

The Old Colfeian Society



MINUTES OF ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ON WEDNESDAY 17 JANUARY 2024 AT HORN PARK

1. Attendance and Apologies for Absence

Apologies for absence were received from Greg Jones and Ian Harjette.

In attendance were M.Cartwright, V.Lease, C.Cherry, A.Ward, R.Burton, R.Russell, M.Barnes, T.Lowne, D.Isaacs, B.Monk, D.Ford, K.Mcneil, E.Foster, I.McGregor, G.Smith, M.Gayfer, L.Banks

The Chairman declared the meeting to be quorate.

2. Minutes of Previous Meeting

The minutes of the AGM held on 17 November 2021 were agreed as published.

3. Chairman's Report

M. Cartwright explained that this meeting had been rearranged due to the need to give 4 weeks notice of an AGM.

Over the last 18 months around 15 scholarship pupils had received support from OC funds to undertake educational activities such as trips to Naples/Rome and the Cern Hadron Collider and participation in the Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme.

G.Jones wishes to step down as President and attendees were asked to consider a suitable replacement.

M.Cartwright wishes to step down as Chairman and the constitution can be changed to allow a Deputy Chairman who would eventually take over as Chairman. Suggestions for a replacement Chairman can be given to Mark Barnes or Martin Cartwright.

I.Harjette wishes to step down as Treasurer. A vote of thanks was extended to Ian who has acted as Treasurer for over a decade.

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A vote of thanks was extended to D.Ford and B.Monk for their work in running the 300 Club.

Two annual dinners had been held since the last AGM – one at Royal Blackheath Golf Club and the other at the RAF Club. There had also been drinks evenings at the Old Bank of England pub, Old Toms Bar and The Boot & Flogger.

The 2022 and 2023 Remembrance Parades were both very well attended.

4. Treasurers Report

The Chairman presented the annual accounts for the 12 months ending 31 July 2023 which show an excess of expenditure over income for the period of £4,533. The overall assets less current liabilities total £56,257.

Following advice from the Independent Reporting Accountant, M.Gayfer, future accounts will be published in the style usually adopted by non-profit/charitable organisations and will include 2 comparative years and notes.

The incumbent Treasurer I.Harjette had been investigating alternative accounts to enable the OCS fund to earn interest. It is expected that the incoming Treasurer will continue with this review.

M.Gayfer confirmed that in his opinion the accounts showed a true and fair view and fairly present the financial results in all material respects. Subject to M.Gayfer's comments the 2023 Accounts were approved by the meeting.

The meeting attendees voted for M.Gayfer to continue in the role of Independent Reporting Accountant.

5. 300 Club Report

B.Monk confirmed that the membership is generally stable but does not grow. There are around 129 active tickets producing income of around £650 per month.

Marketing of the 300 Club needs to continue and B.Monk is of the opinion that publicity should include more case studies of students that had been assisted by the OCS funds.

V.Leese has renewed the Club's licence for 2024.

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£5,000 had been passed to the school in 2023 and B.Monk confirmed that the Club is currently on course to also generate £5,000 for 2024.

K.Mcneil made the monthly draw.

6. Report from The School

The School Head, R. Russell, reported that the school remains extremely popular and is heavily over-subscribed. On 5 January 2024 560 candidates took the school entrance exam. Despite the strong demand for places the school must try to not become too selective.

New classrooms have been constructed and the school had received a record number of Year 7 entrants.

In addition to strong academic achievements pupils have excelled e.g. some pupils have acted for the National Youth Theatre and a pupil has played in goal for the England U17 team and is involved with Arsenal FC.

The school continues to have 12 Leatherseller Scholars in each of the two 6th form year groups. The diversity that these students bring to the school has a strong beneficial effect and the OCS funds are essential to allow these students to participate in external activities such as educational trips.

The prospect of an incoming government imposing 20% VAT on school fees was discussed. R.Russell agreed that this is a concern but the school would do all it could to minimise the cost impact on parents. Fee cost increases would impact middle income earners the most but as the school is so heavily subscribed cost increases would not have a significant impact on applications. R.Russell thought that the effects of any such fee increases would be most keenly felt in schools in the north of England.

7.Alumni Relations

K.McNeil introduced Lorraine Banks as the school's new archivist. Lorraine provided a summary of the work she is undertaking with the digital archives.

The attendees continued to agree that there is a need to involve more diverse and younger Old Colfeians in OC activities. Various suggestions were made to widen the diversity of participants including including parents in OC events or holding joint events with PAFA.

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K.McNeil confirmed that her team continue to expand the OC email contact list. 200/250 cards, which include a QR code, have been sent out to contacts with only a postal address requesting email contact details.

K.McNeil said that her research found strong interest in pupils meeting Old Colfeians in certain industry sectors to learn about careers in that industry in a social setting.

K.McNeil presented a paper detailing proposals for industry networking events featuring a panel of Old Colfeians and/or parents to be held in central London and perhaps in future at the school. K.McNeil proposed a pilot event based around the legal profession, hopefully to be hosted by two prominent solicitors who are Old Colfeians – Greg Jones and Serena Cheng. A date of 7 March 2024 6pm to 8pm is proposed and K.McNeil will try to finalise arrangements. All agreed that this was an excellent idea.

Future events could be centred on other industry sectors such as finance/business, STEM and technology, healthcare, arts & media, government or entrepreneurship.

8. Election of Officers

Officers wishing to step down or up for re-election in 2023 are;

- President – G.Jones re-elected until a replacement found
- Chairman – M.Cartwright expressed a wish to stand down and it was agreed that nominations will be considered for a Deputy Chairman to work alongside Martin with a view to eventually replacing Martin as Chairman. Nominations were invited to be submitted to the Chairman or Hon Secretary.
- Treasurer – R.Burton was nominated and elected as replacement for I.Harjette.
- Membership Secretary – A.Ward expressed a wish to continue in this role and was re-elected.
- Co-opted Member – T.Lowne was elected as a full Member.

9. Date of Next Meeting

The proposed date of the next OCS committee meeting is Wednesday 13th March 2024.