

Ashford School Association Committee Meeting Minutes

Monday 11 October 2021 at 19:00, via Zoom

Attendance: Julie Piper (ASA Chair, JP), Norma Smyth (Vice-President, NS), Hannah Pinney (ASA Secretary, HP), Mike Hall (Headmaster, MH), Sarah Kershaw (SK), Alex Playford (AP), John Abadom (JA), Rose Berry (RB), Jenny Watson-Bore (ASA Archivist, JWB), Angela Burrill (ASA Archivist, AB) Tom Vafidis (TV), Charlotte Martin (ASA Prefect, CM)

1. Welcome & Apologies

JP welcomed all to the meeting and thanked everyone for attending. **JP** particularly welcomed Rose Berry, Charlotte Martin, Jenny Watson-Bore & Angela Burrill to their first meeting.

Apologies from Nicky Brightling, Helen Fairley, Toby Harris, & Gary McCartan.

2. Approval of Minutes of the last ASA Meeting

The minutes of the Committee meeting held on Tuesday 11 May were agreed as the correct record.

HP will add **JP**'s digital signature to the minutes as approved, and upload to the School website.

3. Matter's Arising

There were no Matter's Arising.

4. ASA Treasurer's Report

HP reported that:

- The Blue Plaques have been installed around the School site and look fantastic receiving positive feedback from all staff. The remaining balance of £2571.73 was paid to Sign of the Times on 9 July 2021.
- 9 whole School photos have been framed by Savia & Cox, and all photos are now displayed outside the Headmaster's Office. **HP** did contact Simon Beaugie, but did not hear back. The ASA paid a total of £627 was paid to Savia and Cox Framers for the framing of the whole school photos at the Senior School (this included a 20% discount).
- Mrs Beets has cancelled her Standing Order to the ASA.

5. Alumni Office Report

HP reported on the following:

Alumni Engagement

- Membership and engagement continues to grow.
- 103 new email addresses since the May meeting, which includes the outgoing cohort of Year 13s.
- **HP** held an assembly with the 2021 Year 13s in the summer term, and the majority have signed up to the ASA.
- Year on Year statistics for the ASA social media:
 - o Instagram followers have increased by 44%
 - o LinkedIn Group membership has increased by 30%.
 - o Continue to receive good engagement on ASA facebook posts, particularly on the throwback Thursday posts.
- **HP asked Committee members to send photos/materials that can be used for the throwback Thursday posts.**
- The receptionists have finished the initial data cleaning project on the database, and Michelle has begun to work on a new project for **HP**.

Tom Watts Award

- **HP** will begin promoting the award shortly to current Year 13s and to the recent leavers.
- As discussed at previous Committee meetings the deadline will be extended into April to allow more time for applicants to finalise/plan their travels.
- The promotion of the award will also be included in the School Tie.

ASA School Tie

- The next edition will be released in December.
- **HP** has collated all the content for this year's ASA School Tie, and it looks to be an exciting issue.
 - o Feature articles from the following alumni:
 - Hannah Wood (née Cowin, Alfred, 1992), Climate and Environment Director at UBS
 - Jon Shephard (Bears, Friars, 1995), Owner of Matches Sports Bar (Ashford)
 - Max Nicholls (Pilgrims, 2014), Dentist & Mountain Runner
 - o Also featuring those alumni who came in to deliver careers talks last year, staff members who are also alumni, degree results, school news, development news and more.
- **If any Committee members have last-minute news to share, please let HP know.**
 - o **AP** reported that Rosie Furnival had not responded to request for School Tie content.
 - o **AP** will contact Alexandra Gale (née Stevens) who has just played for Leicester Tigers Womens' Rugby, and Bethan Williams (née Davies) who is a Dairy Cow Farmer.
- This year we are offering advertisement space in the School Tie, to help us offset production costs.
 - o Preferential rates to alumni and parents (half pages are £200 +VAT and full pages are £300 +VAT).
 - o There is a rate card which can be sent out to interested alumni/parents.
 - o The adverts need to be print ready.
 - o The adverts will not take the place of content, and any money made will help with the bottom line.

- **If committee members are interested or know of alumni who would like to take us up on this offer, please ask them to contact HP for the rate card.**
 - **HP** will contact **AP & JA** to discuss rates.
- **SK** added that the advertising is being sold on an individual basis (to alumni the Department already know), and there is the option to negotiate.
- Past editions of the ASA School Tie have been framed and put on display outside reception.

Careers Talks

- Last term we held talks with Fleur Willson, SJ Stewart, Jo Tivers, and Sophie Stuart.
- The A&D Office is continuing to work with the teaching staff and Careers Department to organise more careers talks, with a few in the pipeline, including talks from Enid Otun and Sophie Montagne, and talks relating to Sport, D&T, finance, and engineering.
- **If Committee members have suggestions for alumni for career talks please let HP know.**

Events

- Unfortunately, the ASA Summer Lunch and in-person AGM was canceled due to the extension of restrictions. However, the virtual AGM was a success.
- **Leavers' BBQ - 9 September**
 - 70 attendees, including staff, with leavers returning from 2017 – 2021.
 - Prizes were awarded to the 2020 leavers who were able to attend. They had not been able to have a prizegiving due to the pandemic. For those prize winners who could not attend, their prizes were posted.
- **London Drinks – 11 November**
 - 31 booked on so far, including staff. There is a real spread of generations booked on from a 1954 leaver to 2020 leavers.
 - The total event capacity is 70, and HP would like to fill the venue.
 - **HP asked Committee members to please share with alumni and on their social media channels.**
- **Carols by Candlelight – Thursday 16 December**
 - **HP asked Committee members to encourage alumni to attend.**
 - Booking will be available on Eventbrite.
- **ASA President's Lunch**
 - **HP** spoken with Carolyn, and the decision has been made to move the dinner from the Autumn term to spring/summer. The date is TBD.
- **Sports Reunion Tournament – Saturday 26 March**
 - This will feature Boys Hockey, Girls Netball, and Mixed Hockey.
 - **If Committee members know people who would like to play, please encourage them to get in touch with HP.**
 - **AP** suggested her brother and Friars alum Rob Playford would be interested (as a current England Hockey Player).
- More dates confirmed include:
 - AGM & Summer Lunch – Saturday 2 July
 - ASA Leavers BBQ – Thursday 8 September

- **HP** would like to run more events hosted by and/or organised by alumni. HP appealed to Committee to suggest events they might like to see.
- **JA** will follow up with Friars alum Luke Williams regarding a London Breakfast Networking event.
- **JA** is organising a Friars Reunion in London, on Saturday 13 November. All are welcome to attend, and **JA** will keep Committee posted on numbers.

HP appealed to all members to invite alumni to join us at the next ASA Committee meeting, so that we can continue to expand our Committee and the ASA's network and reach.

JP thanked **HP** for her hard work.

6. Development Office Report

SK reported:

- The A&D Office is focusing on developing the culture of giving through the whole School community.
- A bursary campaign was launched last term and a telephone campaign held in August.
 - o **TV** was involved in our telephone campaign. **SK** publicly thanked him for his enthusiasm.
 - o 6 alumni callers - **HP/SK/TV** agree they had done a fantastic job and embraced the whole experience.
 - o In total the callers had 183 conversations with alumni/donors.
 - o The total raised in pledges over next 5 years was just shy of £18,500.
 - o There is still the opportunity to support the bursary campaign and the team are still having ongoing conversations with potential supporters.
 - o The telephone campaign also enabled the team to gather more information about careers, where people are living, details of alumni that had been lost, etc.,
 - o A legacy the School was not aware of was identified and garnered more interest from alumni wanting to join the legacy club.
 - o **TV** agreed the telephone campaign had been a positive exercise. He noted that the professional training was of real value to the alumni callers, offering them a lot in terms of skill development, and giving them a clear approach to the calls. In addition for former pupils to be able to engage with alumni, particularly after lockdown, was a really valuable, and a fantastic opportunity for the students to show off the work of the School.
- This term, the School has received a legacy from Mrs. Lendrum's estate. This will be reported in the School Tie.
- The next Legacy Club lunch is planned for the Spring Term.
- The swimming pool campaign is unfortunately still on hold. However, the project is not cancelled, and **SK** hopes to resurrect the fundraising committee in the next couple of months, with the hopes of launching a campaign soon.
- The team have started talking to alumni about the 125-year birthday of the School in 2022/23. **HP & SK** have started to make plans and have several ideas. Many alumni spoken to during the telephone campaign were interested in coming back for a big event. The team will solidify ideas in the next few months and start to share.

SK noted there have been some dynamic things happening in the department and thanked the Archive volunteers and the new School Prefect.

SK proposed that, for the Department to achieve more and keep momentum going, our Committee members should consider expanding their roles. **SK** suggested that volunteers take on certain aspects of the roles **HP** is doing e.g., the Hon Secretary role and running events. This will help us.

- **AP** agreed this was a good idea to have Committee members more involved with meeting organisation, minutes etc.,
- All Committee members can take on responsibility to promote ASA events.
- **JA** suggested utilising Year 13 students to help promote events.
- **HP** asked committee members to email if there are certain projects they would like to work on.
- **JA** suggested committee members pairing up, or forming teams, to work on a project together to help people stay accountable and motivated, to share ideas, and to expand the connections available.
- **JA** suggested having a Teams environment where the Committee can have access to allow everyone to share content and contribute ideas.
- **NS** noted that the Committee would need to work closely with the School. **SK** confirmed that this would happen, and the School would still help support and publicise any events/initiatives and would continue to manage the data.
- **TV** suggested 'Deep Dive' articles in the run up to the 125-year celebrations, with a couple of months focused on each decade. Committee members could take on responsibility for different eras/groups.
- **JA** proposed having a calendar of events for the next 18 months.
- **JP** suggested the Committee can come forward with thoughts/ideas/complications/barriers to this suggestion at the January meeting. **HP will add this an agenda item for the next meeting.**

7. Archives Report

HP was delighted to introduce Jenny & Angela as the volunteer Archivists. **HP** thanked for their work in the Archives.

JWB & AB reported:

- **JWB** thanked **AB**.
- It will take time to sort out, as there is a huge amount of material from the Senior School, the Junior School, and Friars Prep School. There are thousands of photographs, which often can't be named. The aim is to make everything accessible.
- **JWB** thanked the late Sandra Noel, for her sterling service on getting a lot of the early material organised – this has helped considerably.
- **JWB & AB** will:
 - Catalogue and record every single item in the room. They are colour coding, writing catalogue cards, and using British Library Archive forms.
 - Eventually this will all be digitised.

- **AB** is making lists of staff to link them up with the staff photographs. This will be a useful resource.
- **JWB & AB** have already:
 - Organised the copies of the School Tie and they are in pristine order. 2 copies of each edition have been kept.
 - Accessioned and recorded all items with a connection to royalty, including the Brabourne family.
- **JWB** appealed for more Obituaries and Orders of Service from any notable alumni/staff who have died as these are useful archival resources.
- They are going in at least once a week to do a session.

JP thanked both **JWB & AB** for their work.

JP thanked for finding the portrait of Miss Thompson.

JP asked whether there would be a dedicated room for the archives. **HP** noted that along with **JWB** and **AB** they had decided to make the best of the space that they have in Nightingale. They hope a bigger space will be given to the Archives in time.

NS added her thanks, and volunteered her help to **JWB & AB**.

8. ASA Prefect Report

HP introduced **CM** to the Committee as the new ASA Prefect. **HP** is really excited to welcome **CM** to the team.

CM reported:

- **CM** is in Year 13 and House Captain for Yeomen, and a member of the Hockey team, the debating society, and involved in drama and the School musical.
- She is studying History, English Literature, and Drama at A Level.
- **HP & CM** meet once a week.
- **CM** wants to:
 - Use the ASA community for the benefit of students, utilising the alumni's connections and experience, particularly for careers and university advice.
 - Organise alumni speakers for the Sixth Form General Studies talks next academic year.
 - Organise a University panel with recent leavers.
 - Organise a charity day to raise further money for the bursary fund.
 - Collate House Captain updates for the alumni, and use current students to share what is going on at School, e.g., student takeovers on Instagram.
 - Work with the younger years, so they (and their families) know all about the ASA before they leave the School.
- **CM asked committee to suggest what news and updates they would like to hear from School, and what they would like to see from the ASA Prefect. ?**

JP thanked **CM** for presenting.

9. Headmaster's Report

MH reported on the following:

- Thanked **CM** and encouraged Committee to embrace her ideas as ASA Prefect.
- Thanked **JWB & AB** for their work in the Archives. In the future **MH** would like to have materials from the archives on display around the school.
- It was a good end to last academic year, with House competitions, and School starting to feel more normal.
- The Teacher Assessed Grades were the focus in the summer term. There was significant grade inflation, but roughly speaking the school's inflation was half the national average.
- Outcomes for the Year 13s for university destinations remained strong: 90% secured their firm choice; 50% are studying at a Russell Group university; and 19% have gone to a top 10 University.
- Despite the uncertainty and challenges covid presented, from the school roll perspective last year was a record-breaking year with more students joining in-year than ever before. This reflects how well Ashford performed and the strength of the school's online learning provision.
- **MH** was keen that the academic year started with dynamic, positive, engaging, enthusiastic energy, and this has been the case across the students and staff – everyone is happy to be back.
- There will be challenges when it comes to longer effects of covid, particularly on exam results and mental health, which the school is focusing on addressing.
- Currently, school life feels very normal, and not least with the co-curricular programme. There will be a big school production in the spring term, and school fixtures are now happening again.
- The Senior School has been relatively unaffected by covid this term, but the Prep School, by complete contrast, has had an exceedingly difficult time with lots of cases across students and staff.

JP thanked **MH** for steering the School through the challenges of Covid.

10. AOB

HP suggested forming a What's App Group for the Committee.

JP asked Committee members to consider how they would prefer the meetings to run going forward, i.e., virtual, in-person, etc.,

- **HP** will email all Committee members and ask for their feedback when she sends out the minutes.

JP suggested the ASA could plant a tree in commemoration of the Platinum Jubilee, and a blue plaque from the ASA.

JP closed the meeting and looks forward to seeing Committee members at the London Drinks.

Minutes approved at 26 March 2022 meeting

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read "Julie Piper". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large initial 'J' and 'P'.