

Friends of Helmdon School (FOHS) AGM

Chair's Report 2024-25

Introduction

This report gives an overview of our aims and activities over the last academic year, and our plans for the next 12 months.

We have continued to focus on fundraising activities that generate the best return for effort, whether in terms of profit or enjoyment for the children, and to prioritise spending in ways that enrich the children's learning experience.

The committee is in a strong position, with seven active members and three other committed supporters, one of whom has recently stepped down from the role of secretary but is still involved, and two of whom manage the cake sales and second-hand uniform for us.

Highlights from last year

We raised around £7,500 last year, which is a great total from a school with just over 100 pupils, although less than we raised in 2023-24. The reduction is attributable to the difference in profits from the KS2 fundraiser last year, the Fiver Challenge, and the new Reception/KS1 fundraiser this year, the Smarties Challenge, which was to be expected. Our most profitable events were, as ever, the two discos (one at Hallowe'en and one that we moved from May to February) and the two raffles at Christmas and Easter. The income from the Hallowe'en disco was higher than ever and may have been due to a recovery in attendance with the announcement of a new entertainer as we had feedback that the children wanted a change. The February one was less well attended and raised less than Hallowe'en, which is normally the case, but more than the May disco last year so we will keep the new date.

The third parents' Quiz Night was another success and our biggest individual earner so we will plan to run this again if the quizmasters are keen to support a fourth year!

We introduced two new activities in 2024-25, both of which we will repeat. The Smarties Challenge already mentioned raised more than expected, at over £300, although the main driver for the challenge was to give Reception/KS1 children the opportunity to fundraise as the KS2 children had the Fiver Challenge the previous year. We will alternate these activities year by year. The second new event was the Summer Fair. Not only did the fair take in over £900, half of which was profit, but it also provided a great afternoon of fun for the school community before the May half term.

As well as raising money, we were able to spend significant amounts on cultural experiences for the children, namely the pantomime and theatre, as well as half the cost of the annual school trip and £6000 on new laptops.

Plans for this year

We will again publish our annual calendar of events as soon as possible so everyone can save the dates for key activities.

We plan to maintain the most popular regular activities as well as repeating the new ones that worked well last year. We'll also review how we run some of the events to make them as enjoyable for the children and easy for the helpers as possible, in particular Film Friday (which was changed to Movie Tuesday due to the availability of the hall). We chose a shorter film last year but it was still too long for the younger children.

We will also continue to prioritise funding requests that enhance learning and provide rich experiences for the children, while maintaining a healthy bank balance.

Finally, I would like to thank all the committee members and our committed supporters for their hard work and time over the last year. I'm confident 2025-26 will be just as successful.

Rebecca Mount
FOHS Chair