



Minutes from RSPA AGM held on Thursday 1st October 2015

Meeting called to order by Biffo Ordish

Present

Ashley Robson, Venkat Para, Biffo Ordish, Anne Harding, Maggie Berney, Arunas Ruksnaitis, Parninder Singh, Mampreel Kam, Sandra Rodrigues, Patricia Fryer, Mukesh Mohan, Niamh Sherwood, Virginia Cullara, Melanie Hill, Aditi Bose, Nitu Kama, Greg Santoro-Fergusson

Apologies

Frances Gearney, Meenu Paliwall, Ben Graham

ITEMS DISCUSSED

1. Chairman's Report

Please find detailed below a copy of The Chairman's Report

I would like to start by welcoming you to this AGM, at the end of another successful year for the RSPA.

According to the constitution, The Association exists to advance the education of pupils in the School and – nothing else. However, I think it's generally accepted that advancing the education of pupils may be difficult without engaging with and supporting the staff and parents of those pupils. In fact, the constitution gives examples of ways in which The Association may further its objective.

These include:

- Developing relationships between the staff, parents and others associated with the school;
- Engaging in activities that support the school and advance the pupils' education;
- Providing facilities or items for education at the school that aren't provided from statutory funds.

To this end, The Association has held numerous fund-raising events, the most profitable of which has again been the Spring Fayre – so a big thank-you to all of the **Spring Fayre** committee for all their inspiration and perspiration in making this annual event such a success.

The **Quiz and Wine and Jazz** have also made substantial contributions and we thank everyone involved with both of those.

Other sources of income include the Uniform Shop and subscriptions from parents. For clarity, I should mention that membership subscriptions to The Association are a one-off donation. Once you have joined, your membership covers you until your first son at the school – or any younger brother – leaves. In fact, you can remain an associate member for the rest of your life, even without a son at

the school. With The Association offering such good value, I hope everyone is a fully paid-up member.

One little cloud over fund-raising was that we didn't get quite enough support to run the ceilidh but we have worked on learning lessons from that and I think we have every reason to be hopeful that a future event would both be great fun to attend and raise some useful cash.

The **Giving Machine** has provided some useful funds, too. For anyone who doesn't know about this, if you go to many of your favourite online shopping sites via The Giving Machine, your shopping costs you the same but the RSPA gets a percentage of what you spend. Details are on the front page of the RSPA Web site. Amazon, Argos, M&S, John Lewis, several supermarkets and many others are participating.

So what have we done with all this money? Easily our biggest gift to the school, this year, is £25,000 to equip one of the new chemistry laboratories. This is a major commitment for us and I hope this big dip in our bank account will incentivise us to raise a lot of money so we can do more of the same next year. We've also agreed to fund other amenities, such as improvements outside the LRC, including the provision of a giant chess set for the boys to show off their skills as they progress toward grandmaster.

We also support the Wine and Welcome for new parents and the 6th form leavers' party, which is a wonderful feelgood event to recognise the hard work and dedication the boys themselves put into the ethos and success of the school.

A quick word on elections. One of the requirements of an RSPA AGM is the election of officers and executive members, which is fairly self-explanatory, and the election of a Reading Foundation Representative. Reading Foundation is the body that owns the school grounds and that exists to ensure the continuity of the school, to provide training and instruction of pupils, to manage school facilities to raise money and to provide scholarships, exhibitions and bursaries.

Returning to the RSPA, there are many, many people who contribute to the smooth running both of events and of on-going resources such as the Uniform shop— many thanks to Anne Harding for all her hard work there —and the Web site. Cheryl Archer has recently retired from managing the Web site so thanks to her for everything she's done over the years to help The Association. I want to name and fame two more retiring stalwarts – Maggie Berney – who has worked tirelessly to knit together a team of class reps and the parents they represent. Facilitating communication is key to the role of Membership Secretary and Maggie has done a sterling job there, enabling parents to support one another and, of indeed, helping to find the remarkable range of things our boys manage to lose at school. Thanks go to all Maggie's troop of class reps too. And, of course, Meenu Paliwal, our retiring Assistant Treasurer, a tireless presence at meetings and events and a major contributor to the Spring Fayre. Thank you.

I'm not going to mention all the team of Officers and Executive members by name but, needless to say, it just wouldn't be possible without all their diligent work with only the reward of knowing they've done a great job. To all of you, thank you – it wouldn't happen without you. I also want to thank the whole of the school's staff for providing such a wonderful learning and living environment for our boys. I don't think I can mention all of them, either, but two major players are, of course, Ashley Robson and Frances Greaney who are always helpful and co-operative, no matter what we come up with!

And to all others who help in the grand scheme of school, parents and pupils, thank you.

I think we can justly be proud of what we have achieved but there is an enormous amount that we can still do. The school has suffered from many years of under-funding and there is scope for The Association to help in numerous ways in the coming months and years. I want to encourage everyone who can offer any time or resources to The Association to attend meetings, to let us know what you can do, and not to hold back on any ideas and suggestions you may have that can improve the lives and education of our boys. The quality of our sons' education is partly in our hands. Let's do what we can to improve the life of the school for our own sons and to help leave a legacy of excellence.

2. Treasurer's Report

Please find detailed below a copy of The Treasurer's Report

Our accounting period is from the 1st of April to 31st of March. On the 31st of March this year, our total account balance was £42,884, up by £11,672 from a year ago. Our net income for the accounting period was £13,996, a 30% improvement on last year's £10,737. At the time of writing, we have total of £53,973 in our accounts.

As usual, the main fund raiser has been Spring Fayre in May 2014, which has brought in £12,390 total revenue, 58% increase on the £7,817 the year before. The expenses of organizing the Spring Fayre were £5,664, a 228% increase from the previous year's expense of £1,725. The net income received from the Spring Fayre was £6,727, a 10% increase on year 2013 net revenue £6,092. A big "Thank You" to Spring Fayre committee, their unwavering dedication and all the hard work. Also big thanks to all parents who has helped to organize and attended the event and contributed to its success. As a spoiler for the next year's report, the financial performance of Spring Fayre 2015 has been similar to the last year's, so that's another major event very well done.

We can't thank enough Anne Harding for running the Uniform Shop, which has brought us £1,510 this year, roughly the same amount as last year.

Our membership subscriptions remains a very important source of income. We have received £3,233 of membership subscriptions this year, a similar amount to last year. Many thanks to our Membership Secretary Maggy Berney for carrying this flag. The membership fees are subject to Gift Aid, and we are in the process of claiming Gift Aid from HMRC. This has not been done for a number of years, and we are aiming to claim Gift Aid for the last 4 financial years. There are still paperwork hurdles to overcome.

Other events that had been big success are the Quiz and Wine and Jazz. These events brought in £874 and £1,794 net income, respectively, a total of £2,668. On the down side, we had an unsuccessful attempt at Ceilidh, which had to be cancelled due to low interest; we have incurred £63 in costs before April 2015, as well as some later outlay after April.

Other non fund-raising expenses include organizing Wine and Welcome for new parents and Leaver's Drinks at the end of the year, costing £664.

We received £512 from The Giving Machine, 16% down from the previous year. We should try to promote the use of The Giving Machine more.

We spent £2,324 to support the school playground project, in comparison to last year's total spending on school projects of £12,419. Lower spending has resulted in accumulation of the funds, which allowed us to pledge £25,000 towards the equipment of a new science laboratory, as well as £7,000 towards the improvements of school outdoor facilities.

At this time we are unable to secure a sizeable interest on our cash balance. We have received £9 of interest this year on the balance of £23,527 in our reserve account. We might need to look into alternative deposit vehicles in order to earn some interest.

The summary table of RSPA main activities in 2014-15.

	<i>Receipts</i>	<i>YoY</i>	2015	014
	<i>Expense</i>	10%	£6,726.61	£6,092.49
Spring Fayre (net)		58%	£12,390.40	£7,817.35
		228%	£5,663.79	£1,724.86
Quiz		698%	£873.60	£109.53
Wine & Jazz			£1,843.50	
Uniform Shop		-1%	£1,510.08	£1,520.67
Membership Subs		4%	£3,233.10	£3,105.00
Giving Machine		-16%	£512.46	£612.09
School Projects		-81%	£2,324.65-	£12,418.57
International Evening		-100%		£384.72
Ceilidh '15				
Donations			£63.00	
Interest		53%		£72.50
		-1%	£111.01	£9.53
			£9.40	
Net income, excluding projects		30%	£13,996.50	£10,737.39

3. Headmaster's Address

Mr Robson thanked the RSPA for their commitment to the School and for supporting the various funding requests that School has submitted including the Outdoor Play Equipment, Equipment for the new Science Laboratory.

Mr Robson requested that the RSPA support School in the redevelopment of the Squash Courts located near the School Chapel into a high quality gym (fitness suite). The School Governing body has agreed that this is a priority for the academic year 2015/16, given that the sports facilities are not good enough. It would be a "big push" for the school in terms of enhancing mental and physical health of pupils by having a fitness suite.

The project is supported by the PE department.

Estimated costs and funding - The estimated cost of the Gym Project is **£100,000** – (i) £50,000 for refurbishment of the squash courts into a gym + (ii) £50,000 for the cost of equipment in the gym. School has already sourced £20,000 towards the project. Mr Robson requested that **the RSPA pledge £20,000** towards the project.

After discussion amongst the committee it was **agreed and voted upon** that the RSPA would contribute **£10,000 now** towards the new fitness suite/gym refurbishment + a further **£10,000 in February** (subject to sufficient RSPA funds available).

Biffo Ordish proposed that the RSPA support this funding request from School and Arunas Ruksnaitis seconded it.

4. Election of Members / Other Bodies

Membership Secretary – Maggie Berney nominated Aditi Bose to take on the role of Membership Secretary, Michelle Hill seconded the nomination.

It was noted that Maggie Berney has done an excellent job as Membership Secretary over the last few years and in particular helping the new year 7's.

Assistant Treasurer – Meenu Palliwal is stepping down from this position after undertaking this role for a number of years. Greg Santoro-Fergusson volunteered to take on the role of Assistant Treasurer. Arunas Ruksnaitis seconded this.

Meenu was thanked for all her hard work, particularly on the Spring Fayre committee.

School Uniform Shop – Anne Harding informed the RSPA what she would be stepping down from running the School Uniform shop and that Alison Tooth would be taking over.

Anne and her team have worked extremely hard in the shop. A number of changes have been made which has resulted in increased revenue being generated and helped parents stretch the family budget. Tribute was paid to Anne and her team, especially those volunteers who sort and repatriate "lost property".

Reading Foundation – Virginia Cullara proposed no change to the members, Niamh Sherwood seconded this.

Friends of Reading Music – Gaynor Poppleston has taken over from Miriam and will be the link between the RSPA and Friends of Reading Music.

5. AOB

It was recommended that the RSPA change the constitution with regards to RSPA subscription rates which currently stand at (i) a one-off £50 payment or (ii) £10 payment every year.



Next Meeting

Date: Thursday 19th November 2015

Time: 7.30 pm to 9.00 pm

Venue: Meeting room tbc

Meeting closed by Boffo Ordish at 8.30 pm, Minutes created by Marion Murphy.