



Friends of Almond Hill 'FOAH' Meeting – Monday 22nd September 2025 at 6.00pm

Present –

Clare Matthews, Rachael Harrington, Emma Fordham, Diane Cawthorn, Sally Davis, Becca Copeman, Vickie Saunders, Bilqees Tiamiyu, Kevin Robbins, Alba Diaz-Rodriguez, Lucy

Apologies – Carly Payne, Caroline Hornby, Ruth Panton, Hannah Bailey

Halloween Disco (23rd October)

Rachael updated the group on cost comparisons for a live DJ disco and a silent disco. Live disco was £60 more expensive than silent option. Rachel noted that whilst the silent disco is slightly more work for the volunteers, she proposed sticking with the silent disco option this year given how many other things FOAH have going on. Stick with what we know, and we will try a live disco another time. Discussion on ticket prices; these have been static for several years but costs have increased. We also now include pizza in the ticket price. Pizza costs can be justified if we increase the ticket price from £5 to £6. Letchmore have increased their disco ticket price in this way and it still represents good value for money. It was agreed that the ticket price would be increased to £6. An advertising flyer needs to go out ASAP. Clare agreed to design this. Payment will be through Arbour.

Actions Clare to design flyer noting new ticket price.

FOAH members to keep the date free if you are able to help support and volunteer at this event.

Christmas Events

Christmas Card

Clare will oversee this process again this year, shadowed by Becca as succession planning. It was agreed that the template needed to go out in good time.

Christmas Fair (11th December)

Fair will be run in conjunction with Carols in the Quad. Mrs Fordham confirmed staff will be on site until 5.15pm as they were due to attend a staff meeting that day, so will be able to volunteer. Discussion on space and how many people we can expect – acknowledgement that it will be very busy so confining stalls just to main hall and dining room may make things too crowded. Mrs Fordham suggested we have FOAH stalls in the main hall, food in the dining room and then spread stalls out into classrooms, with staff manning these. Two stalls, from two different year groups, per classroom. Year 3 class rooms will work well for this purpose. Some stalls could be outside weather dependent.

Vickie asked whether we could approach Barclay and Thomas Alleynes to ask whether any students were willing to volunteer at the Fair. Barclay students are required to volunteer for the Barclay Badge so this might appeal. Mrs Fordham agreed.

Non uniform day to be held on Friday 5th December in exchange for donations for the Fair. Space to store these prizes will be limited - Mrs Fordham said that the school will find space for a couple of days. A team of volunteers will be needed to label all the tombola prizes ahead of the Fair.

Alcohol will be allowed as tombola prizes as long as prize is always handed to an adult not the child and not opened on site. Mulled wine was very well received at the last Carols in the Quad event so we will repeat that, ensuring nonalcoholic version is also available. A license will be required from Stevenage Borough Council for alcohol. Hot chocolate was suggested, we will provide that this year. Sally asked that we do not use glitter on any stalls (crafts etc) and this was agreed for environmental purposes as well as out of courtesy to those clearing up! Teddies/soft toys required for teddy tombolas – we need to start accepting donations of these now.

Actions Sally and a couple of other volunteers to go through FOAH storage and count how many small gifts we have left over that could be used as Christmas Fair prizes.

Rachael and Vickie to speak about teddy bear appeal.

Vickie to approach Barclay and Thomas Alleynes for volunteer students.

Please keep the date free if you are able to help support and volunteer at this event.

Christmas Present Room (Tuesday 2nd December)

In conjunction with Mrs Fordham, date was agreed Tuesday 2nd December. Will be based in the hall. There was discussion on whether to combine the present room and Christmas fair but consensus was that the present room was now a big event, in a practical sense as well as in terms of the money raised, that would work best as a standalone fundraiser. Sally agreed to lead the event. Sally mentioned that whilst appreciated, the storage provision at the school was no longer sufficient, especially given the success and expansion of the various present rooms held throughout the year. Could the school find any additional space for FOAH storage?

Actions Mrs Fordham agreed to think about additional storage space but said it was unlikely that the school could find more space on a permanent basis for FOAH without it negatively impacting staff space.
Diane to add Present Room to school calendar.

Funding Requests

Mrs Fordham asked if she could pass the invoices for the Year 6 hoodies and books onto FOAH. This was agreed. Mrs Fordham noted Mrs Bond had put in a funding request for Kindness and Wellbeing accreditation. Discussion on the healthy state of FOAH's finances and how FOAH members would be happy to fund. Discussion on whether FOAH can fund a replacement screen and projector for the hall. Members felt funding these larger expenses was particularly satisfying.

Action Mrs Fordham to send Hoodies and Books invoice to FOAH for Carly to pay.
Rachel to speak to Carly about the budgets and what FOAH can pay for.

Spring Term Events Looking Forward

Penny Wars (TBD)

Given the number of FOAH events scheduled for the autumn term, Rachel proposed that this event be pushed back to the spring term in 2026. Attendees agreed with this proposal.

Actions To be deferred until Spring 2026.

School Lottery

New lottery scheme 'Parentkind' to be investigated and compared to current provider. We need a volunteer to do this. Carly was noted as potentially being a good volunteer for this given her financial background.

Action Rachael to speak to Carly to ask if she would be willing to investigate Parentkind and report back on how their scheme would work for us.
This will probably be put back to the Spring term.

Other Business

Finances

It was noted by Mrs Fordham that Carly's treasurer report was exceptionally clear and well produced. Emma asked for this to be minuted as a thank you to Carly for her efforts.

Supporting FOAH

If you would like to keep updated on the activities of FOAH please email foah@almondhill.herts.sch.uk with your contact details and we will add you to the What's app group where opinions, ideas and volunteering opportunities are shared. We have a number of events coming up and will need lots of volunteers.

Action Clare suggested a WhatsApp poll to ask for volunteers' availability for all forthcoming events.

Next Meeting date TBC

We discussed how Monday early evenings were not necessarily convenient for some parents to attend FOAH meetings. Could we hold the meetings on different times/days? No day will suit everyone, and it might not increase attendance, but could enable some new faces to attend and get involved in volunteering.

Actions

Next FOAH to be held on a different day of the week, date tbc.