

Friends of the Abbey JMI School
Registered Charity 802214
Annual report 2020-21

Friends of the Abbey JMI School
c/o Abbey CE VA Primary School
Grove Road
St Albans AL1 1DQ

Contents

Trustees Report	2
Receipts and Payments Accounts	6
Independent Examiner's Report	8

Trustees Report

The Trustees have pleasure in presenting their report for the year ended 31 August 2021.

Charitable Purpose

The object of the Friends is to advance the education of pupils at the Abbey CE VA Primary School by:

- Developing effective relationships between the staff, parents and others associated with the school; and
- Engaging in activities or providing facilities or equipment which support the school and advance the education of the pupils.

Activities during the year

As last year, fundraising by the Friends was significantly curtailed due to the Covid-19 crisis:

- The school was again closed to pupils (with the exception of key workers) for part of the year; throughout the rest of the year, it was often illegal (or unwise) for parents to gather in large numbers for fundraising events.
- The priority of the school, and of the Friends, and of the parents who would normally be fundraising, was clearly the health, wellbeing and safety of the children.

The year was therefore a continued effort to raise funds through events held online, through individual challenges, and through kind donations. The bursary team, led by Louise Abel, also sought funding from grant giving bodies – successfully securing £12,300 towards the Cabin Project.

The core fundraising efforts – outside of the grants raised – brought in £14,646. This is a superb achievement and testament to the dedication of our parents, children and other supporters – our last pre-Covid year raised £22,221 and included two large in-person fairs raising over £11,437. These included

- Sponsored events - we were lucky that Matt Cooper ran a marathon to support the Friends, receiving match funding from his employer, and that quite a few of the children did their own “mini-fundraisers” – securing sponsorship and Gift Aid. The children were thanked personally by the Headteacher with Abbey Ace cards – challenges included both physical – bike riding, running and the like – and mental – for example a book reading challenge and a sponsored silence!
- Virtual events provided entertainment for the parents whilst raising funds – John Gardner and Chris Bennett lifting the mood from “oh no, not another Zoom quiz” to “one of the most fun lockdown evenings ever”, with Sasha Brooke-Williams and Ali Parker bringing us somewhat calmer Pilates and yoga nights.
- Parents set to arranging trails around St Albans, organising tea-towels and calendars with the children’s artwork, and an online auction and raffle.

Many of our other activities continued as they had done in the first Lockdown:

- Second hand-uniform sales, with uniform handed over in a Covid-secure way, continued to go from strength to strength. Increased marketing by Catherine Burgess raised awareness amongst parents.
- Fundraising through Easyfundraising and (new this year) Amazon smile continued. The volume of online shopping sales held up at Easyfundraising, although their payments came in later and we (naturally) did not benefit from the larger payments relating to holidays.

The Friends' committee also continued to play a role as an informal sounding board for the Head for discussing other school issues with the parent body, contributing towards our first object.

Donations to the school

The Friends donated £14,139.40 to the school. This was largely on IT projects – sixty Chromebooks were funded, as well as the 'back end' needed to run Google Classroom. This:

- Provided the school with a more modern platform for online learning, including the ability to run Google Meets securely and at scale during the Winter lockdown and more flexible ways to set and receive work – again, used during the Winter lockdown and subsequently for homework. This addressed, in part, parental concerns about the quality of lockdown learning.
- Provided the school with more up-to-date IT for use in school, which could be moved around between classrooms. This helped during the late Spring and Summer, when classes were bubbled – it being easier to sanitise IT and move it between classrooms than to move children around the school and try and sanitise the whole IT suite. Older, obsolete IT could then be redeployed by the school to families struggling to provide a laptop or tablet for online learning.
- Laid the groundwork for the learning hub project.

Financial position

At the end of the year, the Charity held £24,999. The cycle of giving has been such that we raise funds first, and then donate these to the school. Historically, our policy has been to keep around six months of fundraising expenses in reserve, to enable us to both continue with our planned cycle of events and take advantage of new as yet unplanned fundraising activities. Traditionally we raise a lot of funds in late June and July - and we only agree spending of these at the start of the next term. The effect of this was less this year but had been starting to earmark funds for the 'Abbey Cabin' project, described under 'Future Plans' below, although these have not yet been formally designated by the Trustees.

The financial statements are prepared on a cash basis (i.e., without accruing for spending commitments or income pledged but not yet received). The money (apart from a cash float of £140) is held in an account at HSBC. The general cycle of raising funds to be donated to the school within twelve months means that the charity does not currently have an investment portfolio and therefore has no investment policy.

Future plans

Over the last year, the Friends have been developing a longer-term vision for funding.

- The 'Abbey Cabin' project was an imaginative plan to provide additional space to the school, with a purpose-built wooden cabin in the grounds. One of the biggest challenges to enriching the school's provision is lack of space – space that could also be used by the wider community as provision in this part of central St Albans is sorely lacking.
- Since the year end, the new Headteacher and Governors have discussed with the Friends the best way to deliver this project in the light of changing market conditions. Prices of raw materials have shot up since Brexit, and additional fundraising would be needed – at the time of writing in June 2021, we'd raised (including grants) around 80% of the funding based on our first estimates – but only around 50% of the latest costs. These higher costs also included an increased estimate of the costs of ensuring that archaeological concerns around planning would be met – given that the cabin site would require digging trenches for

electricity and water as well as laying of a concrete base. Another local school's building project was delayed for several months after an unexpected Roman find!

- Moving the IT into the classrooms has left the IT suite – a fully sized classroom space – empty and ripe for reuse – without the need to provide water for drinks and toilets and a new electricity supply. The new Headteacher's vision for a learning hub in this space – including library provision, music provision, breakout area provision and more – would meet the educational needs of the school, whilst also allowing greater flexibility in community use – not least because the hall would have breakout space immediately next door rather than in a separate building. This is in effect a 'virtual' cabin project – allowing the school (with support from the Friends) to deliver the cabin's aims at a lower cost, with less financial and execution risk.
- Fundraising to date – and during 2022-2023 – will also allow:
 - transformation of the school entrance area – providing a warmer welcome for the community and parents; and
 - other key projects to both enhance the school day for the children (e.g., refreshing some of the outside classroom areas and forest school area).

These plans will also enhance the attractiveness of the school to prospective parents – recognising that maintaining pupil numbers is necessary to maintain the current staffing mix which delivers so many of the additional extras the school offers in the curriculum.

Governance

The Friends are an unincorporated association, registered as a charity (802214) with the Charity Commission for England and Wales. The Friends adopted the current constitution in 2018-19, following the model set out by Parentkind, the representative body through which we get our insurance as well as advice, resources, access to discounts and our voice at a national level to government. The advantage of adopting this model constitution is that it is pre-approved by the Charity Commission. The revised constitution also enables the Friends to register for Gift Aid.

The Trustees who served during the year were Astrid Rees (chair) and Richard Gillin (treasurer), each of whom served throughout the year, together with Emma Fenn (headteacher) who resigned at the June AGM (in anticipation of her leaving the school at the end of August) and Harriet McTurk (secretary) who formally became a trustee in Emma's place. Since the year end, Natalie McEvoy became a Trustee in October 2021 in order to transition into the treasurer role, and with Astrid and Harriet also standing down at the June 2022 AGM, the appointment of Sasha Brooke-Williams and Caroline Trotman as co-chairs supported by Louise Abel as secretary – these roles to take effect once the necessary Charity Commission declarations have been completed in July.

As ever, the Trustees were supported by a wider committee of parents – including class representatives, our secretary (Harriet McTurk), second-hand uniform co-ordinator (Catherine Burgess and Caroline Trotman), bursary team (Harriet McTurk and Louise Abel), auction and advertising co-ordinator (Jo West) and other keen volunteers. The Trustees are grateful to them, and to the large number of other parents who have helped put on our programme during the year to raise funds for the school. Special thanks go to Wayne and Karina Gardner who have also clocked up seven years of service – Karina has been a member of the committee since her daughter started in reception, organising several big parent events including a "Cheese and Fizz" event still talked about years later, and Wayne has provided his professional DJ skills for free at a lot of events whilst supporting the school with technical and video skills and designing many of the posters used to promote Friends' events.

Public benefit

In carrying out their activities, the Trustees have had regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission on public benefit.

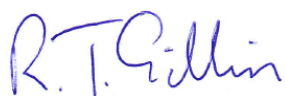
Safeguarding

The Trustees have adopted the School's safeguarding policy in full, save that (as a matter of law), concerns must be reported to the Trustees rather than to the School. In practice, as the headteacher is the Trustee nominated to deal with any concerns, this makes no substantive difference. The Trustees received no concerns in respect of safeguarding during the year.

Farewell

Speaking personally, this annual report is almost my last act as treasurer and trustee, as Ben's time at the school comes to an end. Even before the recent summer fair and next month's wild camping, during my time on the committee the Friends have raised over £134,700 towards the school – the Friends really do make a difference! Having worked with Sasha, Caroline, Natalie and Louise over the more recent years, I have every confidence that they will continue to lead the parents in supporting the school with a wide mix of events and activities, whilst ensuring the parents and children have fun. Their first summer fair figures aren't quite finalised, but it looks to have been a great success and it was so good to see families having fun – and hearing lots of positive buzz about the school!

Approved by the Trustees



Richard Gillin, Treasurer and Trustee
30 June 2021

	Receipts	Payments	Total
	£	£	£
Fairs			
Christmas	1,010.00	(346.45)	663.55
Summer	200.00	-	200.00
	1,210.00	(346.45)	863.55
Parent fundraising events			
Quiz	537.64	-	537.64
Pilates and Prosecco	237.46	-	237.46
Yoga night	225.80	-	225.80
	1,000.90	-	1,000.90
Smaller events			
Uniform sales	538.64	-	538.64
Hannah Sessions prints	63.20	-	63.20
Helping hand	280.00	-	280.00
Christmas and Easter Trails	150.71	-	150.71
Beak the rules day	423.71	-	423.71
Virtual balloon race	311.72	-	311.72
Tea towels	1,062.07	(587.40)	474.67
Calendar	1,181.93	(435.04)	746.89
Leaver's disco	-	(225.00)	(225.00)
	4,011.98	(1,247.44)	2,764.54
Charitable income			
Grant income	12,300.00	-	12,300.00
Sponsored skip/bounce	211.00	-	211.00
Treeasy	70.00	-	70.00
Easyfundraising and Amazon Smile	295.85	-	295.85
Christmas cards	368.00	-	368.00
Donate-a-book scheme	156.04	-	156.04
Marathon - sponsored	4,271.89	-	4,271.89
Minifundraisers	4,019.66	-	4,019.66
Bike theft donation	379.63	-	379.63
Miscellaneous giving	355.59	-	355.59
	22,427.66	-	22,427.66
Charitable giving			
Donations to school		(14,139.40)	(14,139.40)
		(14,139.40)	(14,139.40)
Governance expenses			
Meeting expenses		-	-
Lotteries licence		-	-
Parentkind (formerly PTA.co.uk) membership including insurance		(111.00)	(111.00)
		(111.00)	(111.00)
Total	28,650.54	(15,844.29)	12,806.25

Opening balances as at 1/9/20	£
Bank	12,052.37
Cash in hand	140.00
	<u>12,192.37</u>
Receipts	28,650.54
Payments	(15,844.29)
	<u>24,998.62</u>
Closing balance as at 31/8/21	<u>24,998.62</u>
Being	
Bank	24,858.62
Cash in hand	140.00
	<u>24,998.62</u>
	<u>24,998.62</u>
Surplus to date	26,945.65
Donations	(14,139.40)
	<u>12,806.25</u>
	<u>12,806.25</u>
 Balance sheet i.e. statement of assets and liabilities as at 31/8/21	
Bank	24,858.62
Cash in hand	140.00
	<u>24,998.62</u>
	<u>24,998.62</u>

Richard Gillin, Treasurer and Trustee
30 June 2021

Independent examiner's report to the trustees of the Friends of the Abbey JMI School – Registered charity 802214

I report to the trustees on my examination of the receipts and payments accounts of the Friends of the Abbey JMI School for the year ended 31 August 2021 which are set out on pages 6 and 7.

Responsibilities and basis of report

As the charity trustees of the Friends of the Abbey JMI School you are responsible for the preparation of the accounts in accordance with the requirements of the Charities Act 2011 ('the Act').

I report in respect of my examination of the Friends of the Abbey JMI School accounts carried out under section 145 of the 2011 Act and in carrying out my examination I have followed the applicable Directions given by the Charity Commission under section 145(5)(b) of the Act.

Independent examiner's statement

I have completed my examination. I confirm that no material matters have come to my attention in connection with the examination giving me cause to believe that in any material respect:

- accounting records were not kept in respect of the Friends of the Abbey JMI School as required by section 130 of the Act; or
- the accounts do not accord with those records.

I have no concerns and have come across no other matters in connection with the examination to which attention should be drawn in this report in order to enable a proper understanding of the accounts to be reached.



Rachael Lyon, FCA
48 Tennyson Drive, St Albans, AL2 3HY
30 June 2020