STARS Meeting
Thursday 8th October 2026 at 7:15pm
Abbots Ripton C of E Primary School

In attendance: Jake Heather, Claire Murray, Beth Ockenden, Kirstie Reynolds, Natalie Schofield, Emma Wadsworth and Stephanie Wilcox.

1. Introduction

As Chair, Emma Wadsworth welcomed everyone to the meeting and gave a short introduction.

2. Apologies

Apologies received to the Chair from Kags Alexander-Cahill and Heather Smart.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Chair's Report

4.1 The Chair presented the Chair's Report, headed "STARS Annual Review – 2025/26 School Year" which is appended to these minutes.

4.2 The Chair reflected on the fantastic amount raised by STARS during the academic year and outlined how the funds had been used to benefit the children at the school.

4.3 The Chair thanked school staff, trustees, volunteers who regularly support and help run events, parents, carers and local supporters. Particular thanks were given to outgoing Vice-Chair, James Stevens, for his hard work over a number of years and to previous Treasurers Jas Sidhu, Natalie Selby and Katie Holmes for their contributions.

4.4 The Chair emphasised that the purpose of STARS is to raise funds for essential items needed by the school, improve the school environment and, importantly, ensure that the children have fun.

4.5 Looking ahead, the Chair would like to reduce the running costs of STARS by seeking to encourage people to donate time, money and skills, as well as seeking sponsorship and other support from local businesses.

4.6 The Chair was keen to publicise the School Lottery and Easi Fundraising again, as these provide relatively straightforward streams of income. The possibility of an online pre-loved school uniform shop was also discussed and it was agreed that the Secretary would take this forward with assistance from volunteers.

4.7 The Chair set out the events planned between October and Christmas, together with a provisional list of events for January to July. Ideas were discussed for refreshing existing activities, including different stalls at the Summer Fair, and for holding other events during the year.

5. Treasurer's Report

5.1 In the absence of a current Treasurer, the Chair presented the financial overview contained in her report. In summary, STARS raised £10,081.54 during the 2025/26 school year, principally through events and fundraising with £301 coming from the School Lottery.

5.2 During the year, STARS contributed over £5,000 towards items and initiatives benefiting the children, including:

- A bike for the Van Gogh classroom and other educational resources;
- Books and fans for each class;
- A spirituality bench;
- Easter eggs and Christmas gifts; and
- Financial support for school initiatives, including swimming lessons for Picasso class.

5.3 Going forward, STARS has committed £400 towards transport costs for Young Voices and contributions towards air conditioning improvements and refurbishment of the school maze area.

5.4 It was suggested and discussed that a separate fundraiser for air conditioning may be beneficial, as parents may be willing to contribute specifically towards creating a more comfortable environment for children, teachers and other staff.

6. Election of Officers and Trustees

5.1 Those present proceeded to elect officers for the 2026/27 school year:

- Chair: Emma Wadsworth, proposed by Jake Heather and seconded by Steph Wilcox.
- Treasurer: Natalie Schofield, proposed by Emma Wadsworth and seconded by Beth Ockenden.
- Secretary: Steph Wilcox, proposed by Katie Reynolds and seconded by Emma Wadsworth.

5.2 It was discussed that it was not necessary to have a Vice-Chair. Anyone interested in supporting STARS is, of course, encouraged to come forward whether as a volunteer or a member of the Committee.

7. Any Other Business

7.1 Make Do and Mend: Mr Heather advised that the school would like to hold a Make Do and Mend event and has a list of jobs and projects for which help would be very welcome.

Those present discussed the difficulty of finding a weekend when everyone is available, including sometimes due to childcare commitments or extra-curricular activities. A weekday, such as a Friday, may be more suitable for some parents who do not work on that day and whose children would be taken care of in school. It was also suggested that many employers offer their employees volunteering days which parents and carers might be able to use to help at school during the week.

7.2 There being no other business, the meeting closed at approximately 8:15pm.

Date, time and location of next meeting: TBC.