



ASHFORD SCHOOL
ASSOCIATION

ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF

Ashford School Association

Wednesday 7 July 2020, 19:00, via Zoom

Committee Attendees: Carolyn Chamberlain (ASA President, CC), Julie Piper (ASA Chair, JP), Hannah Pinney (Alumni Officer, HP), Nicky Brightling (ASA Treasurer, NB), Norma Smyth (Vice-President, NS), Tom Vafidis (TV), Toby Harris (TH), John Abadom (JA), Sarah Kershaw (Director of External Relations, SK) & Mike Hall (Headmaster, MH), Alexandra Playford (AP), Gary McCartan (GM) & Callum Thomas (CT).

Committee Apologies: Alexandra Playford (AP), Helen Fairley (HF)

A recording of this meeting can be viewed on YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LWCjarhzyis>

1. Welcome & Meeting Business

CC welcomed all alumni to the 2021 ASA AGM.

Hon. Secretary Approval of the 2020 AGM Minutes (HP)

The minutes of the 2020 ASA AGM were approved as an accurate record and the date and **JP's** digital signature will be added.

The Hon. Treasurer's Report on the 2020 Accounts (NB)

- Total reserves of the ASA as at 31 December 2020 was £9,408.79 comprising £233.08 in the Natwest Account and £9,175.71 in the Santander Account.
- The ASA Natwest Account is still receiving a few standing orders but one was cancelled in the year. The total amount received was £82 compared to £88 last year. The £82 was transferred in April to the Ashford School Foundation (which funds bursaries and contributes towards capital projects).
- To keep the Santander savings account open we had to ensure there was a transaction (other than interest) going through the account. Therefore £50 was transferred from the Natwest account in January 2020 to the Santander account.
- The total interest received in 2020 was £27.60.
- We have spent some of the funds this year on plaques and framing Old whole School Photos but more information on that to follow

Election of Officers (HP)

The Officer roles up for election this year were:

- ASA President
- ASA Vice-President
- ASA Treasurer

All current officers (Carolyn Chamberlain, Norma Smyth, and Nicky Brightling) indicated before the meeting that they should like to stand again. No other nominations were received. The three officers were re-elected unanimously via a Zoom poll.



- Carolyn Chamberlain was re-elected as ASA President (up for re-election 2025)
- Norma Smyth was re-elected as ASA Vice-President (up for re-election 2024)
- Nicky Brightling was re-elected as ASA Treasurer (up for re-election 2024)

2. Alumni Office Report (HP)

HP is the Alumni & Development Officer at Ashford School, and the ASA Hon Secretary. She is also an ex-pupil, having been in Squires House from 2004 – 2011. She shared a few highlights from the past year in the Alumni Office at Ashford School

- Despite restrictions, there has been continued growth in the alumni community and increasing engagement across all social media channels and the (virtual) events programme.
 - Email contacts have grown YoY 16%
 - LinkedIn connections have grown YoY 49%
 - Instagram followers have grown YoY 60%
- **HP** encouraged alumni to share what events they would like to see and to encourage their peers to engage!
- The 2020 ASA School Tie was sent out to over 1300 households, and to 1650 alumni by email. It featured over 80 different alumni as well as former staff, current staff and students.
- **HP** appealed to alumni and former staff to share their news by emailing the Alumni Office, whether it is news of an exciting promotion, a business, an achievement, or a personal piece of news like an engagement/marriage/baby.
- **HP** has focused on ensuring the ASA is connected with current Sixth Formers and recent leavers.
- A new Prefect role, dedicated to supporting the Alumni & Development Office, has been launched. **HP** congratulated Charlotte on being the first ASA Prefect. Charlotte is in Yeomen House (and was in Lendrum House at the Prep School) and is also Yeomen House Captain. She is studying Drama, History and English Literature, and participates in many extra-curricular activities. Charlotte is very much looking forward to the opportunity to connect and support our alumni, and to provide student insight. **HP** is excited to work with her and knows she will be an asset to the team!
- Virtual talks for both alumni, and careers talks for our students have continued throughout the year, with 4 virtual networking sessions for alumni and 11 different speakers in School covering Food Studies, History, English, Sport, Drama, Music, Wellbeing, and Psychology. **HP** thanked all those who had volunteered their time.
- **HP** noted if any alumni would be interested in speaking, please get in touch.
- **HP** hopes to host talks with former members of staff next year. **HP** appealed to alumni to nominate a staff member they would like to hear from again.
- Covid restrictions allowing, **HP** hopes to re-launch career focused breakfast networking sessions, and hopes to be able to welcome alumni back to School for events such as Carols by Candlelight, and the School Musical.
- **HP** has also focused on developing the School archives and has appointed two former staff as volunteer archivists: Jenny Watson-Bore and Angela Burrill. Both Jenny and Angela taught English at Ashford School, and Jenny also ran the library, and bring a wealth of experience. They



will be assisted by current parent Mairi Goodman. If there are alumni who want to volunteer or have an archival enquiry, please get in touch at archives@ashfordschool.co.uk

- The ASA have also supported 2 exciting projects at Ashford School which have helped to bring our long history (nearly 125 years!) to life.
 1. Framed whole School photos are now on display at both the Prep & Senior School. At the Senior School the oldest photo displayed is from 1914, and at the Prep the Friars whole School photos date back to 1959.
 2. The ASA have also commissioned a series of Blue Plaques which celebrate the history of the School and are being installed over the summer! The ASA Committee hopes to continue with this project in future years.
- **HP** noted that the past year has been challenging for everyone, but how wonderful it had been to see the alumni community continuing to grow.
- **HP** thanked all the ASA Committee for their support, and all alumni for their involvement.

3. Headmaster's Report (MH)

MH thanked **HP** on behalf of the Committee and the ASA on the wonderful arrange of initiatives and developments that she has been pushing forward.

MH reported that:

- The School has focused on maintaining positivity and remaining optimistic and nimble as an organisation, ensuring that the community can move forward in a purposeful way.
- **MH** is exceptionally proud of the School community - the ethos, sense of togetherness and optimism across the whole School is strong. The students continue to be supportive and encouraging of each other, which was displayed at the School Sport's Day earlier in the afternoon.
- In terms of Covid, the School has done remarkably well in terms of cases, and has not had to send whole year groups home or close bubbles. This is a testament to the rigour of the School's Health and Safety policy, and also to the care that the whole School community has taken.
- Momentum has not been lost in terms of delivery of the Curriculum, and the students have come out of this situation in an advantageous position.
- The main concern moving forward is around wellbeing of staff and students. There will be a legacy of the impact of Covid for many years to come, and a close watch will need to be kept, particularly on those children who were at the most vulnerable stage of their development. **MH's** other concern is around Year 10 & Year 12 students, as they will have to sit their external exams next year.
- Academically, the School has been remarkably successful with the provision of online learning. The local and regional word of mouth about the standard of this provision has really benefited the School. Teachers taught live almost right from the start, which many schools did not.
- The biggest challenge from an academic point of view has been the Teacher Assessed Grades, the TAGs, which was an incredibly challenging task for the teachers.
- Throughout Covid, **MH** has focused on building the momentum of academic rigour in the School.
- The staff have tried to minimise the impact of Covid on the co-curricular programme, and Music Concerts, Drama Productions and Sports fixtures have continued to take place, which has maintained momentum for the students.



- One positive is that the School has gained over 120 new students during the academic year, many from the local area. This is a remarkable achievement, and feeds back into the reputation that stemmed from our online learning provision. From an Admissions point of view, the School is in a strong position.
- The future of the School and its financial stability is still occupying **MH's** thoughts significantly.
- Boarding in a vulnerable position in the UK, and we have lost several boarders from our community. Until the international travel situation settles down, that will continue to be the case.
- **MH** feels an enormous sense of pride over the last year's achievements, and feels that the School is emerging more strongly from the pandemic than it entered into it.
- **MH** shared the exciting news that one of Ashford School's teachers, Heather Loughlin, has won the Inspirational Teacher of the Year across the entire United Learning Group. An incredible achievement.

CC was delighted to read that the School has had national recognition for all that the School had done, and wished to congratulate the School & **MH**. The continued reputation for innovation is to be celebrated.

4. Outgoing Head Girl & Head Boy Reports

Outgoing **Head Girl Olivia Jefferson-Pillai (Merchants, 2021)** & **Head Boy Sam Loader (Yeomen, 2021)** joined us to share their experience at Ashford School & what becoming a part of the alumni community means to them. Please watch their speeches on the YouTube recording at 29.04mins.

5. Development Office Report (SK)

SK reported on the activities of the Development Office this past year.

Ashford School Foundation

- Katie Floyd (née Webb, Merchants, 2003) has joined the Ashford School Foundation as a Trustee this year. Katie brings a wealth of fundraising experience with her and is currently the Development Officer at Benenden School. The Trustees are looking forward to working with her.

The Bursary Fund

- The School has seen an increase in applications for School bursaries.
- Bursary awards from the School are directly correlated to School income, which has been impacted by the reduced school role.
- United Learning provided a hardship fund which the School was able to tap into.
- The Foundation bursary awards are separate to the School bursaries, and this year, the Foundation was delighted to award 83% more funds than it had in previous years.
- Supporting the school strategy of identifying talented students that would benefit from an Ashford School education, the Foundation are working to increase the funding available for their bursary awards.



- A bursary funding campaign will be launched this summer, and a telephone campaign will be run in August, with around 700 contacts to be rung.
- The Development Office have been working closely with Sixth Formers on this campaign, who have been hired to conduct the calls. It has been heartwarming speaking to these students in their interviews, and hear about the impact the School has had on them, and how they want to help fundraise to support talented students receive the same education that they have.

Swimming Pool Capital Project

- The Foundation and School have conducted a feasibility study for a new 50m swimming pool at Ashford School. However, the project has had to be put on hold because of the pandemic.
- The swimming pool programme has just won an award at the Independent School Parent Awards for the community work that they do, not only supporting local and school swimmers, but also the provision they offered to elite swimmers over the pandemic.
- We hope to continue with this fundraising project in the new academic year.

Legacy Club

- A zoom call with members was held in March, where virtual afternoon team was shared, and a good catch up was had.
- **SK** thanked all Legacy Club members and hoped that this will grow.

125 Years

- In 2023, the School will be celebrating 125 years since its founding in 1898.
- The team will be starting to plan soon, and if you would like to be involved or have ideas, please email Sarah Kershaw (kershaws@ashfordschool.co.uk) or Hannah Pinney (pinneyh@ashfordschool.co.uk).

6. Guest Speaker – Dr Anjola Onifade (Yeomen, 2012)

We were delighted to be joined by Dr Anjola Onifade as our guest speaker. Please view the YouTube recording to listen to him at 48.12 mins.

7. AOB

JP thanked all for their contributions to tonight's meeting, her fellow Committee members for their dedication and hard work, and all the staff of Ashford School.

We would like to thank the following guests for attending the ASA AGM 2020:

- Anjola Onifade (Yeomen, 2012)
- Callum Thomas (Squires, 2013, ASA Committee Member)
- Carolyn Chamberlain (née Nelms, Nightingale, 1960, ASA President)
- Charlotte Martin (ASA Prefect, Yeomen)
- Colin Howard (Former Member of Staff)
- Hannah Pinney (Alumni & Development Officer, Squires, 2011, ASA Secretary)
- Irene Martin (Current Physics Teacher)



ASHFORD SCHOOL
ASSOCIATION

- Gail Pussard (née Morgan, Cranmer, 1967)
- Gary McCartan (Friars, ASA Committee Member)
- Gina Loughlin-Sims (Former Member of Staff)
- Jess Barnick (Knights, 2011)
- Jo Cottee (Pilgrims, 1975)
- John Abadom (Friars, 1987, ASA Committee Member)
- John Jones (Former Member of Staff)
- Julie Piper (Knights, 1979, ASA Chair)
- Katie Floyd (née Webb, Merchants, 2003, ASF Trustee)
- Michael Boddy (Friars)
- Michael Hall (Headmaster of Ashford School)
- Nic Creasey (Boarding Registrar)
- Nicky Brightling (née Clarke, Knights, 1984, ASA Treasurer)
- Nicu Munteanu (Alfred Housemaster)
- Norma Smyth (Former Deputy Headmistress, ASA Vice-President)
- Olivia Jefferson-Pillai (Head Girl, Merchants, 2021)
- Pippa Jones (Nightingale, 1965)
- Rae Stollard (née Sasson, Brooke Place, 1963)
- Ricky Beets (née Suren, Cranmer, 1954)
- Sam Loader (Head Boy, Yeomen, 2021)
- Sarah Kershaw (Director of External Relations)
- Toby Harris (Franklins, 2013)
- Tom Vafidis (History Teacher, Friars, 2006, ASA Committee Member)

Contact Emails:

- **Hannah Pinney, Alumni & Development Officer / ASA Hon Secretary:**
alumni@ashfordschool.co.uk / pinneyh@ashfordschool.co.uk
- **Sarah Kershaw, Director of Admissions, External Relations & Communications**
kershaws@ashfordschool.co.uk