



Aston School Parents Association

Chair's Report – Year ended August 2025

When I agreed to take over from Sian last year as Chair of ASPA, I don't think any of us had any idea about what the past year would hold. It has been a year of tremendous highs and equally difficult lows in some ways. First of all, I would like to pay tribute to all of Team ASPA who have made my job so much easier this year. I cannot express my gratitude enough to the amazing ladies who sit here before me today. I know that volunteering to be on ASPA is more than just 'helping out with a bit of fundraising'. It is all consuming at certain times of the year and I know that you sacrifice time with your own families to make sure that the children at school get everything on their wishlist, and for this I am truly grateful.

The loss of Muireann was a huge blow to us this year. Not only was she the most wonderfully organised secretary we could have hoped for, she was a close friend to many, a voice of reason and calm in our more chaotic moments and part of the glue that makes ASPA so much more than just a parent's association. We miss her terribly and look forward to honouring her legacy with a permanent memorial in school this year.

On the flip side of such grief came the monumental feeling of achievement this year that after only 18 months of fundraising we hit the target on not one but TWO trim trails for the school grounds, with the first KS2 trail being installed in December 2024 and the second KS1 trail in August 2025. These have already been enjoyed by the children in school and will be such a long term legacy for ASPA to have been involved in – hopefully there will be children still playing on these in ten years time when our own offspring have left and moved on to their next school!

Our packed events schedule for the year kicked off in October with our usual neon disco being enjoyed by all thanks to the help of the school staff and the lovely Mr Tanner, and we also managed to squeeze in a doughnuts sale to help ease into half term. The children also spent time finalising their designs for the Christmas cards later on in the year (which always feels a bit strange doing it in October but we do like that early bird discount!)

We were able to purchase some wet play games for classrooms in November using the money raised from our Asda cashpot donations and then December started in style with our traditional Christmas Fair. This takes a tremendous amount of organisation but is always loved by the attendees, with a real feel of bringing the school community together. It involves dance displays by local groups, performances by the school choir and lots of fun stalls, including the opportunity to visit our fantastic Santa! We were also involved in the collecting as part of the Santa Round the Village event the following weekend which is always great fun and a fab way of us to offer support to other local groups. We finished the year off by helping with the refreshments at the school Christmas performances, and thanks to all those that chatted to the OFSTED inspector who arrived the next day. The quote from the report read as follows:

“The school works collaboratively and effectively with its highly valued parents' association. Fundraising efforts have helped decorate and furnish a special resource base called the 'Hub'. The association has also supported with the installation of impressive wall murals and a trim trail on the school field. This work enhances pupils' personal and physical development.”
Praise indeed from OFSTED!

January was spent busily planning for a major new event in our fundraising calendar – 40Fest which was our 40th birthday celebration involving the band Big Indie Rocks, Phil Hall of Mirage Disco and a rather large amount of prosecco! This took place at the start of February, and although initially planned as more of a thank you party and celebration of our 40 years, we did actually make a profit through ticket and drink sales which we were able to plough back into the trim trail fund. We also had our second neon disco of the year (February was a big disco month for ASPA!)

A busy February led on to a equally packed March, with the annual sponsored read and also the Someone Special females sale which had a lovely selection of gifts as usual. This meant that with the Easter holidays in April, we got a well deserved break this month.

May is the month we hold our traditional signature ASPA day and this year it was based on our 40th birthday celebrations, involving a magician (and reluctant rabbit), a silent disco, party games and hat and cake decorating. We were able to wow school at the final assembly at the end and break the news that we already had £11k towards the £15k total for the next KS1 trim trail. May half term was also when I braved the spider shed and gave it a good clear out which meant we have increased capacity for storage of ASPA resources (although we still need to tackle the Christmas stuff and purchase some more racking to give it the final push it needs).

June saw our Someone Special Sale for the men, and due to a slight hiccup with ordering we now have plenty of stock ready for next year – never a bad thing! We also began preparations for our Well Dressing event.

July is all about the well dressing and this year was no exception. This is a hugely important cultural capital event for the children in the village and we were very proud to be one of only two designs displayed this year. Due to the slimmed down nature of the event we had worried that the profits from our Rainbow Raffle would be significantly down but were relieved that that was not the case. Our final hurrah of the school year was to provide pizza and snacks for the year 6 camp out at the end of term.

Although this has been one of our biggest fundraising periods to date, it feels in some ways like we have spent less in school as our efforts have been focussed on two very ‘big’ purchases, but we have still been able to provide extra help towards games for the classroom, provide treats for year 6 and support towards PGL and give the children a fab ASPA day off curriculum. The Treasurer’s report details other financial spends for the year that I have probably missed, included Carolyn’s great efforts with the second hand uniform which is a great service for the school parents and brings in a steady trickle of income for us each year.

For the year ahead, I would like to recruit some new faces into Team ASPA so that the amazing achievements from previous years can continue and prosper. We are group consisting of a large amount of KS2 parents and it would be lovely to have some ‘young blood’ to start a handover to in the coming year, so that ASPA can continue to celebrate its birthday for many years to come.

Finally, thank you again to all who give their time up to help, be it 5 minutes, or in some cases like our lovely departing Alison, 10 years! It is always hugely appreciated and as the Beatles say “I get by with a little help from my friends.”