

Friends of Bolney CEP School AGM – Chair's Report

Wednesday 12th November 2025

Welcome and Introduction

Good evening everyone, and thank you for joining us for the Friends of Bolney AGM.

Over the past year, Friends of Bolney has continued to play an important role in supporting Bolney School through fundraising, events, and community connections. It's been another busy and rewarding year, focused on maintaining the wonderful enrichment and support that our charity provides — even during a time of change for the committee.

Thank You to Our Supporters

First, I want to say a huge thank you to everyone who has contributed — whether by helping at events, donating prizes, organising fundraisers, or simply supporting us with your time and encouragement. Every bit of help makes a difference to what we can achieve for the children at Bolney School.

A special thank you to **Clem Sutters** for continuing to research and apply for grants, and to **Clare Pope** for securing the **Tesco Stronger Starts grant**, which provided **£1,500** towards the new slide area in the playground. In total, grants have contributed **£1,800** this year.

We're also very grateful to **Ms Lofthouse** and all the school staff for their continued partnership and support, and growing involvement in fundraising — particularly through their collaboration on the **Christmas Fair** last year and support for the brilliant **Music Quiz organised by Zoe Belton**, which raised **£384**.

Strengthening Community Connections

This year, we've worked hard to continue strengthening links between the school and the wider community. Our community coffee mornings have been a highlight — the children and staff hosted villagers, proudly showing their work and sharing school life. A big thank you to all the parents who baked such delicious cakes and those who helped serve refreshments.

Fundraising Highlights

Fundraising this year has been a team effort that has raised just over **£8,500**. Highlights include - The **Christmas Fair and Raffle**, run in collaboration with the school, which raised an impressive **£2,180**. The **2024 Challenge** brought in **£1,029** — a fantastic initiative that involved every child having the opportunity to raise £20.24 towards the school's production of *Jack and the Beanstalk*. The **Pram Race stalls**, run alongside **Jill Doddington** and **Hannah Edwards**, raised **£1,600**, including **£500** of matched giving from Jill's workplace — another brilliant community event. Huge thanks also to **Lacey Fox** for organising the **school disco** and **colour run**, which the children loved and which raised a combined **£975**.

What We've Funded

Over the past three years, our small but dedicated committee has raised more than **£40,000**, including the **Bolney Blast**, which alone raised **£6,000** — with funds from our upcoming raffles and auction still to be added. This last year alone we have spent **£16,300** supporting a fantastic range of enrichment experiences: from workshops and music lessons to playground improvements, drama sessions for the school Panto, and the much-loved whole school trip to the Hawth for the Panto last Christmas. We've also continued our commitment to fund vital curriculum contributions, helping teachers access resources that enhance learning and inspire our children.

Supporting Bushcraft

More recently, we've supported the school in bringing **Bushcraft** in-house — working with Rachel Booty to source the equipment needed to set up the area and through funding the annual running costs of this brilliant enrichment activity. Thank you to all of the parents who have kindly donated equipment.

Building a Sustainable Future for FoB

A major focus this year has been shaping the future of Friends of Bolney to make it more inclusive and sustainable. Following our **Parent and Carer Survey**, with a fantastic **73% response rate**, we introduced clearer communication channels, a new **WhatsApp community**, more flexible ways for families to get involved and ways to engage the children in regular fundraising— including the introduction of **class bake sales**. The first, run by **Willow Class**, raised **£134**, and with six planned per year, this could raise around **£800** annually. Thank you to the school for their support with this initiative.

We've also encouraged more parent voices through our new polling group, which has been a brilliant way to involve families in conversations and decisions about how funds are used.

In addition, we launched the option for **voluntary financial contributions**, which some families have already joined — thank you to those who have. We hope these changes create a strong foundation and framework for the new committee to build on, helping to share the load and ensure Friends of Bolney continues to thrive for years to come.

Committee Farewells

As we come to the end of our time on the committee, I want to acknowledge the incredible ladies I joined the committee with three years ago and have been on this 'PTA journey' with! **Danielle Elphick** (Co-Chair until February this year), **Lacey Fox** (Secretary), and **Clare Pope** (Treasurer until February this year and member for 6 years) have all poured in endless energy, brilliant ideas, time, and support—often going above and beyond. Their dedication, creativity, and commitment have ensured continued fundraising success and, most importantly, have created amazing experiences and opportunities for the children. I am grateful to them and proud of what we have achieved as a team.

As our final gift from the committee this year, we're excited to organise a **Christmas magic show** for the children. We hope it brings lots of joy and excitement!

Welcoming the New Committee

Tonight, Clare, Lacey, and I are stepping down to make way for a new committee. I'm very pleased to welcome **Georgia Rainback** as our new Chair and **Rebecca Cymerman** as Secretary, **Sophia Civale** as a Committee Member and to give a big thank you to **Lorna Barrow**, who has already been doing a brilliant job as Treasurer since February.

Looking Ahead

We're leaving the committee in a strong financial position, with the upcoming **Rawson Hall 10th Birthday Raffle and Auction and Christmas Raffle** still to come. We hope these events continue the momentum and provide valuable funds for the year ahead.

As we step down, we do so knowing that FoB is financially stable, full of potential, and ready for a new chapter with fresh ideas and enthusiasm.

Friends of Bolney is open to **everyone** — parents, carers, staff, and the wider community. Its success depends on all of us playing a small part, whether that's giving time, sharing ideas, or offering a little support. Every bit helps, so please get involved and support the new committee as they take things forward.

Thank you once again to everyone who has supported us over the last three years. It's been privilege to serve as Chair and I wish the new team every success for the years ahead.

Zoë Bellamy

Chair – Friends of Bolney CEP School