

Old Grovian Association

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



MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ONLINE NOVEMBER 2024

Reports available on the website from 18th November as listed below and now listed as OGA AGM minutes 2024.

Survey sent to all Old Grovians via email and published on social media account to request Old Grovians to agree minutes and elect officers.

- 1. Chair's Report**
- 2. Treasurer's Report**
- 3. School Update**
- 4. Southernns Report**
- 5. OG Sevens Report**
- 6. OG Cricket Report**
- 7. Foundation Report**

- 8. Election of Officers**

OG Chair	:	Daniel Nulty (90-97)
OG Chairman Elect	:	TBC
President	:	James Lockwood (86-92, St16-)
Treasurer	:	Vanessa Bates (87-94, St14-)
Secretary	:	Eve Corry (st24-)
Xaipete Editor	:	Sam Cadman (89-96, St11-)

9. Date of Next Annual General Meeting

This will take place on Sunday 09 November 2025.



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Chair Report

It has been a honour to serve as Chair of the OGA for the past 12 months and I take the opportunity to thank the retiring Chair, Anthony Cadman for all his efforts during his term of office and for his continued support and assistance with the OGA throughout my term.

This past year as Chair of the Old Grovian Association has been an absolute joy for me, and I can hardly believe how quickly it has flown by! It's been such a pleasure to attend a variety of events and connect with so many Old Grovians.

Sadly, it is noted that attendance at the AGMs has steadily declined over recent years. Consequently, the committee decided that the meeting this year will held via the internet.

The Autumn Reunion is the first event on the OGA calendar and, despite the poor weather that day, competitions against school teams in Rugby, Netball and Squash took place, reports of which can be read in the last winter edition of Xaipete. Thank you to the team organisers, officials and caterers for their contributions on the day.

One of the highlights of the year was The London Reunion on 18th April at the Walrus & Carpenter near Monument. It was wonderful to see such a great mix of Old Grovians across generations coming together. Having some of the "young ones" join us made it extra special, and I'm hopeful this event will continue to grow next year. We had around 30 attendees, ranging in age from 22 to 89—a true testament to the enduring connections formed through our shared school experience.

Another successful event was the OGA Golf Reunion held, this year, at Ridding Park, Harrogate. It was a perfect sunny Sunday in late May and no fewer than 13 teams took part in a 4-ball stableford competition. Highlight of the day was a Hole-in-One at the 'nearest-the -pin' hole scored by Jeremy Clayton. Commiserations go to the runners-up who thought they had victory in the bag until they were pipped at the post by the final team home! This is proving to be a very popular event. I recommend early reservation for next year's competition to avoid disappointment.

Winners: Oliver Coughlan, Daniel Nulty, James Phillips, Ben Rhodes

The Leeds Reunion was held on Thursday 3rd October at the 'Friends of Ham' bar. Its proximity to the rail station made it convenient for people to 'drop in' on their way home from work and around 40 OGs attended. It was an excellent opportunity for Old Grovians to forge new business connections, rekindle old friendships, and share cherished memories of school days. I hope this event becomes a regular tradition and attracts even more attendees in the future.

I want to sincerely thank the school and the OGA for the privilege of serving as Chair this year. It has been rewarding to meet both familiar faces and new ones throughout this journey. As I pass the baton to Dan Nulty, I wish him a fantastic year as Chair for 2024/25, and I look forward to continuing to support Old Grovian events in the years to come

Tony Zammit (st 82-08)



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Treasurer's Report

The Association is reporting a surplus for the year end 31 August 2024 of £2,572, with cash at bank of £39,192.

A few years ago, the OGA ring fenced funds of £5k to be matched by the School to allow the digital archiving project to continue. The School is focusing all resources on managing the impact of the removal of the VAT exemption on school fees and Loss of Business Rates relief, and as such this project has paused. The committee is recommending to the AGM that these funds now be released back to the Association for alternative use.

The draft budget for the year to 31 August 2025 which includes the release of the £5k mentioned above, showed a surplus of c£12k and the committee is recommending that to support the school, a donation of £10k be made by the OGA to the school each year for the next three years, which the school can use as it sees fit, such a donation would not attract VAT.

Vanessa Bates



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School Update

In a year marked by political and economic uncertainty, Woodhouse Grove School has demonstrated remarkable resilience and growth, maintaining its strong position in our local Independent Education market. Despite the various challenges facing the broader educational landscape, the School has managed to sustain robust enrolment numbers and has seen key developments and achievements across its academic, infrastructure, and co-curricular activities. Below is an overview of the major highlights and milestones from the past twelve months.

Enrolment and Academic Success

The School's enrolment numbers have held up remarkably well, with Years Groups in excess of 100 across the Senior school and a Sixth Form roll of well over 200. Numbers at Brontë House have also stabilised, and in some cases rallied, despite the testing local demographics, which have seen a decline in primary aged children in recent years. This stability reflects the School's ongoing reputation for academic excellence and its appeal to families seeking high-quality all-round education.

This year's A-level results were in line with projections, with the majority of Year 13 students securing places at their first-choice university. While national statistics reflect a worrying decline in university entry rates, particularly in the north of England, Woodhouse Grove remains an exception to this trend. Our students continue to outperform national averages, further underlining the quality of education provided at The Grove.

Infrastructure and Facilities

Several significant infrastructure projects have been completed over the past year, enhancing both the student experience and the School's capacity to generate additional commercial income. These projects include the opening of:

- The new Sixth Form Building: A modern and spacious facility providing enhanced learning environments for our Senior students.
- A Modular Changing and Club Room Facility: Increasing the School's capacity to accommodate growing sports participation and more external lettings.
- Covered Bolt Courts: Further expanding our sports and recreation facilities for netball and tennis.

These additions demonstrate the School's commitment to continuous improvement, not only in academic standards but also in physical resources, ensuring a well-rounded educational experience for all our young people.

Collaboration with One In A Million Free School (OIAMFS)

Woodhouse Grove and One In A Million Free School (OIAMFS) have enjoyed a unique collaboration since 2018, sharing best practice, resources and facilities, with Woodhouse Grove also awarding two full Sixth Form Bursary places per annum to promising OIAMFS Year 11 leavers.

Last year, the Methodist Schools' Property Company, which owns the land on which Woodhouse Grove School is situated, entered into a 30-year lease with the DfE, giving OIAMFS term time access to sports facilities and changing rooms at Woodhouse Grove. This agreement provides OIAMFS with a permanent home from which to deliver its PE Curriculum and provide its pupils with sporting enrichment opportunities. Meanwhile, monies generated from the lease will go towards Woodhouse Grove's Bursary Fund, enabling more young people to access the outstanding education offered, as well as further improving facilities, benefiting both schools.

Staffing Updates

Assistant Head (Curriculum), Claire Nott, left us at the end of the year to take up a training position for Ministry with the Methodist Church; Louise Watson retired from her Senior Tutor role and Matthew Munday retired from the Geography department, having held various positions of responsibility during his time at the School. Between them, this impressive trio notched up an impressive 63 years' service. In addition to which, the School's Director of Music, Phillip Tedd, elected to leave in order to take some time out of teaching after what had been a very difficult period for him personally, following Andrew Crawford's untimely death last year. Their contributions will be missed, but the School remains in good hands with a dedicated team of talented staff ready to continue their legacy.

Independent Schools' Inspectorate (ISI) Report

In February, ISI visited Woodhouse Grove (The Grove, Brontë House and Ashdown Lodge) and confirmed that the School continues to deliver on its core aim of nurturing the full potential of every student. The report noted the School's commitment to academic excellence, social responsibility, and the holistic development of each individual pupil. This affirmation highlights the ongoing success of our mission to prepare students academically, culturally, and spiritually for life beyond school.

Challenges in the Political Landscape

The introduction of VAT on Independent School fees presents significant challenges for the sector. While Sir Keir Starmer's Government argues that the policy is necessary to fund 6,500 new teachers for State schools, it remains a point of contention whether this tax will achieve its intended goals. There is concern within the Independent School community, and beyond, that such policies will negatively impact social mobility and special education while reducing Britain's competitiveness in the global education market.

However, Woodhouse Grove has been preparing for this eventuality through careful financial planning, ensuring the School remains robust despite these external pressures. Our strategic investments, including the aforementioned infrastructure projects, have strengthened our position and provide additional revenue streams that will support the School's ongoing operations and affordability measures.

Sporting Achievements

Woodhouse Grove's sporting programme continues to be a source of pride, with participation across a wide range of sports at all levels. The School's inclusive approach to sport ensures that all students have opportunities to compete and develop their skills.

At the elite level, the past twelve months have seen several outstanding achievements:

- U19 Netball Team: Runners-up in the Independent National Schools' Cup.
- 1st XV Rugby Team: Reached the National Schools' Cup Quarterfinals.
- Cross Country Teams: Intermediate Boys, Intermediate Girls, and Senior Boys teams all qualified for the National Schools' Cross Country Finals.

Additionally, our students have gained County, Regional, and National recognition in a myriad of sports; including, athletics, cricket, netball, rugby, fencing, football, rowing, and golf. Notably, in July, 50 Senior rugby players toured South Africa, and our Senior Netballers toured the Caribbean over the October half-term, further cementing our reputation as a powerhouse in school sport.

Co-curricular Provision

The School's most recent ISI Inspection Report highlights our strong extra-curricular programme, which is integral to our educational approach. The School continues to offer a wide range of activities that go beyond academics, allowing pupils to engage in music, drama, and other creative outlets. These activities are not seen as separate but are instead considered "co-curricular" as they complement the academic curriculum and are a core part of School life. As ever, over the past twelve months, there has been a packed programme of plays, recitals and concerts.

The School also promotes intellectual enrichment through its "Grove Award" and Super-curricular activities, which encourage pupils to think critically and participate in academic challenges. These experiences foster a sense of leadership, creativity, and teamwork.

Trips, both domestic and international, further enhance students' learning and personal development. These diverse offerings highlight the School's commitment to providing a holistic education that supports both academic and personal growth. Two examples of recent overseas trips include: a thrilling Business Studies trip to New York, which included a private tour around the famous Garment District, learning about its history in the production and manufacturing of clothing, as well as visiting a working factory in the heart of the City; and a 23-day conservation trip to Costa Rica in which students undertook a 5-day trek through the rainforests of the Corcovado National Park, before volunteering at a local turtle conservation project, where they were given tasks such as late night turtle patrols, beach clean-ups, and working in the hatchery.

Conclusion

Despite the political and economic headwinds, Woodhouse Grove School continues to thrive. Our commitment to providing an exceptional education, coupled with strategic planning and investment, ensures that the School is well-positioned to face the challenges of the coming years. Our partnerships, facilities, and dedication to fostering both academic and personal growth remain central to our mission, and we are excited for what lies ahead.

Thank you for your continued interest, support and commitment to Woodhouse Grove. We are proud of our shared heritage and look forward to welcoming the Old Grovian community to future Alumni events, gatherings and celebrations.

James Lockwood MA (86-92, St16-)

Headmaster



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Southerns Report

Since his appointment as a Trustee in 2009 Tony Bramwell has carried out his responsibilities with diligence. Sadly, he has now resigned as a Trustee. We thank him for all his help in the past. We will miss him.

In February ex Deputy Head David Wood helped to interview twenty-two excellent applicants.

Southerns awards of £450 each were given to Abigail Lewis and Philip Wright. Four Crabtree, four Nutall, two Reg Storr and five Davy awards were also given- in total £ 5050. We wish everyone success in their further education and future careers.

My many thanks to the Headmaster and Staff involved for all their help.

Kath Dawson
Southerns Trustee



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OG Sevens Report

2024 has been another huge step forwards to the new OG Sevens touring rugby team. After the sad end of the 15-a-side team in 2022 it seemed that it was the end of OG rugby beyond school, however I don't think any of us could dream of how successful the initiative has been.

The season started off for us in April when we were invited to play at the world-famous Melrose 7s competition which is the oldest 7s competition in the world. We went there with high hopes but realistic expectations with a squad of 14 and 8 of which went to Woodhouse Grove school to take on sides from around the world with a draw that pitted us against the winners from the previous year - the formidable Monaco Impis. Much to the surprise of the crowd who were asking who the OGs were, we managed to race our way to victory thanks to a hat trick of tries from OG Ben Magee. We went on to beat another full-time team called the lions before losing in the Semi Finals to Shogun rugby who had pretty much a full international squad. This really elevated our profile and allowed us to build momentum into our 2 local tournaments at Ilkley and West Park where on each occasion we managed to put out 4 teams. At West Park, we won the Elite cup, the Open Cup and the social plate with George Worthington outstanding all day.

At Ilkley we got pipped in the final of both the elite and social tournaments but yet again walked away with the social plate trophy and one of the proudest moments of the season came when Ben Turpin was called up to the GB squad and played for them in Euros in Croatia. We entered our final competition in July in London and again we lost to another formidable Shogun team in the Quarter finals of the elite, but yet again we managed to walk away with the social plate.

We've had 68 players play for us this summer, 46 of which are ex WGS lads, 7 of which have previously captained the school.

We ended the summer season with a Ball that had 250 people attending all willing to support the OG7s.

We look forward to finishing the year now by taking two teams to enter the Dubai 7s in the International Open and International Social. It's a step into the unknown for the team but one we look forward to.

We look forward to reporting and hopefully more success next year. If any OG's would like to help on or off the field with the OG7s please get in contact with John Hinchliffe.

Matt Gaffney, OG Sevens



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Cricket Report

Season number 2 for Grovians CC didn't start off as well as it ended, the first 2 matches we played both resulted in losses, but we quickly changed that by winning the next 10 games in a row which was a bit more familiar to us after the very pleasing first season we had last year.

Over the season we played 14 games, won 10, lost 3 and had 1 cancelled, which led us to finals day for the second year in a row which was held at Undercliffe CC this year.

The semi-final was against Bowling old lane, we won the toss and chose to bat, putting on an impressive 173/6 after 18 overs, we were feeling confident going out to bowl. Bowling old lane started well taking the attack to our spinners but our seam attack was just too strong in the end as they finished on 165/9 after the 18 overs with Jack Luxton picking up 5 wickets.

On to the final which was against Undercliffe CC. Again, we won the toss and chose to bat. Overseas Neyko Stiglingh retired on 50, a quick fire 36 from Luxton and 21 from McLelland got us up to 149/6 after the 18 overs. We started well with the ball taking a couple early wickets and this time it was our spinners that ran through the opposition with Reece Cockshott bowling 4 overs and taking 2/14 and Dom Bradburne bowling 4 overs and taking 4/20. This resulted in Undercliffe finishing on 96/8 after the 18 overs. All in all, a great day of cricket and Grovians CC becoming Bradford and District Evening League Champions. A great achievement for the team.

Notable mentions throughout the season go to overseas player Neyko Stiglingh (231), Ed Brown (208) and Jacob Slater (208) all passing the 200 runs mark for the season. As we play 16 over matches it is always helpful when players have a high strike rate, Skipper Ethan McLelland (165), Ed Brown (157) and Ewan Stephenson (153) all were striking above 150 for the season but out in front was Jack Hartley striking at an impressive 227 for the year. Ever present opening the bowling with spin was Mustafa Sajjad who took 9 wickets for the season but leading the way with 17 wickets was Reece Cockshott. Behind the stumps was Skipper Ethan McLelland taking 9 victims for the season.

Dom Bradburne, Director of Sport



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Development/Foundation Report

OGA AGM 2024

Foundation Priorities for the Coming Year: Strategic Focus Under New Development Leadership

With the appointment of Eve Corry as Development Officer, the Foundation is positioned to strengthen its fundraising and community engagement efforts. Eve, who brings over a decade of successful fundraising experience from the charity sector, will work closely with the school's marketing team and myself, Sam Cadman, to achieve our goals. Together, we aim to raise funds that will directly support our bursary campaigns, ensuring that Woodhouse Grove can continue to welcome a broad range of students from diverse backgrounds and offer life-changing opportunities to those who might not otherwise have access to our school.

Key Priorities for 2024

1. Expanding Fundraising Initiatives

To build a sustainable future for Woodhouse Grove, we will focus on:

- o Annual Giving Campaign: Launching a year-round campaign encouraging regular donations from our community.
- o Major Donor and Legacy Programmes: Leveraging Eve's expertise to engage key donors for impactful contributions, especially for our bursary fund.
- o Digital Giving and Outreach: Partnering with the marketing team to enhance online giving and reach a broader supporter base.

2. Strengthening Alumni Relations

Building strong connections with alumni is essential to our long-term goals:

- o Alumni Events and Engagement: Organising events that deepen ties and engage alumni in school life.
- o Enhanced Communication: Developing newsletters and social media content to keep alumni informed and involved.
- o Alumni Volunteer Network: Expanding alumni contributions through mentoring and career support, reinforcing ties to Woodhouse Grove's mission.

3. Optimising Donor Stewardship

Effective stewardship will help maintain and grow our donor base:

- o Personalised Engagement and Impact Reporting: Sharing updates on the tangible impact of donor support, particularly on the bursary programme.
- o Recognition Programmes: Establishing initiatives that honour donor contributions, inspiring further involvement.

4. Strengthening Data and Reporting

A robust data system is essential for targeted outreach and strategic planning:

- o Database Management: Ensuring accurate records to support efficient communication and personalised engagement.
- o Financial and Impact Reporting: Collaborating with Finance to deliver transparent reports on income, Gift Aid, and the impact of contributions.

5. Adapting to Financial Challenges

Facing challenges such as the VAT introduction, our strategy includes:

- o Maximising Revenue Streams: Diversifying income to mitigate potential financial impacts.
- o Community-Focused Campaigns: Emphasising bursaries and initiatives that align with our school's values of integrity, respect, and community, ensuring that students from all backgrounds have access to a Woodhouse Grove education.

Conclusion

With Eve Corry's experience and the support of the marketing team and myself, we are confident in our ability to advance Woodhouse Grove's Foundation goals. By prioritising fundraising, stewardship, and outreach, we aim to secure essential funding that will provide opportunities for students from all walks of life, enhancing the rich diversity that defines our school community.

Sam Cadman, Director of Marketing & Commerce