

Friends of Helmdon School (FOHS) AGM

Chair's Report 2025-26

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 two other committed supporters, one of whom manages the second-hand uniform for us. We are, however, looking for someone to take on the cake sales as the previous coordinator is no longer able to help.

Highlights from last year

We raised around £9,000 last year (our total income of c.£11k included a £2k grant that went straight in and out), which is a great total from a school with less than 130 pupils and more than we raised in the previous year. We held most of the same events as 2024-25 with the exception of the Fiver Challenge for KS2, which is on a bi-annual rotation with the Smarties Challenge for Reception and KS1, and which generates significantly more revenue. As well as being our biggest individual fundraiser, it's a great experience for the children who were so enthusiastic and determined.

Our other most profitable events were, as usual, the regular Hallowe'en and February discos and the Christmas and Easter raffles, all of which raised more than last year, likely due to the greater number of pupils in school. A few factors increased our takings in the Autumn term too, as we had more orders than ever at the Christmas shop, we changed suppliers for the Christmas cards and gifts and the Collection with Santa accepted card payments for the first time.

In the spring, our fourth Quiz Night for parents was a huge success again and just as much fun under the new quizmasters, although it would be great to have more parents attend.

Lastly, we ran the Summer Fair for the second time and raised even more than last year thanks in part to the kind weather!

Thanks to both a healthy bank balance and the fundraisers, we were able to spend significant amounts on trips and experiences for the children as well as much-needed resources like the replacement interactive whiteboard and refurbished iPads.

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 the newer ones that have proved successful additions, and welcome any new suggestions. We will try to find a coordinator for the cake sales or review how these can work without one if we don't get a volunteer.

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 and I look forward to a successful 2026-27.

Rebecca Mount
FOHS Chair