

The Friends of Hurstbourne Tarrant Primary School

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting

Registered Charity No. 289751

Date: Thursday, 17 September 2026

Time: 3:15 pm

Venue: Hurstbourne Tarrant Primary School

Chair: Sophie Bush

Minutes: Rachel Hoyes (Secretary), with AI-assisted transcription

Present

Sophie Bush (Chair), Rachel Hoyes (Secretary), Carly Bentley (Treasurer), Rachel Juniper, Chris Parker, Gareth Dee (Headteacher), Sarah Tilley (School Business Manager), Emma Main (Spring Class teacher), Jacob Solomon (Summer Class teacher), Abigail Kearsey (Autumn Class teacher), Sophie Claridge, Harriet Austin (left at 4.20pm), Beccy Battle, Gini Loughridge, Olivia (Livy) Wallace, Rosie Mills, Louise Pittuck-Schols.

Apologies for Absence

Michelle Rusbridge, Brian Heyel, Melanie Heyel.

1. Chair's Welcome and Logistics

The Chair welcomed attendees and thanked Mr Dee for facilitating the 3:15 pm start, which had enabled several more parents and members of staff to attend.

The Chair asked whether there were any objections to the use of an AI programme to assist the Secretary with minute-taking. Harriet Austin asked whether the school had any policy in place for carbon offsetting of its AI use. Mr Dee answered it did not. With no objections, Rachel Hoyes started the programme.

The Chair noted that there was a great deal to cover, that the meeting had started later than planned, and that she was mindful of everyone's time. She advised that she would move through the early items swiftly but would flag where there were opportunities for questions.

2. Approval of the Previous Minutes

The Chair confirmed that the minutes of the previous AGM (held 9 October 2025) had been circulated to the full Friends committee and published on the school website, and that hard copies had been distributed around the room. She invited any questions, corrections or alterations. None were raised.

Motion: That the minutes of the AGM of 9 October 2025 be approved.

Proposed: Rachel Hoyes. **Seconded:** Rachel Juniper

Outcome: Carried on a show of hands.

3. Matters Arising

3.1 School Paths

Rachel Hoyes reported that the path from the bridge to the tennis court had become a quagmire over the winter. Ian Seffon, a school parent, has offered to complete the work free of charge. An attempt was made last year but had to be aborted because conditions were too wet. He now hopes to carry out the work during the October half-term, though this may be delayed if a large commercial job arises, given that he is donating his time. The matter has been cleared with the Parish Council, which has responsibility for the path. Rachel Hoyes will keep members updated.

3.2 Reading Pod Project and School Shed

The Chair updated the meeting that, following email correspondence from the Chair of Governors (Mr Parker), it had been made clear that the reading pod project and the school-shed request had not been through the necessary internal processes at school with the leadership team and the governing body prior to being tabled at the previous AGM.

Both items are therefore on hold as far as the Friends are concerned and cannot be explored further until they have been considered by school leadership and the governing body. The Chair reiterated that the reading pod has the full support of the Friends and would be given the same careful and enthusiastic consideration whenever it is brought forward again by school leadership as a fundraising objective.

On the shed specifically, the additional obstacle is health and safety: a metal shed could be climbed on, creating a roof-access risk, and the matter requires engagement with the local authority. Mr Dee confirmed that Mrs Olding is looking into the matter.

Status: both funding requests currently withdrawn by the school while under review by school leadership and the governing body.

3.3 Meccano Sets (Mr Price's Request)

The Chair explained, for the record, that the delay on the Meccano sets requested by Mr Price at the previous AGM may in part have rested with the Friends: the sets requested were junior sets rated age 5+ and therefore probably not the correct product. Meccano was added

to the Friends' Amazon wish list in the hope that they might be gifted by a member of the local community but were not purchased — an approach Rachel Hoyes noted had not been a success. Mr Price's priority at the time had also been the shed, which was subsequently blocked on safety grounds, and his list also included a substantial request for computers, laptops and iPads, much of which was fulfilled by the Friends.

Action: Rachel Hoyes / Sophie Bush to follow up to confirm which Meccano sets are age appropriate.

3.4 Purchasing Route and Spend Tracking

Mr Dee raised the logistics of the per-class allowance, proposing that teachers submit their lists to Mrs Tilley, that the school orders the resources through the office and keeps a running tally of spend, and that the school then invoices the Friends for the costs.

Members agreed this was workable and, in Rachel Hoyes's words, that the Friends were happy either way. It was noted that the school holds supplier accounts and secures discounts, and can reclaim VAT (although Mrs Tilley flagged that this was not always possible on every Amazon purchase).

It was agreed that a shared spreadsheet would be maintained so that spend can be tracked transparently, visibility is maintained on both sides, and duplication is avoided.

The Chair clarified the Friends' working assumption: any request reaching the Friends is presumed to have been through the proper channels at school. The Friends then hold a committee vote on whether to fund it. She noted that, looking back at the previous year's list, the Friends had funded almost everything either fully or very substantially.

Actions:

- **Mrs Tilley to collate teacher lists and share with the Friends**
- **With Friends committee approval confirmed, Mrs Tilley to order resources through the school office, track spend and invoice the Friends.**
- **Rachel Hoyes to establish and maintain an ongoing requests-and-spend spreadsheet, to be shared with the school.**

3.5 Waitrose Community ("Green Token") Project

The Chair reported that the Friends have been working to secure a place in the Waitrose green token scheme, which awards funding in three tiers — **£500, £1,000 and £1,500** — with every participating cause receiving one of the three amounts. The Friends had originally been offered a January slot, with the reading pod raised only as a possible project, and have since been offered the opportunity to be brought forward to the period **1 October to 31 December**. A specific named project is required in order to take up the slot.

Mr Dee interjected to say that he had not been aware of the approach and asked to be informed when the Friends contact commercial entities, on the basis that the school's name is being used and he needs to know what is being said and what is being asked for. The Chair accepted this without reservation and undertook to make the school aware of

conversations with potential donors, noting that the Friends would never present anything as more than a potential project and would always be extremely careful with wording.

Carly Bentley asked whether the requirement applied to all fundraising or only to commercial entities. Mr Dee confirmed it applied where a commercial entity is approached using the school's name.

It was noted in passing that the Friends have legacy arrangements in place with **ASDA** (purchases made through the ASDA app) from a previous committee, and that Amazon Smile had also been used historically.

Mr Dee confirmed he was happy in principle for the Friends to be on the Waitrose scheme, but that there is currently no approved project to nominate. Options briefly canvassed included something reading-related (considered likely to appeal to the general public) and air conditioning (considered likely to read as a luxury to the public).

Agreed: without an approved project from the school, the Friends would have to push the Waitrose opportunity back to January.

Actions:

- **Friends to notify the school before approaching commercial entities.**
 - **The Waitrose slot to be revisited once an approved project is available.**
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4. Chair's Report

The Chair read her report in full, for the particular benefit of those who had not previously attended a Friends AGM. A copy of the Chair's Report is attached to these minutes.

Who We Are

The Friends is a registered charity governed by a formal constitution, available on the school website under the Friends section. The elected core officers — Sophie Bush (Chair), Rachel Hoyes (Secretary) and Carly Bentley (Treasurer) — also serve as the legal trustees of the charity, ensuring that the PTA acts lawfully, remains financially sound and pursues its charitable aims. They are supported by up to six named committee members in line with the constitution: Sophie Claridge, Livy Wallace, Rosie Mills, Louise Pittuck-Schols and Michelle Rusbridge. The Friends work closely with Mrs Tilley, School Business Manager, who actions approved funding, and rely on a wider network of volunteers.

Strategic Funding Framework

The core mission is to advance the educational experience of all pupils by raising money for enrichments that standard government budgets do not cover. The school leadership team identifies priorities, reviews them with the governing body, and submits requests to the Friends. Every committee member is given the opportunity to vote on every single spend.

Following the last AGM, the Friends committed to a benchmark of approximately **£500 per class, per term, per teacher request**, plus an additional **£500 for school-wide SEND provision**, with the twin objectives of fairness across the school and faster turnaround of spend. The Chair stressed this is a benchmark and not a hard-and-fast rule, and that the Friends remain open to other systems and continue to welcome requests, large and small, from the school throughout the year.

The Chair also asked that requests be submitted with a **priority order**, noting as an example that Mr Price's previous list had placed the shed alongside roughly fifteen computers with no indication of relative importance, which left the Friends guessing at what mattered most.

Year in Review

The Friends raised **£18,435** during the academic year. Flagship events brought the whole village together in support of the school, which had been an unofficial aim of the committee.

Beyond direct fundraising, the Friends completed several community projects:

- Work on **Syd's garden** with Mr Solomon, across three separate sessions with a team of parent volunteers
- A grant secured for **two picnic/games benches** on the play area
- Negotiation with local business owner **Vinoth** to fully fund a new school-branded **gazebo**
- Community donations of resources, including **Tonies for Spring class, toys and books** for the whole school
- Introducing a **music teacher** when the Hampshire Music Service was unable to provide cover for two full terms. The Chair noted this had proved a very successful appointment.

Impact — Where the Money Went

The Friends fully funded:

- Weekly music classes for every class
- Immersive Trunk Theatre history shows for the whole school (The Great Fire of London; The Romans)
- Two phonics computers and a dedicated library computer
- Dictionaries and thesauruses for the whole of Autumn class
- Specialist SEND resources, sensory equipment, STEM classroom toys and dyslexia screening tools
- Active Me 360 break-time activities, twice weekly
- Direct subsidies reducing coach costs for class school trips
- Over **60%** of the school's latest computer upgrade

Thanks and Contact

The Chair thanked Carly Bentley and Rachel Hoyes for their dedication and professionalism, and thanked the committee and all volunteers — noting that every cake baked and every stall staffed makes a difference. New members and ideas are always welcome via

hbtfriends@gmail.com or in the playground. The Chair asked that any ideas for resources or equipment be taken to the school leadership team and governors for oversight first.

5. Treasurer's Report and Accounts

Carly Bentley presented the financial position.

Income

Item	Amount
Summer fair, incl. silent auction	£8,458
Christmas raffle	£3,618
Quiz night	£1,768
Readathon	£1,775
Jumble sale (new this year)	£1,040
Discos, film nights and video game day (combined)	over £700
Donation — Vinoth (gazebo)	£950
Donation — Evans and Partridge (summer fair)	£500
Total raised	£18,435

Year-on-year growth: **£14,324** (2024–25) rising to **£18,435** (2025–26). The Treasurer attributed much of the increase to the silent auction at the summer fair and the success of new initiatives, the jumble sale and Readathon.

Expenditure

The Friends paid **£26,000** directly to the school during the year, part of which settled invoices carried over from the previous school year. This included **£5,000 towards the school's recent laptops/computers** investment of £7,900 and full funding of the enrichment programme (Trunk Theatre workshops, dictionaries and thesauruses, weekly music tuition, sensory and SEND equipment, and dyslexia screening).

Systems and Platforms

- **ZEFFY** has been introduced as the Friends' fundraising platform. It charges 0% commission and handles ticketing, auctions and donations. Members reported it as

user-friendly, a significant time-saver, and a considerable improvement for reconciliation of accounts.

- A **Lloyds Bank card terminal** and **PayPal POS** are now used for on-site payments. This was of particular help at the busy summer fair, where the previous single-device card machine had been a bottleneck.

Reserves

The bank balance stands at approximately **£20,000**. The Treasurer and Secretary explained that a buffer is deliberately maintained to cover emergencies, the substantial upfront costs of the summer fair, and the risk of a washout in bad weather.

Mr Dee thanked the Friends on behalf of the school for the time volunteers have given and the sums raised, and said the school was genuinely appreciative.

Adoption of the Accounts

It was noted part-way through the following item that the accounts had not yet been formally approved. It was agreed that the accounts would be circulated by Carly Bentley to Friends committee members, school leadership and the governing body and, once formally adopted, published on the school website alongside the AGM minutes.

Actions:

- **Accounts to be circulated to members, school leadership and the governing body.**
- **Formal adoption of the accounts to be confirmed.**
- **Approved accounts to be published on the school website.**
- **Minutes of this AGM to be published on the website.**

6. Election of Committee Members and Core Officers

The Chair declared all core officer positions and all ordinary committee member roles vacant, and acted as returning officer for the election.

Role	Elected	Proposed by	Seconded by
Chair	Sophie Bush	Livy Wallace	Rosie Mills
Treasurer	Carly Bentley	Sophie Bush	Rachel Hoyes

Co-Secretaries

Rachel
Hoyes and
Rachel
Juniper

Sophie Claridge

Carly Bentley

The Chair noted that if any procedural error had been made in the nominations she would welcome correction, and looked to Mr Parker in that regard. No objection was raised.

Rachel Hoyes explained the co-secretary arrangement: she intends to **step down at the end of this academic year**, with Rachel Juniper taking the role thereafter. She emphasised that this was the committee's suggestion only and that alternative nominations from the floor would have been entirely welcome.

Ordinary committee members elected as a slate: Sophie Claridge, Livy Wallace, Rosie Mills, Louise Pittuck-Schols and Michelle Rusbridge. Carried on a show of hands.

7. Fundraising Objectives from School Staff

The Chair reiterated the £500 per class per term benchmark as a fairness mechanism rather than a cap, and repeated the request for **prioritised** lists.

Mr Dee confirmed that all items presented had come from the teachers and had his support. He noted that small-ticket items are straightforward, but that larger items are more complicated than they first appear, often requiring external agency involvement, Hampshire County Council engagement and risk assessments — tree work in summer, where branches may drop, being one example.

7.1 Whole School

Funding objectives were presented by Mr Solomon.

- **NGRT (New Group Reading Test).** The current test is significantly out of date. Cost is not published and must be obtained by speaking to the supplier directly; Mr Solomon has emailed them. Mrs Tilley has a contact and is also looking into it.
- **Two new iPads.** Of the fifteen class iPads, one has been reassigned to the front desk after the sign-in iPad failed, reducing availability for class use. Spring and Summer class in particular are affected.

7.2 Mr Price

Mr Solomon presented a list of funding requests on behalf of Mr Price.

A list ranging from a **wooden storage box** through to **10 new netball kits**, a **rugby set** and the outstanding **Meccano**.

Action: Mr Dee / Mrs Tilley to email Mr Price's full list to Rachel Hoyes, reorganised in order of priority.

7.3 Mrs Main (Early Years / outdoor provision)

- **Horseshoe table** — described as a strong shared priority with Miss Gelderd. Both have seen the table in use in another school; it allows a teacher to sit centrally with approximately six children around them, improving visibility, accessibility and peer conversation without leaning across engaged children. A specific product link is available. It was noted that the arrangement had worked very well at a school which has recently closed but the furniture had been acquired by another organisation.
- **New sandpit, with a cover** (to keep out leaves, balls and cats), **plus sand**.
- **Deep water tray with guttering** — existing trays are too shallow, so water goes everywhere and children get soaked; guttering supports rolling balls and cars, useful for understanding the world.
- **Bike helmets** — a small number of replacements, as existing helmets are showing wear.

It was confirmed that **pre-loved items are acceptable** for sandpit resources (e.g. animals, small toys), since such items get broken and binned in any case. The Friends will put a request out to the community.

Action: Mrs Main to send the horseshoe table link to Rachel Hoyes for costing and committee vote.

7.4 Miss Kearsey

- **"Spice of Life" topic — Indian dance workshop**. A provider has been identified. Cost estimated at around **£200**.
- **World Book Day guest speaker** — to bring more visitors into school.
- **Dyslexia screener for Autumn class**. A second unit is required, as the existing screener is in use with Mr Solomon's class. Cost expected to be similar to the previous purchase, **c. £300**.
- Thanks were recorded for the Friends' existing subsidy of **school trips**, which Miss Kearsey said were the remainder of her list.

7.5 Friends' Inventory

The Chair advised that the officers intend to establish an **inventory of items supplied to the school**, so that all parties can see what has been provided and when — the example given being repeated Lego requests where nobody is sure what has already been bought and items end up at the back of cupboards.

Action: Friends officers to establish a supplied-items inventory.

7.6 Offer of Donated Laptops (Harriet Austin)

Harriet Austin reported that a project at her employer had recently closed, leaving **over 280 Lenovo laptops** available for a fraction of their original purchase price. They are effectively new — some have barely been switched on — and come with a **three-year warranty**. The alternative is destruction, as they cannot be recycled. An invoice would be issued. The laptops cannot be resold (e.g. on eBay).

Rachel Hoyes noted that a full laptop refresh had previously been costed and would have wiped out the Friends' reserves. Mr Dee confirmed the school would in fact **prefer refurbished machines** for pupil use, subject to the school's IT provider (**Drift**) being able to configure them for the school network. He undertook to contact Drift.

Carly Bentley asked whether iPads or dyslexia screeners might also be available; Harriet believed the stock is laptops but agreed to check, noting her employer holds around six dyslexia screeners.

Actions:

- **Harriet Austin to email Mrs Tilley (copying Mr Dee) with full specifications and details of the laptops, and to confirm availability and the deadline.**
- **Harriet Austin to check whether iPads and dyslexia screeners are also available.**
- **Mr Dee to contact Drift regarding configuration.**

7.7 In-School Enrichment as an Alternative to Trips

Rosie Mills argued in favour of more school trips, noting the children love them. Members sympathised — the Chair agreed the school would ideally do more trips but noted the practical difficulties, particularly coach availability and cost. Mr Dee confirmed that trips were often cancelled by other schools for want of transport.

The proposed compromise was to **bring providers into school**. The Trunk Theatre history day was cited: the whole school saw the performances on The Great Fire of London and The Romans, resources were supplied for workshop activity as well as the shows, nobody had to travel, and there were no coach costs.

A **four-year cycle** of themed in-school days was proposed — e.g. a history day, a geography day and a science day — timed to match each year's topic, and taking advantage of the fact that topics carry across classes. Members were enthusiastic and agreed it should be put forward for support.

Suggestions were also made that, where trips do go ahead, booking well in advance and offering parents the option to pay in instalments (e.g. two payments of around £25) would improve affordability and access.

Action: Friends to explore funding a four-year cycle of in-school themed enrichment days.

7.8 Process Following the AGM

The Chair explained the standard practice: the Friends collate all requests from school leadership as quickly as possible after the AGM, take them to the next Friends PTA meeting, for discussion and approval and aim to give an answer on every single item so that purchasing can begin promptly. The Chair noted that the Friends have usually approved every requested item for funding and usually in full.

8. Any Other Business

8.1 Routing of Ideas from Parents

The Chair asked how ideas raised informally with Friends members in the playground should be routed, given that the Friends cannot judge what the school does or does not need.

Mr Dee confirmed that parents may continue to approach the relevant teacher directly where an idea is plainly relevant to them — the Chair's contact with Mr Solomon about Trunk Theatre being the model — **provided he is copied in**, so that he retains oversight and there are no unwelcome surprises. It was also noted that some ideas might sit better with the **school council**.

Mr Dee added that, with **three months left in post**, he was conscious that the incoming Headteacher may have different ideas and priorities, and that he would therefore not be putting forward significant requests of his own. He said it would be valuable for his successor to arrive knowing what resources are potentially available through the Friends.

8.2 Readathon Funds — Remaining Balance

Rachel Hoyes and the Chair confirmed that, after the two phonics computers, the library computer and the dictionaries and thesauruses, approximately **£700 of Readathon money remains unallocated**. When promoted, the Readathon was directly tied to World Book Day and all funds raised were earmarked for reading, phonics, the library, so the c. £700 balance remains ring-fenced for reading-related provision.

Mr Solomon reported that a list of books had already been compiled, with pupil input and handed over.

Agreed: Mr Solomon to resend the book list to Mrs Tilley, and the school to purchase books to the value of £700 through the school's own purchasing route, invoicing the Friends. The Chair confirmed this was already an approved spend. Miss Kearsey added that comics and magazine subscriptions would be equally welcome and the children would enjoy them.

Action: Mr Solomon to send the book list to Mrs Tilley; school to purchase to a value of £700 and invoice the Friends.

8.3 Joint Event with St Mary Bourne

Harriet Austin asked whether a joint event with St Mary Bourne Primary School had ever been considered — specifically a **ball**, as a large ticketed event capable of raising significant sums and open to parents and the wider community.

Sophie Claridge responded that her sister is a parent at St Mary Bourne Primary School and a ball had been discussed as a possible joint fundraiser.

Members were enthusiastic. The proposal discussed was that proceeds be **split 50/50** between the two schools. Rosie Mills cautioned that the key risk is the **upfront funding**: both PTAs would need to commit equal amounts in advance and agree proportions clearly, to avoid disputes over who paid for what. Organisation would be critical, as two separate charities would need to agree the same terms.

Mr Dee confirmed he had no concerns from the school's perspective.

Action: Friends to explore a joint ball with St Mary Bourne Primary School, including upfront cost-sharing arrangements.

8.4 Upcoming Events and Fundraising

Members noted that the full events programme would not be covered in detail, for time reasons, and that staff would be very welcome at the next Friends meeting where it will be discussed.

- **Christmas raffle** — the major event of the Christmas term. **Rachel Juniper** will lead again, having raised approximately £3,600 last year. Work has already begun. Sophie Claridge will assist with raffle prizes.
- **Auctions, donations and philanthropic support** are always welcome.
- **Readathon** — confirmed as a great success, with many appreciative comments from parents about the way it engaged children with reading. **Agreed by both the school and the Friends that it should run annually.**
- **Maths-a-thon / science-a-thon** — Carly Bentley asked whether the Readathon model could be applied to maths or science. The idea was received enthusiastically as a "maths challenge".
- **Ground force day** — mooted as a way to keep the school grounds well maintained.

Action: Friends to produce a draft events list at the next Friends PTA meeting and send it to Mr Dee for dates to be agreed.

8.5 School Disco — Request for Staff Support

Rachel Hoyes raised that the discos, while enjoyed by the children, are the one event the committee finds difficult. Parent volunteers do not know all of the children's names, what behaviour is appropriate, or what the children are and are not permitted to do, and the event can become chaotic. Mrs Tuson's attendance last year, running structured dances, made a substantial difference.

It was asked whether any staff would be willing to attend. Mr Dee suggested involving the **student council**. Rachel Hoyes welcomed this warmly and confirmed she has already had some contact with **Miss Kearsey**, who leads the school council, on related matters.

Action: Rachel Hoyes to speak with Miss Kearsey about student council involvement in the disco and a more structured format.

8.6 Communications

In response to a question about how events are publicised, the Chair explained the process: the Friends first confirm the school is content for the event to be held; materials are then approved by Mr Dee and sent out to the parent community and staff by Mrs Tilley. The Friends then reinforce through parent **WhatsApp groups**, with committee members spread across all year groups. Where an event is community-facing and has been approved and circulated, the Friends promote it more widely — via **Facebook**, posters, and village noticeboards. The Friends do not use Instagram.

It was noted that the Friends work closely with the **Parish Council**, and that the summer fair is run jointly with the **horticultural/flower society**, which works well.

8.7 Commemoration of Mr Sullivan

Sophie Claridge reported that, at the Annual Parish Meeting, she had learned that **David Sullivan** had very kindly donated money to the school, and asked whether a plaque or similar commemoration might be possible — noting that **Mrs Murdoch** had also made a generous donation, and that it would be meaningful for the family. Members recalled Mr Sullivan's contribution to the school over many years, particularly his reading help.

Mr Dee said the family are completely open as to the form it takes, and that his own thinking was towards something **spiritual** — reflecting the church element of the school and its values. Possibilities mentioned included new house flags and a spiritual area in Syd's garden. It was clarified that the existing bench commemorates Mrs Murdoch.

The Chair offered that, if funding help is needed, the Friends could put a proposal to the committee — including potentially **match-funding** the sum donated by David Sullivan.

Action: Mr Dee to develop a proposal; Friends to consider match funding once a proposal exists.

9. Close

The Chair thanked everyone for attending, noting particular appreciation for those who had managed childcare in order to be there and for staff who had stayed on.

Contact: hbtfriends@gmail.com