



RHODES AVENUE PRIMARY SCHOOL ASSOCIATION  
Registered Charity No. 1082744

## **RAPSA AGM**

### **Minutes**

**7pm Wed 18 Oct 2023**

**Witham Hall, Rhodes Avenue Primary School**

Committee Members Present: Alison, Effie, Chi-Chi, Gigi, Pavla, Nadia, Giulia,

Apologies received from: Erika, Addy, Kelda

Staff member: Maria

Other attendees: 4

### **1. Welcome**

Alison opened the meeting and welcomed attendees. Rhodes Avenue PSA (Primary School Association) is made up of parents of children at the school; all parents are members of the PSA. Committee members are also parents at the school who volunteer their time, alongside jobs and busy family lives.

The aims of the PSA are to raise money for the school, and to bring the community together socially.

### **2. AGM 2022**

The minutes from last year's AGM were approved.

### **3. Review of Fundraising Events 2022-23**

With the final relaxation of COVID restrictions, larger fundraising events could be held once again. The slides displayed photos from various fundraising events, including coffee mornings, bake sales, quiz night, Santa's Grotto, the jumble sale, Rhodestock and the summer fair, which was the biggest fundraiser of the year. Virtually everyone from the school community got involved in some way, making the event a huge success.

### **4. Review of Finances 2022-23**

The academic year opened with £35K, of which £32K was transferred to the school. Net income from fundraising and events totalled £31K. Closing balance at the end of the year was £36K.

Breakdown of income:

- JustGiving – donations and Gift Aid raised £17K (including £11K from Adrian's memorial page)
- Commissions via Easyfundraising and Amazon Smile raised £1K. (Of note, Amazon Smile is no longer active, reducing the potential revenue from this platform this coming year).
- Annual fundraising events raised £17K (including £9K from the summer fair and sponsorship from local estate agents)

Expenses totalled £4K and included new gazebos for the school, Christmas bags, Easter eggs and the hire of Alexandra Palace for Adrian's memorial.

Questions were asked regarding how it is decided how the money is spent. It was explained that RAPSAs position is that the school is best placed to decide how the funds should be used to benefit the children, outside of the school budget from government. It is also written in RAPSAs constitution as a registered charity, that the school should take the lead on this decision-making. RAPSAs chair and treasurer meet with Maria/senior team to decide at the start of the school year what the priorities are for spending and to make a plan for the year.

There are some adjustments when donations are taken; platform fees are paid for Just Giving, Stripe, PTA events and SumUp. Gift Aid is a scheme available to charities, meaning extra money can be claimed from HMRC. For a £10 donation, £12.50 would be received through this scheme, as basic rate tax is reclaimed. It requires parents to tick the box if they are tax payer, when making a donation via Just Giving, for the school to benefit from Gift Aid. Additional funds raised through Gift Aid outweigh the fees that are paid out when using the various platforms.

The school has benefitted from funds raised by RAPSAs in a variety of ways in recent years:

- School trip subsidy (£21K)
- Technology equipment (£59K)
- COVID loan (£82K)
- External classroom pods (£37K)
- Astroturf (£16K)
- New books (£7K)
- Teacher classroom funds (£17K)
- Playground and climbing equipment (£67K)

In 2022-23 funds raised were spent on the following:

- Wooden Pod in Spinney (£15k)
- Reading Corners in every classroom (£850)
- New library books (£7k)
- Portable storage units for DT (storage that converts into tables) (£550)
- Revamp of pergola seating area (£1K)
- Speaker in corridor for calming music (£450)
- Hardship fund – trips – spent on residential only (£4.5K)
- New climbing frame in EYFS (£1K)
- Installation of new outdoor sinks (£500)
- Bake-off kitchen units (£1K)
- 6 portable hobs (£300)
- Dividers for playground to zone areas – (£3K)
- KS2 playground equipment (£890)
- Extension cables (£225)
- KS1 Playground river and bridge area (£5.5K)
- Hardship fund for school meals/BC/ASC (£3K)

## **5. Election of committee members**

Last year's AGM saw the election of new committee members, after the previous committee all stood down after an extended term of office post-COVID and/or with their children leaving the school.

Alison was renominated to be chair and this was seconded.

Chi-Chi was renominated to be secretary and this was seconded.

Effie was renominated to be treasurer and this was seconded.

## **6. Fundraising priorities**

- The planned safe space pod has now been designed and is due for installation in January. It will be a safe space for all, rather than a sensory pod for a smaller number of children, in order to be more inclusive. It will be located off the playground. The focus will be on the wellbeing and mental health needs of children at the school.
- Hardship fund for trips – this may need to be increased due to the current cost of living crisis
- EYFS bicycle trail (wet pour) - resurfacing of the ground for younger children
- Yurt or bell tent for the spinney to allow sheltered class teaching space as the pod is too small for a whole class
- Electricity installation for the pod in the spinney
- Books and stationery – additional to the school budget
- Flexible funding over the year as the need arises

Fundraising target for the coming year is £30K.

There was further discussion on how it is decided how the money is spent. The school has a wish list of things that they cannot provide with government budget allocation. The aim is for as many children as possible to benefit from them. The list of spending priorities gets presented to the chair and treasurer, who constructively challenge the proposals before agreeing them. Joanne Tillson (school business manager) also gave Alison and Effie a tour of the school to see the resources that have been paid for by RAPSAs.

A question was raised regarding how proportionate RAPSAs funds are compared with government budget. Maria explained that the school budget from the government is very limited once staffing has been taken into account. Approximately £10-11K remains for the curriculum. The school is running a deficit budget for the second year in a row. Therefore, having additional RAPSAs funds is very helpful; the school would not be able to afford the additional facilities/experiences without this vital fundraising. One parent commented that the significance of RAPSAs contributions is perhaps poorly understood by many parents across the school community. A suggestion was made to publicise this more, emphasising "Without RAPSAs we would not have..." including previous years' contributions to have a visual view of what has been funded over the last 5 years. This was followed by some discussion regarding how to increase parental involvement – there are many different ways of contributing. One parent suggested that calls are put out for people with specific skills to volunteer for specific tasks when needed. Alison also acknowledged that the RAPSAs webpage needs updating, and that this is planned for the coming year.

## 7. Dates for the diary

This year so far, £4,530 net profit has already been raised since September (£3,600 from quiz night, plus Welly Wednesday and coffee morning). The autumn/winter term tends to be busy with events. This year we will hold a Winter Fair, for the first time since COVID. Other big events in 2024 include the jumble sale (spring term) and summer fair.

## 8. How to get involved

All Rhodes Avenue PSA events are organised and run by parent/carer volunteers. There are many ways to get involved:

- Volunteer to help at events
- Send fundraising ideas to [rapasa@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:rapasa@hotmail.co.uk)
- Be an events coordinator for a one-off event
- Promote Rhodes Avenue PSA events as a class rep
- Make a donation
- Use Easyfundraising when shopping online, which donates a % for each purchase, e.g. M&S, Booking.com and other websites
- Corporate match funding

The committee itself needs to continue to grow and be future-proofed. The standard tenure of committee membership is two years, although members may wish to continue for longer, either in the same or more supportive role. The committee welcomes new members, and is grateful for either regular or more ad hoc support. Parents/carers with specific skills may be able to offer their expertise in areas such as website management, graphic design, finance, sustainability, gardening, baking, communications, apps, research, building, planning, team management, archiving, community champion liaison, sponsorship, advertising, apps etc.

By joining the committee, being a class rep, or volunteering to lead or help at an event, we have the opportunity to be at the centre of the school community while supporting the school.

On behalf of the school Maria expressed gratitude to the members of the RAPSAs committee for all of their hard work and commitment last academic year. Maria told the group that the Rhodes Avenue PSA army is always present in school working away for the benefit of all of the children. Maria told the attendees of the meeting that many of the things at Rhodes Avenue are there because of fundraising from Rhodes Avenue PSA and not from the school budget and it is these extras that have enhanced the provision offer at school. Maria said she would ensure to communicate more obviously which items/projects have been purchased from money raised by Rhodes Avenue PSA when communicating with the school community. Maria thanked the Rhodes Avenue PSA for their support in February when Adrian passed away. Maria reported that she will always be grateful for their presence and offer of support and help during what was a very difficult time in school.

Alison closed the meeting by thanking everyone for everything that you do, have done or will do for the school.