

## Ashford School Association Committee Meeting Minutes

Tuesday 11 May 2021 at 19:00, via Zoom

**Attendance:** Julie Piper (Chair, JP), Norma Smyth (Vice-President, NS), Nicky Brightling (ASA Treasurer, NB), Hannah Pinney (ASA Secretary, HP), John Abadom (JA), Helen Fairley (HF), Michael Hall (Headmaster, MH), Sarah Kershaw (SK), Gary McCartan (GM), Callum Thomas (CT), & Tom Vafidis (TV)

### 1. Welcome and Apologies

**JP** welcomed all to the meeting.

**GM** introduced himself to the Committee. **GM** was at Friars in the mid-1970s, and his father, Larry McCartan taught there until 2001.

Apologies received from Toby Harris (TH) & Alex Playford (AP).

### 2. Approval of Minutes of the last ASA Meeting on Wednesday 27 January

The minutes of Wednesday 27 January were approved as an accurate record.

**HP** proposed that moving forward the minutes are signed using a digital signature and held electronically on the School system rather than being printed. This will speed up the process and be more environmentally friendly. The Committee agreed. **JP** will send **HP** her digital signature.

### 3. Matter's Arising

There were no matter's arising.

### 4. ASA Treasurer's Report

**NB** reported that:

- Online banking has been set up for the Santander account which makes payments and checking balances a little easier.
- The balance on the Santander account as at 31 December 2020 was £9,175.71. We have received interest of approximately 7p per month and NB transferred £5,000 to the ASA Natwest account on 21 April. This leaves a balance of £4,176.08 in the Santander account as of today.
- The Natwest Account currently has a balance of £2,669.35 after receiving £5000 from the savings account; paying £82 to the Ashford School Foundation (donations received in 2020 from old monthly standing orders) on 21 April and also £2,523.73 paid to "Signs of the Times" as a 50% deposit for the Plaques.
- A further payment of £2,523.74 + carriage is due to be paid to "Signs of the Times" when the plaques have been done.

- The standing orders received since 1 January 2021 are as follows:
  - 1 February – Grilli P (£6)
  - 1 February – Julie Nicola Wills, Julie Haycraft (£12)
  - 1 February – Mrs F E Beets (£6)
  - 1 February – Seward & Seward, Hannah Seward (£6)
  - 22 February – Miss Minter (£6)
  - 8 March – Brian Hill, Gemma Hill (£6)
  - Last year the next standing order was not received until 20 July (Blower F £6)
- **If any of the Committee know those mentioned in the list above, please can they get in touch with them to let them know that their Standing Order no longer needs to be paid.**
- If the ASA want to commit to further projects they can fundraise for these if needed.

## 5. School Report from MH

**MH** thanked all for the ASA Committee's support, and reported on the following:

- The initial onset of Covid in March 2020 caused a lot of uncertainty in the education sphere and in the minds of parents. However, the School has continued to receive incredible parent support since Covid struck.
- **MH** is immensely proud of the team of 369 staff who were working across both Schools and the nurseries.
- The School has emerged as strongly as we could have hoped, and have tried to maintain a sense of focus and positivity, making the best of the challenging situation.
- Over ¼ of Prep School students were in School during lockdown as their parents were key workers, and all the nurseries were fully open.
- There was a serious outbreak of Covid across 2 of the nurseries before Easter, with 13 positive cases amongst staff and consequently both settings were closed.
- The academic staff are pleased that we have not lost momentum with regard to students' learning. If anything, the students are ahead in terms of content but have had to work on the depth of their knowledge.
- Co-curricular activities are now being resumed, including the reemergence of Sport's Fixtures. The boys have been playing cricket on the field at Great Chart, and so far we have been winning all our matches! We hope to have live concerts in due course, which we still intend to live stream.
- The big pressure is the teacher assessed grades, which puts teachers in an exceptional position. Parents have again been supportive and understanding of the situation.
- The other big challenge the School faces is our boarding numbers for next year. However, we are expecting a considerable bounce back, with parents deferring until September 2022.
- During this academic year alone, we have had a net increase of 54 students in year, which is a major increase. We are still receiving lots of local interest due to the positive reputational impact we have had due to our online learning provision.
- **MH** feels particularly worried for the current year 13 students who have had the best part of their Sixth Form experience largely taken away from them. **MH** feels there is an opportunity

here for the ASA to help build the connection with the year, embrace them, and bring them back into the hold.

On behalf of the Committee, **JP** thanked **MH** and all the staff of Ashford School for their hard work.

## 6. Alumni Office Report (HP)

### Archives

- As School is back in action the volunteer archivist has been coming in. Jenny Watson-Bore will be coming to work in the archives, hopefully within the next 2 weeks. The material is a fantastic resource, and this will enable the School to utilise the content.
- **HP** is going to contact Steve Salter, a local historian, to enquire as to whether he has any old School photos.
- **JP** requested that the portrait of Miss Thompson be looked for in the Archives and recovered.

### Plaques

- The plaques are on order and should be with us for the Summer Lunch. They will be incorporated into future tours. Thank you to everyone for your support with the numerous iterations. There are 3 garden plaques, and 10 building plaques.

### Whole School Photos

- At the Prep School, past whole School photos from both Friars and Ashford Prep School are now displayed on the walls.
- The Senior School would like to work on a similar project, displaying whole School photos from the 1910s onwards outside the Headmasters Office in Old Alfred. There would be 1 photo for the decades prior to 1960, and 2 for every decade from 1960 onwards – this would be around 12 photos that need framing.
- The initial quotes for this project have all come out in the same region of £900-£1000. This covers framing and mounting, as some will need remounting due to damp and stains.
- **HP** would like to propose that the ASA use some of their funds to support this project, as it would truly appeal to all generations of alumni – given that our funds come from historic standing orders this would be a fantastic project to support.
- **SK** added that it was fantastic place in the school to be displaying these photos as prospective parents and tours always get taken to this room. It is lovely have alumni looking at photos of their past years.
- **The Committee discussed this project and agreed to support and fund the whole School photos.**
- **JA** suggested a Friars alum, Simon Beaugié, who owns a Picture Framing Business. **HP** will contact him for a quote.

### Engagement & Communications

- We are continuing grow our social media presence and ASA membership.
  - Since January we have 50 more people signed up with up-to-date contact details.

- Two members of the reception team have been trained on the alumni database and are cleaning the data.
- Continued to do #throwbackthursdays on social media which are still very popular.
- Following from last Committee meeting I have done dedicated Friars posts for Friars Flashback Friday.
- **GM, TV, JA and CT will share with HP more materials for posts for Friars posts.**
- **HP** is meeting with Year 13 on Friday to introduce them to the ASA and get them to share their contact details with us. They will be receiving a copy of the ASA School Tie, Save the Dates and branded ASA Cookies.
- **HP** and **TV** have had a catch-up meeting looking at ideas for Friars alumni.
  - **TV** is in contact with one of the former Headmasters and speaking with him about
  - **HP** connected with a Friars alum who is opening a Sports Bar in Ashford, and he would be interested in hosting a reunion when he is up and running.
- After Prince Philip passed away we asked alumni to share their memories of DofE at Ashford. We received some lovely responses, and lots of photos from across the generations. Consequently, **HP** will be using this for the 'From the Archives' section in the School Tie.

### In-School Talks

- HP has been working with the teaching staff to organise more careers talks from our alumni, and so far alumni have spoken to the following departments: Music, Drama and Sport. It has been wonderful to have alumni sharing their expertise in this way and inspiring our current students
- Upcoming talks include:
  - Jo Tivers Head of Food at KFC speaking to Year 10 Food Studies students.
  - PhD Health Psychology student SJ Stewart speaking with our Year 13 Psychology students.
  - Fleur Willson Deputy Ambassador to the British Embassy in Tripoli Politics and Diplomacy hosting a talk on Careers in Diplomacy.
- **ASA Committee members to provide HP with potential speaker ideas.**
- **HP** will include these speakers in the next School Tie, and will be inviting them in the Summer Lunch.

### Tom Watts Award Update

- Unfortunately, Euan had to cancel his travel plans and is now undertaking an elective locally with a consultant in IVF therapy. He will be attending clinics and conducting lab work. He has still offered to talk to current students, and this has been passed on to our Head of Sixth Form, Claire.

### Events

- **AGM & Summer Lunch – Saturday 3 July**
  - AGM will also be held virtually so that more people, from around the world can join us.
  - More details will be released in due course.
  - All Committee members are to bring at least one guest.
  - Restrictions will be confirmed closer to the time.

- For the AGM Agenda, we will have the Constitution amended, and we will also have a few members of the Committee up for re-election, Carolyn, Norma and Nicky.
- SK urged people to make early bookings so we can make a call as to whether the event can run.
- **Leavers BBQ – Thursday 9 September from 17:00 onwards**
  - For most recent leavers and outgoing Year 13s, along with current staff
- HP will look to put the other annual ASA events into the diary during the summer when hopefully restrictions will have been lifted.

**HP would like to keep expanding the ASA Committee and asked that all Committee members propose a new member for the ASA Committee. All members to speak to an alum, and to ask them to join us at our next meeting.**

- This is a chance to broaden our links with the alumni community, and to leverage our unique network.
- We are particularly keen to recruit recent leavers, those from the 1990s, and alumni based overseas.
- These ASA meetings are a chance for alumni to hear what the School is doing, and to help us further develop the alumni community.

## **7. Development Report (SK)**

**SK** updated the Committee on the following matters:

- The Foundation has appointed a new Trustee, alumna Katie Floyd. Katie works in the Development Team at Benenden School and brings fundraising experience to the Trustees.
- The Foundation is at the beginning of a large number of activities.
- In the Spring term the ASF Trustees reviewed the bursary awards. They renewed all existing awards and made 3 bursary awards to new students. Unlike the smaller awards made in the past the Trustees decided to make much larger awards. Unfortunately, only one of the three awards has been taken up. Moving forward, the Foundation would like to make larger awards that will make a transformational impact.
- A virtual legacy club afternoon tea was held in March 2021. Legacy club members were sent hampers as a thank you in lieu of meeting in person, and SK, HP, & MH updated them on School life and the bursary fund. As a result of this meeting several of our members made single gifts which will go towards bursary fund.
- The ASF wants to encourage the culture of giving throughout the School community. People have found the pandemic incredibly hard, but several donors have noted they would like to give to a worthy cause.
- It is a challenging time to launch a capital fundraising campaign, and so the swimming pool campaign is on hold.
- There is a real need for the Foundation's bursary fund to be increased, and so **SK & HP** plan to launch a much bigger fundraising campaign for bursaries to help students into the school who otherwise wouldn't be able to afford the fees.

- **HP** has been cleaning the Alumni & Development database
- **HP & SK** are planning a telephone campaign over the summer. The callers will be recent leavers and Year 13s who are passionate about their time at Ashford., who will phone and speak to our alumni community. David Young held a successful campaign in 2017, but this years campaign will have a smaller, more targeted pool of alumni.
- **SK** hopes to update the Committee of the campaign's results at the next meeting.

#### 8. AOB

There was no other business.

The date of the next meeting will be decided via Doodle Poll.

Minutes approved at 11 October 2021 meeting

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'Julie Piter', is written over the right side of the signature box.