £3. We'll communicate this in the new year - first time changing it in 5 years.

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

Next PreLoved Stall date: 6th December 2024

CHILDRENS CHRISTMAS JUMPER DONATIONS WELCOME FOR THIS EVENT!

Christmas Cards

The children's artwork is now being made into Christmas Cards managed via the capable **Elisabeth O'Connor** in the run up to the festive season - this brings in funds to the FOA and School. Thank you!

4. Spend Requests Update (HP/JR)

(HP) Throughout the year the FOA funded many items that add value to the children's school experience, one of the main items that we funded recently was the School Playground Resurfacing. FOA are paying £35,000 for the playground.

(JR) Second part of the playground project - Mrs Ratcliff is meeting with various groups of children to work out what items to put in the playground. School has some funds to pay for some equipment. Then they would look at a fundraising event to raise some money for the rest.

Spend Request Review - HP and JR to meet to discuss

5. AOB

Token Management (HP)

We previously bought 5000 tokens (costing parents/carers £1 each), we only have 1400 left. We will buy some more tokens as 1400 is not enough for future events..

Should we do refunds or not?

Only in exceptional circumstances. We should add to event flyers that tokens are non-refundable.

FOA will update documents on the token policy so it is clear to all.

Questions & Answers with Open House attendees

Question: What happened to the bees?

They died. More parents and staff want to be involved. How much of the bee budget is left? £600. FOA would pay for the training of parent volunteers, School would pay for teacher volunteers. We need 3 x new keepers. Mrs Leslie Stockmon-Armand has asked for more volunteers.

Question: When can we have a school disco?

Mrs Ratcliff is not sure, because of safeguarding issues, no toilets next to the hall. Could we hire somewhere

else? St Mary's? School is looking at Valentine's Ball. Heathside could be an option as they are considering hiring their hall out for reduced rates.

Question: Pre-loved sales can be a bit late at the start of term, are online sales possible?

(HP/JJ) At present this system seems a handful to find stuff, package it up, send payment details. Something to be reviewed.

Question: Have we stopped being a feeder school for Weybridge Heathside?

Mrs Ratcliff will communicate that out to the school community, however we don't have any control over this as a school - it is up to Heathside. Heathside have joined a MAT (Multi Academy Trust). Feeder criteria very low down the list so unlikely to impact your child getting into school.

Question: What is the lifespan of our Library Pods?

(JR) Around 15 - 20 years. We need to ensure we maintain it. We've had it for 3.5 years

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- 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: 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 Lead: Julia Jones

ECO STALL Lead: Jané Piper