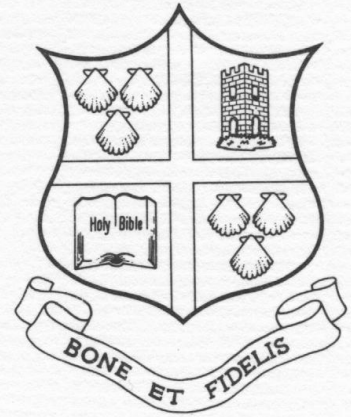


Old Grovian Association

Woodhouse Grove School, Apperley Bridge, W. Yorks BD10 0NR Tel: 0113 250 2477

FOUNDED 1890



E-mail: oga@woodhousegrove.co.uk

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD TUESDAY 10TH NOVEMBER 2020

Given the current situation regarding Covid-19, this year's AGM was held via written reports and virtual motions

1. Chair's Remarks

Via written reports

2. Approval of Minutes of the 2019 Annual General Meeting

The minutes were approved and signed as a true record. There were no matters arising.

Proposed by Dan Nulty

Seconded by Sam Cadman

3. Chair's Report

Delivered via written report

4. Treasurer's Report

Via written report

5. School update

Via Written report

6. Report on Southern's and other Scholarship Funds

Via written report

7. Election of Officers for 2020/2021

OG Chairman: Mr J K Jones (St1978-2016)

OG Chair Elect: Miss S J Pickles (1987-1994)

Agreed by all present

Treasurer: Mrs V L Bates (1987-1994 + St2014-)

Secretary: Mrs H A Garner (St1992-2018)

Xaipete Editors: Mrs S H Lockwood (St2016-)

School Representative: Mr E R Howard (1971-1978 + St1981-)

Agreed

8. Re-election of Keith Jones as OG Chairman 2020/2021

Due to the cancellation of events through most of Keith's year in office 2019/2020 it was decided that he should be re-elected for a further year Sarah Pickles will remain as Chair-Elect for this coming year and take over as Chair in November 2021

9. Date of AGM 2021

14th November 2021

10. OG RUFC

Via written report

11. Foundation

Via written report

16. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

None

CHAIRMAN

DATE



Old Grovian Association AGM 2020 – Comments from the Chair

The past seven months with the Covid-19 pandemic situation has meant that we have been living in a very worrying and difficult world. We have missed out on so much such as catching up with families and friends, going to the theatre, browsing in retail shops and for many including myself missing out and having to postpone that long awaited summer holiday in a warmer climate. Having said all this and being that I am now officially an OAP, my lawn, hedges and flower beds have never looked better as a result of hours of TLC in the lockdown period. Small consolation I hear you say and we all look forward to the day when it is announced that a vaccine has finally been found to protect us from this pandemic virus. I fear that this will be the only acceptable solution that will give people the confidence to return to what is classed as “normal life” again - if life can ever return to normal again when working from home and wearing face masks becomes part of daily life.

I have to report that due to Covid-19 the various OGA calendar of events for last year did not take place due to safety reasons. With this in mind I was very honoured to be invited at the recently held committee meeting to Chair the organisation again for the coming year. This is a role that I am delighted to accept and I very much hope that we will be able to restart and meet once again at events in the not too distant future.

I reiterated my comments from last year's AGM and that is to encourage a wider depth of support for such events such as the already well established reunions, year reunions and the very popular and successful Golf Day held at Headingley Golf Club. Old Grovians need to feel welcomed and encouraged to attend or even help arrange these important events especially if they have not attended for a number of years or not at all. The OGA organisation and the school would welcome and be happy to host year reunions or a 'group of friends' reunion in order to catch up with various pathways and successes in life since leaving school.

Old Grovians should be very proud of their former school and wherever possible continue to follow and take a keen interest in the various aspects of the all - round education that a school such as Woodhouse Grove provides for its students.

Stay safe and look after each other.

Xaipete.

Keith Jones

Old Grovian Association

Treasures report for the year end 31st August 2020.

The OGA is reporting a profit for the year of just over £6k.

The increase in profit as compared to the previous year is due to the decision to include subscriptions for Year 11 leavers of which there were 44 in July 2020.

The COVID-19 pandemic put the OGA archive project on hold, however funds were pledged and have been accounted for as an accrued expense in the year.

The cost of Xaipete increased this year due increased distribution.

Looking at the balance sheet the OGA has strong cash at bank and is owed c£11k by the school in respect of the annual life subscriptions.

The budget for 20/21 continues to show the association making profits.

The committee discussed and agreed to propose to the OGA at the AGM the making of an annual donation to the WGS Foundation of £3k, matched by the school, to be used to provide financial support to an Old Grovians child/children or Grandchild/children to enable them to attend the school. Such support to be awarded via the schools standard bursary award process.

In addition the committee proposed, given the profit levels in 2019/20 a one off donation of £3k to the Southern's Scholarship fund.



Old Grovian Association AGM 2020: Headmaster's Report

As a Headmaster, now in my ninth year of Headship, I have been be used to leading from the front – being accountable to Governors, parents, inspectorates and my colleagues – striving to deliver the highest possible levels of service in academic provision, pastoral care and co-curricular activities. I know that is the job I am entrusted to do here at the Grove. However, since March, my Senior team and I have also been required to provide key-worker childcare centres; to move entire staff and pupil bodies to remote teaching and learning; to devise, monitor and justify the provision of centre-assessed GCSE and A-level grades for our pupils; to risk assess, staff and manage the re-opening of schools, and to make decisions about health care and track and trace where guidance has been nebulous and last minute – and sometimes non-existent.

If you had told me a year ago that I would be leading a school that had been able to display, in such short order, innovation and flexibility, that had navigated such impossibly choppy waters, and had stayed energetic, positive and generous in the face of all of this – I might have doubted it would have been possible.

We have all learnt that extraordinary times call for extraordinary leadership and I am proud that there is so much excellent leadership at Woodhouse Grove, at all levels. Sadly, on a national and global scale, leadership across a whole plethora of contexts, and particularly in the political arena, seems to have been found wanting, just when we all need it the most.

Monday 16 March 2020 started like any other Monday of a Spring Term at the Grove. Meetings first thing, followed by our weekly Whole School assembly in the Sports Hall – we no longer have an Assembly Hall; alas, the Memorial Hall is now the English teaching corridor, and there is no other venue that can accommodate nearly 1,000 people.

On a Monday morning, I also hold a Staff Briefing during morning break. Yes, the coronavirus was discussed, and plans were already being made to allow overseas boarders to go home early. However, the major issue on the agenda was School trips over the Easter holiday, including the triennial netball trip to the Caribbean; would they or would they not go ahead? Looking back, how naive were we to ever think that these would run...

Then, of course, came the news we were not expecting until the end of term, at the very earliest; schools were told by the ineffectual Education Secretary, Gavin Williamson, to close their doors from Friday 20 March, and all summer public examinations would be cancelled. Before we all left for what, at the time, was an unknown period, I addressed the staff in the Grove Theatre. I spoke a lot about waiting to receive more clarity from Government and specifically from the Department for Education. In many ways, even as I write this piece in the autumn, some six months on from school closures, that clarity is still sadly lacking.

And then the children and staff departed, and the very steep remote learning curve began...

My overarching message to parents at the end of the Spring Term was a pretty clear one:

“The pace of change, uncertainty for the future and the need to provide reassurance to pupils, parents and staff whilst keeping calm is far from an easy task. As I am sure will be the case for many of you who lead and manage organisations, my colleagues and I are working incredibly hard, under huge pressure, to help steer the School and its wider community through these dark days.



Old Grovian Association AGM 2020: Headmaster's Report

This is a very stressful time for us all and there is a natural temptation to see the office and responsibilities people hold in their working lives and ignore the human beings fulfilling these roles. I would, therefore, respectfully urge everyone in these challenging times to treat one another with the respect and dignity we all deserve."

Staff worked incredibly hard over the Easter holiday to further refine our remote education planning and delivery. In just a few weeks, we had to radically and rapidly transform the School's operations, furloughing a huge number of support staff and sending pupils home and switching to online teaching. Other departments, such as HR and Finance, also had to adapt to using remote practices, whilst a much-depleted grounds and maintenance team worked tirelessly keep on top of things – believe me, the early months of lockdown was real grass growing weather!

Of course, the biggest challenge was the unknown. Recognising that the whole country was in a difficult situation and having to find a way of teaching and staying in touch with our young people, whilst managing our fixed costs, retaining our staff and keeping the School in sound financial shape. Whilst school closures had been on the cards for some time, news of the cancellation of exams came as a total bombshell and it, quite understandably, left our Year 11 and Year 13 students and their parents feeling very upset, angry, confused and even more anxious.

The main news of the summer holidays was, of course, the public examination results. There are many words I could use to describe this summer's exam results season; however, "shambolic" perhaps best sums up the handling of the awarding of exam grades. Since the end of March, the two major teacher associations to which I am affiliated – the Association of School and College Leaders (ASCL) and the Headmasters' and Headmistresses' Conference (HMC) – had been alerting the exams regulator, Ofqual, to potential problems with the now infamous algorithm. Sadly, neither Ofqual nor the Department for Education listened or took any of these concerns seriously.

In the absence of examinations, we did our very best to be responsible and evidence-led with our Centre Assessed Grades (CAGs) and rank orders. At the same time, there were legitimate concerns about the potential for grade inflation and the absence of standardisation in the calculation and award of the grades which meant that a mix of CAGs, rank orders and statistical moderation was necessary. Key to fair outcomes was the correct mix of these ingredients, and as time went on, it became clear that the lack of emphasis on individual student data was likely to lead to unfair outcomes for pupils. My HMC colleagues and I consistently pressed for a transparent, fair and free appeals process to be able to address any issues emerging from Ofqual's calculated grades. The absence of any such process, and the grotesque nature and extent of the A-level results debacle on Thursday 13 August, prompted the call for a reversion to CAGs.

This call was made in the full knowledge that CAGs were not perfect and that a whole host of new difficulties would follow, including pressure on university places and a likelihood that some parents would challenge the CAGs awarded in good faith by the School. However, in my view, this was by far the lesser of two evils. It enabled us all to move on; students to progress to the next stage of their educational journey and schools to concentrate on their preparations for a start of an Autumn Term like no other. Plus, it avoided the possibility of an even bigger crisis that would erupt with the publication of GCSE results on 20 August. We are, of course, rightly proud of our A-level and GCSE results and the achievements of our young people. As ever, in any exam season there are winners and losers, but usually on the back of the students' own efforts, not by the whim of a system which was designed to safeguard the big picture and in the end has safeguarded no one.



Old Grovian Association AGM 2020: Headmaster's Report

It is difficult to talk about record results when the planned moderation process was then removed. That said, we had very high hopes for both our Year 11 and Year 13 students; they were proven academically capable on every measure we had, and it is a travesty that there remain question marks over some of the grading. However, at an individual level, the results remain worthy of significant celebration. We had 50 Year 13 (Upper Sixth) students who achieved ABB or better in their A-levels; 63 students at GCSE with at least one top grade (8 or 9) and 36 pupils with at least 6 high grades (7 or better), while 92% of the cohort have achieved the headline statistic of 5 GCSE passes, including English and mathematics.

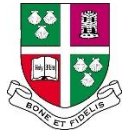
On 03 September, we were delighted to welcome back all our pupils to School. The School term started very positively with pupils, staff and parents very excited about the prospect of a return to something like normal. However, it was not long before we got our first positive Covid test case. Since then, we have been managing regular cases in School and the subsequent track and trace procedures that need to be followed. Schools across the land worked around the clock to ensure that they would reopen on time and in a Covid-secure manner, on the understanding that that there would be rapid testing and an effective track and trace system in place. We have been let down. Testing is a nightmare and track and trace is non-existent – we are doing it with little guidance from Public Health England and no support from any external contact tracers.

Sadly, owing to the current situation, we are not able to run our normal programme of gatherings and reunion events. However, we very much hope to resume normal service as soon as it is safe to do so.

In Psalm 25, the psalmist writes, “Turn to me and be gracious to me, for I am lonely and afflicted”. When we all meet again, let us all turn to one another to share our fears and our struggles, and respond with kindness, fellowship and compassion. If we do this, we can start to rebuild the Old Grovian community in which we are all a very special part.

Xaipete!

James Lockwood MA
Headmaster



Old Grovian Association AGM 2020 - Southern Trustees Update – Kath Dawson

At the end of last year it was decided to hold the 116th Southern Trustees Meeting in late April 2020-the main business being to interview those members of Year 13 who wished to be considered for Leavers' Awards. Unfortunately the coronavirus intervened.

After receiving copies of the letters of application much later in the year, the Trustees were able, by obeying the Covid restrictions at that time, to meet up with The Headmaster and Mr. Ed Wright - Deputy Head with responsibility for academic matters.

The quality of the 23 applicants was high, both in terms of academic ability and contributions made to all aspects of school activities.

As a result, the Southern Scholarship of £450 was awarded to Esther Bean who intends to read Architecture at Sheffield University in 2021. In addition two Crabtree, two Nuttall, one Storr, and five Davy Book Awards were given, along with four Old Grovian Awards of £250. a grand total of £3,250.

We are pleased to report that the Scholarship Funds remain healthy with over £65,000 invested in the Charities Investment Fund. The Trustees wish to thank WGS Finance Officer, Mr. David Ainsworth for his help. Our thanks are also due to The Headmaster for his hospitality and help, to Mr. Ed Wright, Mrs Claire Nott for her help with the applicants and to Mrs, Rachel Dodds, the Headmaster's P.A.

The Trustees wish to put on record their very best wishes to all those going on to further education or work wherever that may be and to keep safe.

Every five years the Southern Trustees must retire en-masse and put themselves forward for re-election which occurs this year. The current Trustees are:

Mrs Kath Dawson (St 82-99)

Mr. Tony Bramwell (52-59)

Mrs. Jackie Darwin (St 02-16)

All wish to stand for re-election.



Old Grovian Association AGM 2020 – OG RUFC Update

Dear Old Grovian colleagues and friends,

I don't think anyone reading this 12 months ago would have quite appreciated what the next 12 months had in store for us and the wider rugby community.

The 19/20 Season: even though it finished early, was our most successful season in Yorkshire 2 as we managed to carry on building on our solid foundations. The club managed to field a 2nd team during the season for the first time in many years as we continue to attract Old Grovians back to the club. We finished 8th in the table and were confident of improving our position further during the remainder of the season.

As always, we had a few weeks where the team was thin on the ground, but I'm pleased to report that John Hinchliffe continued to prove that age is only a number as he graced the field once more.

The key aim off field of the club was, and still is, to improve the club's facilities. So we were extremely pleased to be approached by Otley RUFC to join forces with them. We were due to play out of Cross Green during the 20/21 season. Old Grovians will continue to remain a club on its own, but it will now be based out of Otley and will have full use of their existing and new facilities that are due to be built over the next few years.

The club are very excited about this move and feel that it will not only help secure the future of the club, but also provide a pathway for players leaving WGS of all abilities to play at an appropriate standard of rugby.

Further details of this exciting development will be announced in due course.

The club continue to seek out new volunteers and will welcome people who want to help us make a success of Old Grovians RUFC

If any ex Grovians would like to assist the club in anyway, please contact OldGroviansrugby@gmail.com

The continued support and help of WGS is greatly valued and special thanks must go again to Simon Wood for keeping Elm Tree Farm in tip top condition. In addition to this, Dan King, Joe Bedford and Nathan Barr continue to be huge supporters of the club and we can't thank them enough.

Once more the club wishes to send a hearty thanks to all OGA members for their generosity and support. Without this support the club would not exist - in return it pledges to uphold the true spirit, good sportsmanship and the tradition and good name of the school.

Old Grovians



Old Grovian Association AGM 2020 – Foundation update

While much of the work of the WGS Foundation has been disrupted now for the best part of the year some significant and gratifying progress has been made. Donations received continue to grow steadily and this hopefully indicates the empathy that Grovians have for the aims of the Foundation. The current balance stands at close to £150k.

Whilst specific fundraising projects will follow in due course as times improve, donations received this year include legacies, one off donations and several new donors have signed up to regular giving via standing orders. All combine to make a significant contribution to our aim to make a difference through the principle of “Paying it Forward”.

Although the events calendar of the OGA and Foundation remain very much on hold, the WGS Foundation Office (now slightly relocated to allow even closer collaboration and support with Marketing & Commerce Dept) reopened at the end of the summer. Obtaining updates from Old Grovians remains a priority. Without the various events and reunions normally held throughout the year, our ability to connect physically is limited. We therefore urge the OG community to use whatever means they favour to “Update, Engage and Commit”. Social media engagement continues to grow, and we will look to enhance this further in the coming restricted months to engage more widely in a virtual atmosphere.

The email account: foundation@woodhousegrove.co.uk remains a reliable means for more detailed correspondence and photos, along with of course traditional mail or telephone.

Projects listed to be revitalised in due course include an informal style Scottish Reunion, potentially a South West reunion and perhaps overseas gatherings, as travel and number restrictions ease. Once School reopens to groups of visitors, hosting year group reunions would be welcome opportunities.

Archive Digitisation having been placed on hold will be another project reopened during 2021.

Ensuring our database is kept updated remains a priority. Please do feel able to contact us to enable us to have the most accurate information with which to act upon and communicate with.

The support received by the Foundation during the pandemic encourages us that our project is well established and heading in the right direction. The goodwill evident within the OGA community offers immense potential. Our aim now is to reinforce knowledge of our aims and beliefs regarding Bursary fee support. Now, more than ever the School remains committed to enabling pupils from disadvantaged backgrounds to access the opportunities on offer at the Grove.