

TRUSTEE'S ANNUAL REPORT 2023/2024 SCHOOL YEAR

REFERENCE & ADMINISTRATION INFORMATION

CHARITY NAME	FRIENDS AND FAMILY OF HIGHFIELDS AND/OR F.F.H	
charity no.	1096062	
address	London Road Newark Nottinghamshire NG24 3AL	
TRUSTEES	NAME	APPOINTED
Chair	Melanie McKinnon	27 th September 2023
Vice-Chair	Olivia South	27 th September 2023
Secretary	Jo Legdon	27 th February 2023
Co-Treasurer	Leanne Lewin	27 th September 2023
Co-Treasurer	Sara Radrizzani	27 th September 2023
Head Teacher	Sarah Lyons	Incumbent as Head Teacher

INTRODUCTION

Welcome to the Annual General Meeting.

The FFH is a parent-run PTA charity tasked with enriching the school community and making Highfields Independent School and Day Nursery a better place for our children to grow and learn.

The FFH's primary purpose is to:

- fundraise with the school community to enrich pupils' experiences and
- organise social and other events to promote good relations between staff, parents, and pupils.

These two purposes are of equal value.

We achieve this by promoting a cooperative partnership between the administration, staff, parents, and others associated with the school and engaging in social and fundraising activities.

This Trustee Report details the work of FFH from September 27, 2023, to September 18, 2024. The financial figures in this Trustee Report are less precise than what you will find in our final annual financial numbers for submission to the Charities Commission. Our final accounts will be prepared over the coming months by the 2023/2024 Treasurer after the close of our financial year on September 30, 2024.

We started the year with just over £16k across our bank accounts and can proudly announce that we raised a further £56k this school year, donating £47k directly to the school. After spending £20k on operating costs and asset acquisitions, we closed the year with £5k in our bank accounts to start this new year.

These figures contrast with last year, as while we raised similar amounts—£54k in 2022/23 compared with £56k in 2023/2024—we were able to donate £47k this year as opposed to our £22k donation last year, mainly due to substantially reduced operating costs this year.

The FFH Financial year closes at the end of September. As a result, our Trustee Report does not include the Treasurer Report, as it can only be compiled after the financial year has closed. Instead, this Trustee Report has the logged data until 18 September 2024, prepared by the current FFH Treasurer.

After the close of the FFH Financial Year, the Treasurer's Report will be made available for download on the FFH website in early 2025: <https://www.ffhcharity.org/downloads>

We are very grateful for the ongoing support and guidance provided by our Head Teacher, Mrs Lyons, Deputy Head, Mrs Martin, Operations Manager, Mrs Beaumont, and the administrative staff who deal with our many and varied queries with patience and understanding. Without the backroom team, the FFH couldn't function as we do. With Mrs Beaumont leaving the school and her role as Bursar, we look forward to working with Miss Day this school year as a critical school contact.

The AGM is the PTA's only formal meeting of the year. It covers committee elections and reviews the previous year's events and fundraising activities.

Before we commence these formalities, we would like to extend the following thank you:

- Firstly, thank you to the members of the FFH Committee who have worked tirelessly throughout the year, given full-time jobs, children, tertiary education commitments, location, and many other critical priorities. Your generous donation of your time, skills, and patience is hugely appreciated.
- We have received generous donations from local businesses, including Ambitions Personnel, Davies-Todd Opticians, and Streets Accountants, who have all been individually thanked. We are also incredibly grateful for the Hanton family's enormous personal generosity and that of other anonymous families.

Without all the FFH Volunteers, who generously man stalls, run the uniform shop, lend equipment, sponsor, donate and contribute, there would be no FFH Events. So, thank you to everyone involved with the FFH this year.

OBJECTIVES & ACTIVITIES

All the funds raised by the FFH are spent to enrich the school community and the experience of our children throughout their school journey.





With due regard for the Charity Commission's public benefit guidelines and in line with our objectives, each year, the FFH runs a wide range of events to raise funds towards the school's "Wish List" and to provide social opportunities for pupils, parents, staff, governors, and the wider community. These include events like Highfest, Film Nights, Bacon Fridays, Freeze Pop Fridays, and more for the infant and junior pupils' enjoyment. The FFH also welcome suggestions from the membership and organises one-off innovative fundraising initiatives.

The FFH plans all activities, drawing on volunteers from the parent membership, school staff, and broader community of supporters as appropriate, with due consideration to safeguarding and risk assessments. The FFH is very grateful for the time, expertise, and donations given by all involved, without whom it would not have been possible to achieve so much.





The FFH's work enables the advancement of pupils' education by giving money to the school to purchase equipment, resources, facilities, and other "Wish List" items it would otherwise not be able to afford. Regular FFH meetings are held, and all parents and carers of enrolled Highfield students are welcome to attend. At these meetings, upon instruction from the Head Teacher, short, medium, and long-term spending and time frames are agreed upon.

We are very proud to announce that Mrs Lyons's objectives for the 2023/2024 School year have been met, and £47k was donated for the following short, medium, and long-term fundraising projects and goals.

All Short-Term Objectives:

- Donated £313.50 for First Aid Courses for Selected School Forms 
- Donated £400 to pay for Pantomime Bus Hire 
- Paid £135 for School End-of-Year Disco 
- Support the Year 6 Leavers by covering the costs (£84) and donating all proceeds (£517) from Freeze Pop Friday fundraising 

All Medium-Term Objectives:

- Defibrillator Machine 
 - Applied for and won a 50% Grant for a Defibrillator Machine, reducing the price from £1,800 to £900 
 - Donated £450 towards the remaining balance 
- Organised a sponsored read with our pupils and Usbourne Books to raise £1,200. Usbourne Books then donated a further £720 raised and provided books to Highfields to the value of £1,920. 

All Long-Term Objectives:

- Donated £40,000 to buy a new school bus. ✓
- Donated £3,250 for a 5-year contract with Kitt Medical Allergy, including onsite kits, staff training and maintenance. ✓
- Donated £1,750 towards the building of the new school pond. ✓

FUNDRAISING EVENTS & INITIATIVES

The fundraising year started as usual, with the Committee planning an events schedule similar to the program hosted in 2022/2024.

Key Fundraising Events across the year grossed:

- Highfest raised £11,483
- Highfire raised £3,700
- Wine Night raised £1,634
- Christmas Event raised £2,123

Key Fundraising Initiatives across the year grossed:

- Online School Bus Donations: £23,000
- Gift Aid: £5,299
- Usborne Sponsored Read: £1,200
- Other Donations: £710
- Uniform Shop raised £1,215
- Bacon Roll Friday raised £992
- Freeze Pop Friday raised £517
- Film Night(s) raised £1,238
- Student Theme Days raised £350
- Easyfundraising raised £2,374
- Sports Day raised £302
- Others raised £500

The Easyfundraising program has effectively raised passive funds for the FFH across the past year. Once a parent has signed up for the program, each time they shop with the included retailers, a percentage (average 1%) of their total spend is directed to the FFH's bank account every quarter. We have raised £2,374 this year and a total of £4,237.47 since the account was established in 2022. As of September 2024, 18 Highfield supporters have actively raised money for Highfields using the Easyfundraising application.

When we look at previous accounts for the FFH (the only records we have on file), we see that this year's gross revenue returned slightly higher results than any other financial year records dating back to 2015.

Year	Income	Outgoings (incl. Donations to School)	Net
2015/2016	£13,685.91	£20,469.75	-£6,783.84
2016/2017	£23,268.99	£31,321.15	-£8,052.16
2017/2018	£23,028.34	£15,597.59	£7,430.75
2018/2019	£19,686.48	£23,489.78	-£3,803.30
2019/2020	£6,317.85	£3,618.66	£2,699.19
2020/2021	£14,994.21	£7,727.99	£7,266.22
2021/2022	£19,456.1	£17,888.22	£1,567.88
2022/2023	£54,233.16	£49,856.96	£4,376.20
2023/2024	c.£56,000.00	c.£67,000.00	c.-11,000.00 **

** As mentioned, we started the year with £16K in the bank and raised a further £56K, totalling £72K in funds. We donated £47K to the school and spent £20K on operating costs and asset acquisitions, spending a total of £67K. While the above table shows us in the red by £11K, we have a positive balance of £5K in the bank thanks to starting the year with £16K (£16K - £11K = £5K). The new FFH Committee for the 2024/25 year will start this school year with £5K in the bank.

The FFH would like to take this opportunity to thank everyone involved in raising funds for the FFH this past year. We can all be very proud of our efforts and these impressive results.

HIGHFEST

This year, we were proud to host another successful Highfest weekend event under the theme of A Midsummer Night. Despite horrendous weather (including thunder, rain, and hail on Saturday afternoon), we enjoyed a fantastic weekend together. After all costs were met, we sold 232 tickets and grossed £11,438 netting £1,715.

Highlights for the weekend included:

Family Zone

- Fully Stocked Main Bar
- Pimms & Prosecco Bar
- All Day Live Music (3 Bands across the afternoon and early evening)
- Live Performance of A Midsummer Night's Dream with audience participation
- Variety of Hot Foods (including vegetarian, vegan and gluten-free options)
- Coffee & Milkshakes
- Evening Camp Fire Sing-along
- Tombola
- Festival Shop

Kids Zone

- Kids A Midsummer Night's Dream Workshop by Starlight Theatre Academy
- Kids A Midsummer Night's Dream Performance by Splatts Entertainment
- Traditional Face Painting
- Bouncy Inflatables, Disco Dome & Obstacle Course
- Children's Yoga
- Magician Shows

Highfest is run by dozens of parents who volunteer to make the event extraordinary for everyone who attends. We are very grateful for their efforts and generosity.

This year, there were a few instances in which current and past students' behaviour fell short of what is expected at Highfields School. Moving forward, the school will address any instances reported at Highfest regarding current student poor behaviour directly with the student (and their family) the following week. As for past students, any follow-up action will be at the FFH's discretion and may include exclusion from attending future FFH events in collaboration with school management.

HIGHFIRE

Based on a parent survey in 2023, we reintroduced Bonfire Night to the school and renamed it Highfire on Friday, November 9th. The event was a tremendous success, with a highly positive turnout of school families and 304 tickets sold. The event grossed £3,700 and netted £554.

Highlights for the evening included:

- No-Bang Fireworks display to scheduled music!
- Bonfire
- Hot Food, Drinks and a Bar
- Traditional Bonfire Sweets Shop

The event will be hosted again this year on Friday 8th November.

WINE NIGHT

In addition to reintroducing Bonfire Night, we hosted our first Wine Tasting event before the COVID-19 epidemic.

Highlights for the evening included:

- Live Music & Dancing
- Cheese Boards
- Wine Tasting

The event was a terrific success, with ticket sales grossing £1,634 and netting £679.27.

In September 2023, Mrs. Lyons, after conducting a thorough survey among parents, identified the pressing need for this school year – to acquire a new school bus to replace the current one. This urgent matter was further underscored in the October FFH Monthly Meeting, where the FFH unanimously agreed to kickstart the fundraising efforts.

The primary reason for changing the current bus is that a person with a Certificate D1 license can only drive the vehicle. Less than 5 of the schools' current staff hold D1 licenses, and these are mostly older and more senior staff.

A secondary reason is that the current minibus is a 2010 registration, which has become less reliable recently.

We agreed we needed a school bus that all teachers could operate with a full category B (car) driving license. The current setup, where senior staff are the only ones qualified to drive, often leads to scheduling conflicts and frustrations for teachers and sports planners. More drivers mean more opportunities for our children to participate in away days, sports events, and excursions.

In November 2023, we announced to the school parents that we would be fundraising to replace the existing school bus. Parents received this announcement and objective positively.

After reviewing the used bus market, it became clear that a budget of £40,000 - £45,000 would be necessary to purchase the right vehicle.

Fortunately, we already had £10,000 in reserves from the previous year's fundraising, leaving us a balance of £35,000 to raise. Through direct donations and the benefit of Gift Aid contributions, the FFH raised a total of £30,000, and in July 2024, £40,000 was donated to the school. It was agreed that a further £5k+ might be required, and if so, the school would trade in the existing school bus to meet that deficit.

Over the summer of 2024, the school purchased a new 17-seat bus with funds raised.

Thank you to all the generous families, particularly the Hanton family and other families who would like to remain anonymous, as their essential donations enabled us to meet our target.

Constitution

The FFH is an unincorporated association governed by an adopted Constitution dated 27 February 2023 and registered with the Charity Commission in England and Wales on 27 February 2023. The membership comprises parents or legal guardians of pupils currently enrolled in Highfields Independent School and Day Nursery. The association is fortunate also to enlist the help and support of the wider school community, including members of staff, governors, grandparents, former pupils and their families, and residents and businesses for events and fundraising.

Appointment of Committee Members

The Committee Members, of which the Office Holders shall number at least three, are elected volunteer members, except those appointed by the Constitution as listed above—the Officers, including a Chair, Secretary and Treasurer.

A school representative also holds an Officer role. Historically, the Head Teacher has held an Officer role on behalf of the school.

Each Office Holder and Ordinary Member is a Trustee and automatically retires with effect from the next AGM following their appointment. However, they are eligible for re-election at that AGM if they are proposed and seconded by the membership and are willing to stand for the role. When circumstances dictate, Office Holders may, outside of the AGM, appoint by co-option any person from within the membership ready to act as an Officer.

In addition, a team of seven Class Representatives (one per school year group) make up the support team for the FFH Committee and act as essential communications intermediaries on behalf of their year group.

COMMITTEE ELECTIONS

At the beginning of each school year, the FFH Committee Members are elected at the FFH AGM to manage FFH on behalf of all Members. There are two types of Committee members: Office Holders and Ordinary members; both are Trustees.

Office Holders have specific roles, such as Chair, Treasurer or Secretary and have a legal duty to ensure that FFH acts lawfully and is appropriately managed. Ordinary Committee Members are vital in working alongside and supporting the Office Holders.

The elected 2023/2024 FFH Office Holders from September 2023 to September 2024 included:

Chairs: Melanie McKinnon: Co-Chair: Olivia South

Secretary: Jo Legdon

Co-Treasurers: Leanne Lewin & Sara Radrizzani

Ordinary Members: Michelle Noble, Helen Willmott, Laura Fletcher, Sarah Hanton, Rebekah Pallett, Jo Porter

Staff Members: Mrs Lyons, Mrs East

Resignations from FFH Ordinary Members include Carly Carpenter, who resigned in March 2024.

New FFH Ordinary Members include Rachel Davison, who joined the FFH in June 2024.

FINANCIAL RESERVES POLICY

While the Trustees make prudent decisions, we do not have a formally agreed-upon Reserves Policy. At this point, we operate an informal agreement to retain £5,000 in the Main Bank account at the close of each school year. The Trustees review this level to see if it can be reduced to liberate funds for the FFH charitable purposes.

Upon the close of this financial year (later this month), we anticipate the Main Bank Account will hold £5,000.

The Accounts for 2023/2024 will need to be reviewed by an Independent Examiner as the FFH raised more than £25,000 this past year, which is the threshold for an independent review.

BANK ACCOUNT SIGNATORIES

The FFH holds a bank account with NatWest, and the following are signatories.

Olivia South
Melanie McKinnon
Jo Legdon

LICENSES

The Secretary manages all licensing, including applying for TENS (Event) Licenses and Gambling License for Raffle events. All licenses are currently up to date.

Melanie McKinnon: Chair

I have volunteered as Co-Chair and later Chair for the FFH over the past 19 months and am incredibly proud of the work the FFH has delivered during this time, with the support of many incredible parents and students. Highfields School and all its families should be deeply proud of the funds we have raised together, the fun events we have enjoyed, and the ongoing benefit these efforts will bring current and future students. I am grateful to have had the opportunity to lead the FFH and hope the charity will continue to grow from strength to strength as I hand the responsibility onto a new Chair this year.

Olivia South: Vice-Chair

Since joining the school in 2016, my family and I have been very fortunate to have experienced some incredible events run by the FFH. This led me to want to volunteer for the FFH, and starting in 2018, I could do so. I then became an Ordinary Member, followed by a Co-Chair, and am currently the Vice Chair. I have seen the FFH go from strength to strength in the last few years, particularly after COVID-19, when encouraging families to socialise at events was quite challenging. As I step down from Vice Chair to Ordinary Member of the FFH, I am very proud of all our achievements. I am sure people have often heard me say that the FFH is not just an ordinary PTA! I know the FFH's newest members will continue the tradition of making the Highfields' experience for children magical and memorable like no other school.

Jo Legdon: Secretary

I have enjoyed the role of Secretary for FFH but mostly I enjoy being part of the FFH team which gives me the opportunity to add value to my own child's school experience as well as that of all the other children in the school. Seeing the children's faces when we host our events and experiencing their excitement for events like Highfire, Non-uniform days, Film nights and Highfest is a great feeling; knowing that I've personally contributed to the excitement is very satisfying. The FFH is a great committee and the support of our parents with volunteering is invaluable so it really is a whole school / team effort!

Leanne Lewin: Treasurer

What an incredible year it has been for the FFH! I am so proud to be part of this amazing team of volunteers and all that we've accomplished together. Taking on the Treasurer role this year has been a rewarding experience—I've loved being a trustee and contributing from a financial perspective. There have been countless magical moments, but some of my highlights include seeing the children's excitement as they arrived at the 'snow' at the Christmas event, enjoying the 'low bang' fireworks set to music, singing around the campfire at Highfest, and, of course, the wine and dancing at the wine-tasting evening! This year, the FFH has exceeded all expectations. In addition to our usual fundraising efforts, we were able to help the school purchase a new bus thanks to the hard work of the committee members and the generous support from Highfield's families and local businesses. I'm excited to see what we can accomplish together in the coming year!