



Aston School Parents' Association

Chair's Report – Year ended August 2026

Well, another year has flown by and I can't believe I am typing my second and final chair's report for ASPA. I'm sure after our monumental fundraising efforts for the trim trail last year we had ideas that this would be a 'quieter' fundraising year but alas Mr Moore had other plans for us! (Only joking Mr Moore – there's nothing like an ambitious project to get us motivated!) After starting the new academic year without a firm plan as to what we might want to help school with, a seed of an idea started to grow. Discussions about the lack of suitable withdrawal spaces in school and the expansion of the very successful forest school provision, along with some internal school funding that needed to be spent this year pointed towards one very wanted addition to the school environment – an outdoor classroom space. We discussed this as a committee and decided we felt we could commit £7.5k to the project considering what we had raised in previous years. So what did we do to raise the funds?

Our year kicked off in October with Halloween disco being enjoyed by all thanks to the help of the school staff and the lovely Mr Tanner. To be honest, I'm still unsure whether we put these discos on more for the children or for Mr Moore and Mr Bamford, who thoroughly enjoyed themselves dancing to some banging tunes from the 1990s. We also completed our traditional Christmas gifts with pictures designed by the children in order to capitalise on the early bird discount. There was a new ordering system for these this year which helped streamline the process somewhat, so hopefully that will be adopted again this year.

We rolled into the Christmas season with several of our committee members helping with Santa round the Village in the last week of November – we are very appreciative of the donations they have given us over the past few years and hope we can continue to support this venture as it passes to new hands. The Christmas Fair was yet again a great success with a superb turnout and lots of fun games, stallholders and entertainment to pass the time. We also cracked open the Baileys as is tradition for the Christmas performances, encouraging day drinking and merriment whilst the parents watch the nativity.

We had a quieter January this year which was the equivalent of a lie down in a darkened room after the madness that is December in school, so come February we were ready to dive straight back in with our Valentine's disco. Glow sticks and heart decorations were the order of the day and everyone seemed to have an excellent time.

February led on to a busy March, with a Reading Bingo challenge which raised nearly £500 and the fun that is all the children dressing up for World Book Day. We also had another lovely Someone Special sale for all the ladies – it gets harder and harder to find items that are suitable for purchasing for £1 each, so I commend all the committee members who spend time making, baking and trawling Home Bargains over the course of the year – no one can sniff out a bulk buy bonus like a member of ASPA!

In April we had the virtual balloon race – it never ceases to amaze me how much time I spend checking on the position of my balloon and how annoyed I get when I fall behind – it's certainly good entertainment value for only £3!

In May we celebrated ASPA Day, basing the events on the 100th birthday of the wonderful David Attenborough. We were lucky enough to have animal handling, clay sculpting, art activities and a David Attenborough quiz to enjoy, which was all rounded off by the most amazing falconry display which we thoroughly enjoyed (although I'm not sure the reception class have yet to recover after they had a front row seat to 'chicken nuggets in their original wrapping'!)

June saw a very productive Someone Special sale for the males across the school community. Lots of lovely goodies were available, and I used one of the chillis from our gift plant in our tea last night – the gift that keeps on giving! Our grand finale for the year was our Rainbow raffle at the Well Dressing Festival in July. This is always popular and we are so lucky to be well supported in putting this on by the rest of the school community, as they volunteer not only goodies to stock the baskets with but also their time to help us run the stall over the two days. Our well dressing looked resplendent in the summer sun and it was great to share this culturally niche event with some newcomers to ASPA (we came to realise exactly how mad the whole process is when we were forced to explain each step in detail to someone who had no idea what a well dressing was...)

Other monies raised have come from sources that continually tick over in the background such as our Easyfundraising donations, uniform sales, tuckshops, Frozen Fridays and the newest addition to our fundraising stable – the school lottery. Each of these has been planned, carried out and had considerable time and energy spent on them by our amazing committee members in terms of setting them up and keeping them running – we give you our heartfelt thanks. We also need to mention other members of the school and village community who have helped with their own fundraising efforts, from inflatable Christmas decorations to table top sales, we sink all these funds back into helping the children and can't thank you enough for all that you do.

So what did we spend all our money on?! Well, we smashed our donation to school towards the outdoor classroom, not only being able to give £7.5k from the fundraising efforts across the year, but the lovely Carolyn also managed to secure an amazing £2.5k community grant from Richmond Village (Bupa Health) so the final amount given to school was £10k. Wow! We also funded all the activities on the previously mentioned ASPA Day, paid for the Year 6 Camp Out pizza and cookies, threw a party and bought the individual prizes for the winners of the Reading Bingo competition and raised enough to put towards the refurbishment of the reading corners in each classroom. Considering the small size of our school, this really is no mean feat.

And how does all this happen I hear you ask? Well, I have been lucky enough to be Chair of ASPA for the last two years and can honestly say it has been one of the hardest yet most rewarding positions I have ever held. First of all, I need to say thanks to all the teaching and support staff, pupils, parents, carers and the wider school community for all the support they offer us. Secondly, I am constantly in awe of the wonderful group of people that make up this team. Life with jobs, families and caring responsibilities is tough and busy, yet time and time again I see this group go above and beyond to make sure that the children in our school get everything they need and then some. Thank you for making my job as Chair so much easier than it could be, and for not just being members of the same organisation, but also people I'm honoured to call friends. I leave this position with absolute confidence in the team that are taking over – you are going to do a tremendous job. My comment in last year's report is that I wanted some 'new blood' to help drive ASPA forward over the next few years and I'm so pleased to see all the new faces from the past few months.

I love to finish with a quote and this year it comes from the American actress and comedienne Amy Poehler:

"Find a group of people who challenge and inspire you, spend a lot of time with them, and it will change your life."