



Friends Of Brailes School (FOBS)

Annual General Meeting - online

Thursday 19th June 2024, 8pm

FOBS Co-Chairs Report – Mary Cole & Selina Hosell

Hello everyone and thank you for joining us for this year's AGM.

We, along with Susan, would like to start by saying a heartfelt thank you to all the families who have supported us over the past year—whether by offering advice, baking cakes, volunteering, or simply turning up with a smile. Your support truly means a lot.

Mary has coordinated a wonderful hamper full of stunning goodies which will be raffled next week at our summer raffle draw. All the volunteers who have helped at our events will be automatically entered as a thank-you.

We're also incredibly grateful for the ongoing support of the wider community and local businesses, who have generously donated and helped us throughout the year. And of course, a huge thank you to the amazing staff at Brailes School—teachers, TAs, support staff, and of course Mrs Childs—for creating such a nurturing and inspiring place for our children. We are so fortunate to be part of a school that continues to shine in so many ways.

FOBS is truly a team effort. While fundraising is important, it's just as much about building connections, bringing families together, and creating those special memories within our school and village. It's a community hub that we are really proud to be part of.

We stepped into the co-chair role last July, following on from a brilliant committee. Like many PTAs, we face challenges—mainly around getting new people involved, especially as long-standing volunteers move on when their children leave the school.

So, here's our gentle plea: **we need new faces**, particularly from families with younger children. You don't need to do a lot—even a little makes a difference. This year, we've introduced a monthly FOBS newsletter, held more socials, and created a New Starter Pack (to be distributed by Mrs Childs) to help engage new families and show them how they can get involved.

In February, we also sent out a short survey to understand how families feel about FOBS and its future. The response rate was small but echoed what we know—everyone is busy, and volunteering can be tough to prioritise. We get it—and are truly grateful for all the support, big or small, that continues to come our way.

Financially, we're in a good place. It's important we are open about the challenges we are facing and commit to making sensible, sustainable choices. We continue to explore grant opportunities as this provides extra income for school to use to buy resources. This year we have set aside funds to cover the cost of pledges we make to school for a "skeleton year," should it ever be needed in the event of a new committee.

Recap of our year!

We have had a busy academic year; here is a recap of the wonderful events we have held;

This year began in September with our Free **welcome tea, coffee, and biscuits** in the playground—an informal but lovely way to reconnect and meet our new parents. Unusually, this was quickly followed by the rescheduled **Brailes 3 Hills Walk**, whereas is tradition FOBS coordinate the sale of the cake and refreshments in the village hall, this gave us a strong start to our fundraising.

We were thrilled to host our first **informal open meeting and social** at Mary's Brew for Ewe at Glebe Farm PYO Pumpkins. We had an amazing turnout to what has previously been a low in numbers attendance to FOBS open meetings. We had an information board laid out and the committee was on hand to answer any questions. This led into our popular repeated **Stargazing event**, which happened to coincide with the passing of Elon Musk's Starlink, plus a perfect view of Saturn and the moon! Huge thanks to the Chipping Norton Amateur Astronomy Group, who brought their expertise and equipment and asked for nothing more than tea and cake—we were pleased to send them a donation in recognition of their generosity and hope to welcome them again in the future.

Tracey Thorne at The George at Brailes continues to be a fantastic supporter of our school allowing us to **sell glow sticks at their bonfire evening** and hosting a **quiz night** in aid of FOBS, this was a lovely evening and a great opportunity for us to share the things we love about our charity, and school with our village.

We had a busy run-up to Christmas, FOBS provided **refreshments at the rabbit's performance**, hosted a **Christmas disco** and "**Break the Rules Day**"—both of which were a big hit with an elective mix of songs! We also held a **Festive Social** at The George at Brailes, which gave everyone a lovely chance to unwind before the holidays and again the turnout was incredible.

In 2025, we introduced a few new events: "**Wear What You Love Day**" around Valentine's Day and the successful, fun and memorable "**Golden Ticket**" event for World Book Day and we are not sure who enjoyed it more us or the children! We then held the **2025 "Brailes 3 Hills Walk"**—and what a difference in weather from the previous year! With over 1000 adults, children and dogs attending, the event was a wonderful success, we give our huge thanks to Ben Venables and the 3 Hills Walk Committee for coordinating this event to raise funds for our school and the village pavilion and we also were able to support Brailes Footpath Group and Brailes Playground Fund.

With all this, we are thrilled to say we **smashed our £4,000 fundraising target** for the year!

Looking ahead, we are excited for the **FOBS Summer Raffle** which will be drawn next week, and the return of the much-loved **Scarecrow Trail** and the **Brailes Show** on 9th August. If you live locally, please do get involved, create a family scarecrow, volunteer at The Brailes Show or come

along and enjoy a fantastic day out. Thank you to Katie Haycock and the Brailes Show committee for running this which raises a great sum of money for us and our community.

Grants & Extra Funding

Thanks to the **Stour Valley Lions**, **Tesco Stronger Starts**, and funds from a previous summer fete and donation, we have helped school add new picnic benches to the school field and purchased added resources—supporting both lunch and outdoor learning and linking to the upcoming **OPAL play programme**.

The **Tesco voting scheme** returns in July (this time in Banbury)—please support us by voting and spreading the word!

This year, we also benefited from initiatives via **Parentkind**, including **No Cold Child** (providing warm coats for £10) and the **ASDA Cashpot**.

Every pound raised goes straight into enriching our children's school experience—from class and trip support to added resources and play equipment.

Looking Ahead

It has been a fantastic year. We are proud of what we have achieved and deeply grateful for everyone's support.

We are happy to continue as co-chairs for another year, but **FOBS needs more people** to help keep this momentum going. Whether it's an hour here or there, help at one event, or taking on a small role—we would love to have you involved. You don't need to know everything or do everything. We are here to support each other.

Thank you again for being part of this brilliant school community.

Mary & Selina

FOBS Co-Chairs