



EX CORDE VITA.

KING ALFRED SCHOOL SOCIETY

MINUTES OF THE 127th ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

HELD ON 11th FEBRUARY 2025

The Annual General Meeting of the Society was held on 11th February 2025 at 7.00 p.m. in the Main Hall.

Present:

Kara Conti	President
Sam Jukes-Adams	Chair
Council members	14
other KASS members	38

In attendance:

Robert Lobatto	Head
Caroline Korniczky	Secretary

President's welcome

Kara Conti welcomed everyone to the 127th Annual General Meeting of the King Alfred School Society.

A Fond Farewell: Forty Years at KAS in Four Acts

Good evening, friends. As I stand before you at the 127th AGM, my last as President, I'm filled with gratitude and a touch of nostalgia. Tonight, I'll share not just a report, but a tapestry of memories—my own “highlight history” of the school, woven from four decades of involvement, laughter, and the occasional well-intentioned misstep.

The Society's Year in Brief This year, your subscriptions have fueled a flurry of activity: co-hosting a conference in Manchester, launching and planning TEDx events, commissioning research on university assessment and new commercial ventures (because, yes, VAT is still a villain), and continuing our beloved Village Book project. Through it all, we've stayed true to our three guiding Ps: preserve, progress, and promote.

Phase 1: Parent Staff (7 Years) I arrived in 1984, drawn by the spirit of A.S. Neill and the legendary Areta Hautman, who roped me in before I'd even parked the car. Soon, I was sewing costumes, running a crèche, and launching the first Fireworks Night—my “joyous mark” on the school. Fundraisers grew grander, from fashion shows to “Come Dancing” balls, and the Auction of Promises became our crown jewel. But it wasn't all glitz; I also introduced the voluntary contribution to fees—my “less popular mark,” but one that stuck. Along the way, I learned that sometimes, Parent Staff could be a bit too enthusiastic for senior staff's liking!

Phase 2: KAS Teacher (One Term) For one term, I swapped parent meetings for the classroom, teaching Year 3. I discovered the joys and challenges of teaching (and staging a memorable production of "Jaws" with a twenty-foot shark). It was a brief but transformative stint, giving me a new perspective on the school and its people.

Phase 3: Chairing Council (9 Years) As Chair, I dove into the deep end—my first task was sacking the Bursar! We launched new appeals, revived the Alfredian magazine, and celebrated the Centenary in style (I even played our founder, Isabel White Wallis, and sang backup for Spandau Ballet). I supported our heads through thick and thin, sometimes being accused of being "in the head's pocket," but always striving for unity and progress.

Phase 4: President (25 Years) The presidency brought new challenges and joys: hosting education conferences, supporting beloved heads like Dawn Moore, and weathering storms of parent and council unrest. There were moments of division, but also of healing and growth. I became "granny" to new pupils, helped steer the Society through change, and found immense pride in the current leadership team. As I step down, I leave the Society in good hands, with Annabel Cody ready to carry forward the 3 Ps.

Final Thoughts KAS has been my home, my family, and my passion. I'm not really leaving—there's still the Village Book, more TEDx events, and, of course, four more years of school fees! If I could pardon anyone, it would be Peter Palliser (for a fading faxed apology), and I leave you all with this: the President's role is to advise, to preserve, progress, and promote. What could possibly go wrong?

Thank you for letting me be part of this remarkable journey. KAS sticks—with all its quirks, triumphs, and enduring spirit.

Chair's Introduction

Sam Jukes-Adams welcomed everyone to the AGM.

Sam thanked Kara for the amazing insight she had just delivered into decades of KAS and your unbelievable commitment to the school and community.

Sam started by explaining the format of the evening and introducing the speakers; Fiona Hackett Chair of Grounds and Buildings; Nick Friedlos, Treasurer and Philip Whale, Chair of Governance on proposed amendments to the Articles of Association. She explained that Caroline Korniczky, our Director of Finance and Operations, would go through the formal business part of the AGM, after which Robert would speak and give his update on the school and his annual thoughtful speech.

Sam clarified that there would be an opportunity to ask questions on the accounts before the vote to adopt the report and Accounts, and on the article amendments after Philip's report. Questions on the other reports would be taken at the end of the formal part of the meeting, prior to the break.

Sam went on to introduce the nominees, explaining that in this year's annual Council elections there were four spaces and 4 nominations to join Council, which meant no contested ballot would be held. She explained that new and returning Council members would be therefore voted in by a show of hands later on in the meeting in Caroline's section of the proceedings.

In alphabetical order, Sam asked each candidate to stand and briefly introduce themselves and their connection to KAS –

- Amy Chapman - new candidate for election
- Grace Edghill - for re-election
- Fiona Hackett - for re-election

- Marshall Stark - new candidate for election
Sam noted that for the role of Treasurer there was one nominee - Nick Friedlos and with the retirement of Kara Conti as President after 25yrs, there was one nomination from our ex chair of Council and long term champion of KAS, Annabel Cody.

Apologies: Apologies were noted from those Council members unable to attend

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting on 6th February 2024: There were no matters arising and the minutes were adopted unanimously.

Chair of Grounds and Buildings' Report

Fiona reflected on the committee's strategic role in maintaining and improving the school's buildings and outdoor spaces, highlighting the complexity due to the site's size and student diversity.

Fiona noted that last year there were key staff changes with a new Director of Finance and Operations (Caroline) and a new Estates Manager (Sam), both bringing valuable experience from previous roles.

Fiona noted that Sam had adapted quickly to the school's governance structure and values the committee's involvement in major projects. He suggested more student engagement could foster greater care for the environment, which is to be encouraged.

Fiona praised the estates team for their teamwork and dedication, with recent additions improving site management and maintenance.

Fiona noted major projects that had been undertaken during the year include the successful Phoenix Theatre extension (on time and budget), upgrades to the photography and archive areas, and landscaping improvements at the school entrance. She noted that routine maintenance continued to reduce urgent issues, thanks to planned preventative schedules.

Looking ahead, Fiona noted that there was interest in exploring solar power and other green initiatives, with ongoing commitment to the school's wellbeing and development.

Treasurer's Report and Adoption of the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the thirteen month ended 31st August 2024

Nick Friedlos, Treasurer and Chair of the Finance Committee, gave his report on the finances of the school.

Nick noted that it had been a busy year for finance, with significant developments including the implementation of VAT on school fees (effective January, not September 2025 as initially expected) and national insurance increases.

Nick explained the roles of the executive team and Council in financial management. The executive team, led by Caroline Korniczky and reporting to Robert, manages day-to-day finances, budgeting, and planning. Council oversees financial risk and ensures a sustainable financial plan.

Financial Results for the thirteen months to 31 August 2024

The audited accounts for the thirteen month ending 31 August 2024 were presented, having been reviewed and approved by Council and external auditors (Hays Macintyre), who issued a clean audit opinion.

Nick noted that the reported surplus was lower than the previous year due to a change in the accounting period (13 months reported instead of 12), not due to underlying performance. He also noted that the school maintains a strong cash position and did not use its overdraft facility in 2024.

VAT and Other Financial Pressures

Nick noted that this year had seen not only VAT on school fees but also other financial pressures (loss of business rates relief, increased national insurance) were discussed. This is a school wide issue and so a VAT working group, including finance and other Council members, has been established to make recommendations.

Nick explained that the school's main income was from fees, with additional income from lettings, donations, etc. Main costs are employment and infrastructure. To mitigate the impact of VAT, fees for January were reduced by over 4% (excluding VAT), resulting in a net increase of 15% for parents (instead of 20%). A 2% cap on fee rises for the autumn term was set, providing certainty through to September 2026. However, the school is actively seeking additional income sources and continues to review costs for efficiency.

The impact of VAT on demand for independent education is still uncertain, but Nick emphasised that the school remains positive about student retention and recruitment. The school aims to maintain financial headroom to support its educational offer and sustainability.

Acknowledgements: Thanks were extended to Caroline Korniczky, (DFO), Alex (finance manager), and new team members Hiral, Grace, and Louise for their contributions.

Nick gave special thanks to Sarah Phillips, the previous Treasurer, retiring from Council, for her invaluable support both during the transition and throughout her time on the Finance Committee.

Questions and Approval: Members were invited to ask questions about the accounts before the formal vote to approve them.

Nick then handed the meeting over to Caroline Korniczky to run through the formal business.

Adoption of the Report and Accounts for the thirteen months ended 31st August 2024.

Nick proposed the adoption of the Trustees' Report and Financial Statements for the thirteen months to 31st August 2024. This was seconded by Nick Harper. The Report and Financial Statements were unanimously approved.

Approval of the proposed amendments to the articles

Philip Whale explained the proposed amendment to the Articles of Association – to amend the Council Member rotation process, change the tenure of the President and the Treasurer and general points of clarification – and explained the reasoning behind the proposed amendment.

The special resolution to adopt the changes, as given in the AGM papers, was unanimously approved.

Election of Officers and Members of Council

The Secretary reported that Kara Conti was retiring as President and that Annabel Cody had been nominated for the office of President. There being no other nominations, she was elected unanimously as President.

The Secretary reported that Nick Friedlos had been nominated for the office of Treasurer. There being no other nominations, he was elected unanimously as Treasurer.

The Secretary noted the retirement of Jo Lucas and Sarah Phillips and reported the nominations for Members of Council as follows: retiring by rotation; Fiona Hackett; and Grace Edghill; new candidates; Amy Chapman; and Marshall Stark. As there were as many nominations as places all nominations were unanimously elected.

Appointment of Auditors

Nick Friedlos proposed that Haysmacintyre LLP be appointed as the school's auditors for the year 2024-25 and that their remuneration be fixed by Council. The proposal was seconded by Fiona Hackett and carried unanimously.

Confirmation of Borrowing Limit

The resolution to increase the borrowing authorisation limit delegated to Council to £5m was proposed by Nick Freidlos and seconded by Philip Whale and was carried unanimously.

Amendments to the Articles

The resolution to amend the articles was proposed by Philip Whale and seconded by Rebekah Clark and was carried unanimously

Any Other Business

There being no other business, Sam Jukes-Adams closed the meeting.

Caroline Korniczky, Secretary

Following the AGM Robert Lobatto gave his report.