Foundation Report

The past twelve months have seen significant progress in fundraising, alumni engagement, communications and the preservation of Woodhouse Grove's heritage.

Key achievements include:

- £16,500+ received in Foundation donations.
- £50,878 raised through the inaugural Grove Giving Week.
- 475% growth in monthly giving, from 4 to 23 donors, including 18 qualifying 1812 Society members, plus one annual donor.
- £7,000+ in annual regular giving income.
- Two new legacy pledges following the relaunch of Fidelis.
- 50% growth in the Grove Business Directory, now with 18 members.
- 6,750+ podcast downloads, reaching 527 cities across 56 countries.
- Two IDPE Development Awards shortlist nominations for Grovian Voices.
- 80+ Old Grovians participating in the second Year 7 Letter Exchange.
- Official opening of The Knowles Heritage Centre.
- 26 Old Grovians recognised in the 2026 Remembrance Roll of Honour.

These achievements demonstrate the growing reach of the Development Office and its contribution to strengthening the Grovian community while developing sustainable support for future generations.

1. Expanding Fundraising Initiatives

The past year has seen encouraging growth in fundraising, with increased regular giving, new legacy pledges and further development of the Foundation's fundraising initiatives.

Donations and Financial Overview

Between September 2025 and October 2026, the Foundation received donations totalling over £16,500, reflecting continued generosity across the Grovian community.

The inaugural Grove Giving Week, held from 27 June to 3 July 2026, raised £50,878 towards bursaries and the 1812 Society Bursary Fund. The week brought together pupils, parents, Old Grovians, staff and friends through a programme of fundraising and community activities.

Regular Giving and the 1812 Society

Regular giving has grown significantly, increasing from 4 to 23 monthly donors, representing a 475% increase. Of these, 18 qualify for 1812 Society membership by contributing a minimum of £18 per month. The Foundation also has one annual donor.

Together, regular giving generates over £7,000 in annual income, providing an increasingly sustainable source of support for bursaries.

Legacy Giving – Fidelis

October 2026 saw the relaunch of *Fidelis*, the School's legacy giving programme, coinciding with Make A Will Month. A dedicated series of social media posts was promoted across Old Grovian channels to raise awareness of leaving a lasting gift to Woodhouse Grove.

Encouragingly, two new legacy pledges were received between 22 September and 5 November 2026.

The Grove Business Directory

Now in its second year, The Grove Business Directory has grown from 12 founding members in September 2025 to 18 members, representing 50% membership growth.

The Directory connects Old Grovians and current and former parents through business promotion and professional networking. All annual membership fees contribute directly to the Foundation's 1812 Bursary Fund.

The 1812 Gala Dinner

The inaugural 1812 Gala Dinner takes place on Saturday 14 November 2026, celebrating the first anniversary of the 1812 Society.

Bringing together Old Grovians, current and former staff, parents and former parents, the event provides an opportunity to celebrate the Grove community and its shared commitment to the School's future. Three Old Grovians from different generations and professional backgrounds will be guest speakers.

2. Strengthening Alumni Relations

Alumni engagement remains a core priority, with a programme of reunions, sporting events, coffee mornings and opportunities to reconnect with the School.

Events and Reunions

Highlights from the reporting period include:

- London Reunion – 30 April 2026: Held at De Hems Dutch Café Bar, Soho. The best-attended London Reunion to date, with Old Grovians representing every decade from the 1960s to the 2020s. The event also celebrated 100 years of the House System, with attendees holding their former House signs for photographs.

- OGA Golf Day – 3 May 2026: Held at Bradford Golf Club, raising over £470 through the raffle and half-way house for the WGS Foundation.
- Grovestonbury Family Fun Day – 28 June 2026: The annual summer reunion brought together Old Grovians, friends and families during the School's first Grove Giving Week.
- Summer Coffee Morning – June 2026: Included an extended archive display celebrating the centenary of the House System on the Hastings-Long Gallery.
- Brontë House Coffee Morning – Autumn 2026: Welcomed over 30 attendees, including Old Grovians and former staff, making it the best-attended coffee morning to date.

The 2025 Autumn Reunion sporting fixtures (netball and rugby) were cancelled due to low numbers, and no Autumn Reunion was scheduled for 2026. The planned House Party event on 3 July 2026 was also cancelled due to low ticket sales.

Termly coffee mornings continue to attract strong interest, with new attendees at each event. Following the success of the Brontë House event, plans are underway for a Saturday Spring coffee morning/social at The Grove, offering those travelling from further afield an opportunity to reconnect.

The annual Remembrance Service takes place on Sunday 8 November 2026, followed by an opportunity for guests to preview the newly opened Knowles Heritage Centre.

OGA Feedback Survey 2026

The 2026 OGA Feedback Survey provided valuable insight into alumni interests and future engagement opportunities.

Feedback highlighted strong engagement with social media, publications, email communications, reunions and the Year 7 Letter Exchange.

Key suggestions included:

- Weekend coffee mornings to accommodate those travelling further afield.
- More year-group reunions rather than relying solely on general reunion events.
- Regional events beyond Leeds.
- More opportunities to reconnect with former classmates and staff.

These findings will help shape the future OGA events programme.

Year 7 and Old Grovian Letter Exchange

The second Year 7 and Old Grovian Letter Exchange attracted over 80 Old Grovians in 2026.

The initiative connects current pupils with alumni through handwritten letters, providing an opportunity to share memories and experiences across generations. Positive feedback highlighted the value of being able to give back to the School in this way.

Old Grovian Engagement and Remembrance

Continued engagement through email, postal correspondence and personal meetings has strengthened connections with Old Grovians and former families.

An increase in obituary notifications received by the Development Office has enabled more former pupils to be recognised and remembered. A total of 26 Old Grovians will be included in the 2026 Remembrance Roll of Honour, compared with 23 in 2025.

3. Communications and Digital Engagement

The Development Office continues to develop targeted communications to strengthen connections with Old Grovians worldwide.

Publications – Xaipete and iNSIGHT

The termly *iNSIGHT* newsletter continues to achieve strong engagement, with consistently high email open rates.

Issue	Open rate
Spring 2025	52.0%
Summer 2025	61.4%
Autumn 2025	54.3%
Spring 2026	56.1%
Summer 2026	57.7%

The Spring 2026 edition also benefited from repeat sponsorship by Old Grovian Keith Loudon (45-50) .

The annual *Xaipete* newsletter remains an important communication for alumni across generations. The planned *Grovian Giving* brochure has been postponed until 2027 due to Development Office priorities and capacity.

Social Media Engagement

Social media continues to provide an effective platform for promoting alumni stories, events, fundraising and School news.

Email Communications and Database Engagement

Email communications are increasingly targeted and segmented by year group, interests and location, achieving an average open rate of 53.2% and click rate of 6.5%.

A 100% sign-up rate was achieved for 2026 Year 13 leavers' personal email addresses, ensuring all leavers were added to the alumni database for future OGA communications.

Grovian Voices Podcast

Launched in March 2025, *Grovian Voices* continues to share the stories and achievements of Old Grovians, former staff, current pupils and the wider School community.

To date, the podcast has achieved:

- Over 6,750 downloads
- Listeners in 527 cities
- Reach across 56 countries
- 30 published episodes across two seasons

The podcast has once again been shortlisted in the 2026 IDPE Development Awards, in the Judges' Choice categories of Outstanding Fundraising Initiative and Outstanding Engagement Initiative. Winners will be announced on Friday 20 November 2026.

Sixth Form and Alumni Engagement – OG Prefects

Following a successful one-year trial of OG Ambassadors, two OG Prefects have been introduced for the 2026/27 academic year.

Their role is to raise awareness of the OGA among younger Old Grovians and support future engagement through:

- Assisting with Old Grovian school tours, where timetables allow.
- Promoting the OGA within the Sixth Form.
- Contributing to social media and *Xaipete*.
- Sharing ideas for future alumni events and activities.

This provides an opportunity to involve younger generations in shaping the future of the Association.

4. Archives, Heritage and School History

The Knowles Heritage Centre

A significant milestone was achieved with the official opening of the Knowles Heritage Centre on Friday 6 November 2026.

Located just off the Quad, the Centre provides a dedicated space to preserve and celebrate the School's history through photographs, archive materials, sporting memorabilia and items donated by members of the Grovian community.

The opening was attended by Hugh Knowles (49-54), his wife Janet and their family, alongside invited guests Roger Davy (47-57) and his wife Barbara, David McCarthy (st53-92) and his wife Liz, and members of the School community.

The Centre will provide new opportunities for Old Grovians, former staff, current pupils and visitors to reconnect with the School's heritage. Future plans include guided tours, weekend visits and further archive engagement activities.

100 Years of the House System

The centenary of the School's House System provided an opportunity to celebrate an important part of Woodhouse Grove's history.

Archive materials featured at the London Reunion and Summer Coffee Morning, encouraging Old Grovians to share memories and reconnect with their former Houses. The Heritage Centre will provide a permanent space to showcase this history for future generations.

5. Donor Stewardship, Data and Reporting

Donor Recognition

Research and planning continue towards the introduction of a Donor Wall at School, recognising and celebrating the generosity of individuals and families supporting the WGS Foundation.

Financial Reporting and Development Office Capacity

The Development Office continues to work closely with the Finance Team to monitor donations, Gift Aid and fundraising income, ensuring accurate reporting and appropriate donor stewardship.

Operating as a single-person Development Office, the breadth of activity across fundraising, alumni relations, communications, events, heritage and database management requires careful prioritisation. Despite these capacity considerations, the year has seen considerable progress in developing sustainable fundraising initiatives and strengthening alumni engagement.

6. Priorities for 2026/27

Key priorities for the coming year include:

- 1812 Society: Increase awareness and membership among Old Grovians, former parents and former staff, encouraging regular giving towards bursaries.

- Legacy Giving: Promote Fidelis and encourage conversations around leaving a lasting gift to Woodhouse Grove.
- Alumni Engagement: Develop more targeted reunions, regional events and weekend opportunities to reconnect with the School.
- Heritage: Promote the Knowles Heritage Centre through school tours, weekend visits and alumni events.
- Business Directory: Continue growing membership and professional connections within the Grovian community.
- Communications: Build on the success of social media, email, *iNSIGHT* and *Grovian Voices* to reach more Old Grovians worldwide.
- Donor Stewardship: Progress the Donor Wall and continue demonstrating the impact of philanthropic support.

The overarching aim remains to strengthen the relationship between Woodhouse Grove and its worldwide community of Old Grovians, providing meaningful opportunities to stay connected, celebrate shared heritage and support the School's future.

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