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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING HELD ONLINE NOVEMBER 2025

Reports available on the website from 10th November as listed below and now listed as OGA AGM minutes 2025.

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. Southerns Report
5. Foundation Report

8. Election of Officers

OG Chair: Daniel Nulty (90-97)
OG Chairman Elect: Daniel Nulty (90-97)
President: James Lockwood (86-92, st16-)
Treasurer: Vanessa Bates (87-94, st14-)
Secretary: Eve Corry (st24-)
Xaipete Editor: Eve Corry (st24-)

9.Date of Next Annual General Meeting

This will take place on Sunday 08 November 2026.

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Old Grovian Association

Chair Report

It has been a real privilege to be chairperson for the year 24/25. It has been great to see so many of you at the various events and reunions around the country. Thank you to everyone who has attended, I was very nervous going to the London reunion and what to expect. I was chatting to the first person who came, and he was lamenting that he keeps coming but has never met one of his contemporaries and lo and behold the very next person through the door was someone whose time at the school overlapped considerably! What I have enjoyed more than anything though is the conversations and memories shared between those whose time at the school were decades apart.

The November reunion was well attended with some fantastic netball and touch rugby on show. The netball ended in a draw with a countback showing that whoever won the last quarter was declared the winner, so it was a victory for the school 1st vii. It was a great game to watch! The rugby saw a mix of ages taking part. It was great to see a team of 99 leavers, brilliantly organised by Chris Gough who was deserving of the Scott Eastwood Smith spirit of rugby award for his efforts. There was plenty of abuse for me not turning out but after seeing Gwyn Vaughan's hamstring go I think I made the right decision to watch from the sidelines, maybe I'll turn out soon...

It was also great to see a few familiar faces from my own year at school at the Leeds reunion. I've not seen many of them over the years so was lovely to catch up and see them again at the summer reunion on leaver's weekend. I'd highly recommend coming along on that Sunday if you can. Live music from current students, barbecue, bouncy castle if you have little ones to bring along, there really is plenty to do and I'd encourage you to coordinate with your friends and people you maybe have not seen for a while to come along. All are welcome!

Please do keep in touch with the school. I have seen people organising tours of the site through Eve Corry - Development Officer (st24-), groups having their own reunions and get togethers in the Hastings-Long gallery to reminisce over a few drinks and some food. I'll also keep banging the drum for Old Grovians to get involved in the best ways you can, whether it be offering help with apprenticeships, coaching, mentoring, scholarships, bursaries. Your skills and experiences can be invaluable in helping to shape and provide opportunities for children who will be heading out into a very different world from the one we did.

I am absolutely delighted that I have been asked to stay on for an extra year as chair. I really hope to see as many of you as I possibly can at future events!

Dan Nulty (90-97)

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Old Grovian Association

Treasurers Report

The Association is reporting a small surplus for the year end 31 August 2025.

The focus during the 24/25 financial year has been in promoting Old Grovian engagement through a series of reunions and coffee mornings, these have been funded by the release of the funds held for the digital archive project.

The OGA has contributed towards the costs of the Development Officer, sharing the cost with the School and the Woodhouse Grove Foundation.

No bursaries were awarded in 24/25 to allow funds to be focused on the above-mentioned ventures.

Vanessa Bates (87-94, st14-)

School Update

A Year of Adjustment and Resolve

The 2024-25 academic year was one of the most challenging in recent memory. The Chancellor's announcement on 29 July 2024, confirming the implementation of VAT on Independent school fees from 01 January 2025, fundamentally altered the financial landscape for the sector. While the decision had long been rumoured, the earlier-than-expected start date was both unexpected and unwelcome, arriving months ahead of even our most pessimistic planning assumptions.

The Government's stated rationale – that the policy would fund the recruitment of 6,500 new teachers for state schools – has been widely debated. While few would question the urgent need for better funded state education, many remain unconvinced that this measure will achieve the desired outcome. As Sir Keir Starmer himself described, this was a "difficult decision, not an ideological one." Yet for schools like ours, the implications are substantial and immediate. The policy risks undermining the diversity, accessibility and partnership work that the independent sector brings to British education as a whole.

Nevertheless, Woodhouse Grove has met this challenge with characteristic pragmatism and foresight. For several years we had been preparing for the eventuality of VAT on fees, engaging in careful financial modelling, operational streamlining and strategic investment to ensure resilience. The development of additional on-site revenue streams, including expanded facility hire, improved conferencing provision and increased lettings activity, continues to strengthen the School's ability to weather such headwinds. These initiatives not only protect financial stability but also enrich the experience of our pupils and extend our reach within the community.

Further complicating the picture were the increased Employer National Insurance contributions and lowering of the contribution thresholds, adding yet more financial strain on independent schools nationwide. The sector faces what can only be described as a period of turbulence. Yet the Grove remains well positioned – agile, disciplined and grounded in clear purpose. As one military strategist once put it, "No plan survives contact with the enemy," and the measure of a good plan is how well it adapts. Our careful planning, I am pleased to say, continues to prove robust and responsive.

Enrolment and Academic Success

Against this uncertain backdrop, enrolment held up remarkably well, with the School meeting its recruitment targets. Brontë House continued to demonstrate reassuring stability, even showing growth in certain year groups despite the regional decline in primary-aged children. This speaks

volumes for the School's enduring reputation for academic excellence, pastoral strength, and all-round educational provision.

Our A-level results last summer were strong, aligning closely with projections and securing university places for the vast majority of Year 13 students at their first-choice institutions. Once again, our pupils proved that academic ambition, supported by dedicated teaching, yields consistently impressive outcomes.

Meanwhile, on a national level, the contrast in university access between regions remains deeply concerning. UCAS data reported by The Times revealed that while nearly 70% of school leavers in Wimbledon progressed to university last year, only 13% did so in Barrow-in-Furness. Such disparities serve as a stark reminder of the enduring challenges in educational equity and of the crucial role that schools like ours play in ensuring opportunity and aspiration remain alive across the country.

ISC Celebrating Partnerships

The Independent Schools Council's "Celebrating Partnerships" publication continues to be an inspiring showcase of collaboration between the independent and state sectors. The 2025 edition once again highlighted how schools are working to address Government education priorities through shared teacher training, access to music and the arts, community sports initiatives and crucial mental health programmes.

It was gratifying to see Woodhouse Grove's partnership with One In A Million Free School (OIAMFS) once again recognised within the booklet, a testament to our sustained commitment to meaningful partnership work. These collaborations remain an essential part of who we are – contributing to the broader educational ecosystem and demonstrating the social value of independent education in tangible, impactful ways.

School Charity Committee

Our charitable endeavours last year continued to flourish under the leadership of our Sixth Form Charity Prefects, both drawn from our Boarding community. Their creativity, energy and empathy reinvigorated our fundraising initiatives, embedding charitable engagement more deeply within school life.

Guided by Mrs Nulty and Rev Drost, the return of whole school voting for charity selection gave students a genuine voice in shaping our giving priorities. Last year's chosen causes reflected a balance of local, national and international impact – from our enduring partnerships with

Candlelighters and Bradford North Foodbank, to St Gemma's Hospice, Cancer Research UK and Save the Children.

A particular highlight was welcoming representatives from St Gemma's Hospice, including Old Grovian David Walker, who returned to share his experiences as a volunteer. The week of Chapel assemblies they led was both moving and motivating, reinforcing for pupils the importance of service and empathy. The total sums raised last year were substantial, but more significant still was the spirit of generosity that underpinned every event.

Achievements Throughout the Course of the Year

The Grove's co-curricular life continues to thrive, with achievements across every discipline reflecting the talent and dedication of our students and staff alike.

- Culture Week returned for its second year and was again a resounding success. The EDI Talent Show proved a standout highlight, featuring everything from classical musicians to comedians, dancers, and even a magician.
- Our mathematicians broke previous records in the UKMT Intermediate Maths Challenge, securing 10 Gold, 20 Silver and 26 Bronze awards, with six students qualifying for the next stage.
- For the first time, we entered 21 pupils into the UK Linguistics Olympiad, winning both Team and Individual Silver and Bronze awards – placing several students in the top 15% nationwide.
- February saw 62 students embark on a Football Tour to Milan, including a visit to the San Siro Stadium to watch AC Milan play live – a truly unforgettable experience.
- At Easter over 100 pupils enjoyed our annual Ski Trip to Italy.
- On the Rugby field, the U14s reached the last 16 of the National School Sports Magazine Cup, while the 1st VII triumphed at multiple 7s tournaments including Scarborough, Ampleforth and Mount St Mary's, and reached the semi-finals of both the North of England and Rosslyn Park National Plate competitions.
- Netball continues to excel – our U15A team reached the National Cup semi-finals, while the U13s captured the Sisters in Sport National Plate title. The U14s and 2nd VII also performed brilliantly in national competitions, and the 1st VII ended their season on a high by winning the Queen Margaret's Invitational.
- In Football, our U14 girls reached the ISFA U15 National Shield semi-final and the 1st XI boys reached the National Bowl quarter-final, losing only one of their 11 matches all season.
- The U13 girls' Cricket team retained their title as West Yorkshire Indoor Champions and narrowly missed out on the county crown at Headingley.

- Our Cross Country runners once again impressed, with a record-breaking 203 pupils participating in the Inter-House event, and the Senior Boys reaching the English Schools' National Cup final.
- The Golf team progressed to the Independent Schools' Regional Plate Final, and our Climbing teams competed more widely than ever before.
- The summer brought a fitting finale, as our Senior Cricketers toured Barbados and St Lucia, combining sport and culture in a once-in-a-lifetime experience.

The Performing Arts programme continues to flourish:

- The Autumn Term production of Chicago: Teen Edition was a triumph of professionalism and creativity.
- The Junior School's Mary Poppins Jr in the Spring Term charmed audiences with its energy and polish.

Staffing Updates

As ever, the end of the academic year brought with it some heartfelt farewells. Each departing colleague left behind a legacy of dedication and care that has shaped countless pupils' lives.

We extended particular thanks to Ms Strachan, Mr Fernandez and Miss Bastin for their passion and creativity across their subjects. We also said farewell to Ms Evers, whose seven years of teaching English, Media and Drama has inspired so many students to pursue the arts with confidence and flair.

After 17 years of devoted service Mr Bean, left The Grove for a new chapter outside teaching – a tremendous loss to the profession and our community alike. Mrs Richardson moved on after nine years in Biology and Science leadership to take up a Head of Faculty role. Mrs Shirley Crawford, after five years in Girls' Boarding and a decade prior in our Medical Centre, departed with our deepest gratitude for her exceptional kindness and care. Mr King, former Director of Sport and Assistant Head, departed after eight years of outstanding leadership, heading to a new adventure with his family in Dubai.

Four long-serving colleagues retired in the summer, collectively giving 96 years of dedicated service:

- Mrs Mitchell (15 years)
- Mrs Charlton (23 years)
- Mr Robb (25 years)
- Mrs Shoesmith Evans (33 years)

Their contribution to every aspect of school life – academic, pastoral and co-curricular – cannot be overstated and they all embodied the ethos of Woodhouse Grove.

Among support staff, we also said a fond farewells to our Catering Manager, Franco Caroleo, whose warmth and humour made the dining hall a daily highlight, and Lindsey McManus, whose nine years in Marketing were marked by creativity, professionalism and unwavering positivity.

Conclusion

Education policy may change, and the financial environment may grow tougher, but the core purpose of Woodhouse Grove remains unchanged: to nurture young people of intellect, character and kindness.

The introduction of VAT has undeniably tested the resilience of our sector, but it has also reaffirmed our sense of purpose. Through prudent management, thoughtful planning and a collective commitment to our values, The Grove continues not merely to survive but to thrive.

We will remain defined not by the policies imposed upon us, but by the difference we make every single day – the curiosity sparked in classrooms, the courage built on sports fields, the friendships forged in boarding houses and the compassion demonstrated through service to others.

The landscape ahead may shift, but our compass is steady. Woodhouse Grove will continue to adapt, to innovate, and above all, to provide an education that inspires young people to be the very best they can be.

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

Old Grovian Association

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Southerns Report

A record number of applications for the Southerns Scholarship process necessitated a two day interview schedule. Mrs Kath Dawson and I were delighted to be joined by a newly appointed Trustee in Mrs Elizabeth Ainscoe, former Head of Sixth Form.

Surrounded by such experience and knowledge whilst interviewing a breadth of talent from our 6 th Form made the process of sifting through the applications and conducting the interviews very much easier. Some would suggest that DNW being confronted by a full timetable for two whole days was something that had not occurred for about thirty years but, whatever the truth in that, rest assured that it was a fabulous privilege for him.

Of the 36 students who applied every one of them was a superb ambassador for the school. Lily Edwards and Charlie Wright won the Southerns Award. Spread across the assorted additional scholarships, including 6 Old Grovian Awards, a total of £5,350 was allocated to 24 students, with 12 receiving commendations.

Our thanks to Chris Softley for promoting the award process (a little too well?) and to Kirsty Fleming and others for looking after us on the days we were in school. Particular thanks of course to the students whose energy and potential was at times quite overwhelming, reminding all the Trustees of exactly what we miss about teaching – young people who surprise, inspire and delight.

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)

Kath Dawson and Jackie Darwin wish to stand for re-election. Tony Bramwell has submitted his resignation, which has been accepted.

David Wood had previously expressed a wish to stand as a Trustee and Chair of the Southerns, this has been accepted and David is duly appointed.
Elizabeth Ainscoe has also expressed a wish to become a Trustee; this has been accepted.

The Southerns Trustees for the next 5 years are:

Mr David Wood (Chair)
Mrs Kath Dawson
Mrs Jackie Darwin
Mrs Elizabeth Ainscoe

The next en-masse vote will be in 2030.

David Wood (st87-18)
Southerns Trustee

Foundation Report

1. Expanding Fundraising Initiatives

The past twelve months have seen significant progress in the growth and diversification of fundraising and development activity through the Foundation Office.

Donations and Financial Overview

Between November 2024 and October 2025, the Foundation received total donations of over £10,500, reflecting continued support from across the Grovian community.

Online Giving and Regular Donations

The online giving page went live on the school website on 26 November 2024, providing a simple and accessible way for members of the Grovian community to contribute to the Foundation. Since its launch, two new regular monthly donors have signed up via the platform, and several single donations have also been received - marking an encouraging start for this new digital giving initiative.

Old Grovian Gift Shop

The Old Grovian Gift Shop launched on 26 February 2025, generating a total revenue of £4,164.99 to date. This figure includes pre-orders for the Old Grovian Rugby Jersey, a popular new addition to the merchandise range. A new Old Grovian merchandise and archive display has been allocated a display cabinet in the school, located at the bottom of the Sports Hall corridor/McCarthy Theatre stairs. This dedicated space celebrates Grovian heritage while promoting engagement with the Foundation's work.

The Grove Business Directory

September 2025 saw the successful launch of The Grove Business Directory, with 12 founding members. The launch event took place on 18 September in the new Sixth Form Building, attended by the Headmaster, Foundation Trustees, staff and directory members.

Each business contributes an annual membership fee, which goes directly to the Foundation's Bursary Fund, offering a sustainable source of support. The next event for the directory, a Breakfast Network Meeting, is scheduled for March 2026, followed by a 2026 Summer evening

networking event to continue to build professional connections within the Grovian business community.

Annual Giving and Legacy Programme

December 2025 will mark the launch of the Annual Giving Campaign, which will incorporate a Regular Giving Programme and the relaunch of the Fidelis Legacy Programme. Groundwork also continues to cultivate potential major donor gifts.

2. Strengthening Alumni Relations

Strengthening alumni relations remains a core focus for the Old Grovian Association (OGA) and Foundation. Engagement activity has continued to expand, both in-person and digitally, with a range of new and established initiatives.

Events and Reunions

Over the past year, the OGA has hosted a varied calendar of events, including:

- Annual Autumn Reunion at The Grove – 10 November 2024
- London Reunion – 24 April 2025
- OGA Golf Day – Sunday 4 May 2025
- OGA Family Fun Day – Sunday 29 June 2025
- New Termly Coffee Mornings at The Grove – 18 March, 10 June, and 9 October 2025
- New Event for Recent Leavers: “Leavers 23, 24, 25” – Thursday 28 August 2025

The Family Fun Day was a particular highlight, attracting Old Grovians of all ages, 2025 leavers and their families, current and former staff, and current families from The Grove, Brontë House, and Ashdown. This event continues to grow in scale and remains a key engagement and fundraising event for the Foundation.

In addition to hosted events, the Development Office has welcomed 85 Old Grovians, including two former staff members, back to school for guided tours.

New Engagement Initiative: The Year 7 and Old Grovian Letter Exchange

A new intergenerational engagement project, The Year 7 and Old Grovian Letter Exchange, was launched in Summer 2025. The initiative invited Old Grovians to sign up to receive a personal letter from a Year 7 student. The response was overwhelming, with 120 Old Grovians registering to

to take part. The project successfully connected current pupils with alumni across generations, fostering a deeper sense of belonging and community within the wider Grove family. OG letters to be presented to the students early December 2025.

Communications and Publications

The last twelve months have seen a strong emphasis on improving and diversifying alumni communications:

- Xaipete, the annual Old Grovian newsletter, was published in February 2026, resulting in a £500 donation from a postal subscriber following the inclusion of a new Foundation Donation Form and prepaid envelope.

- 'iNSIGHT', the new termly alumni newsletter, launched in Spring 2025. The Summer 2025 edition, sponsored by an Old Grovian, enabled 150 printed copies to be distributed and generated two donations to the Foundation.

- Grovian Giving brochure - due for release December 2025. This brochure highlights the many ways Grovians, regardless of generation or gender, can give back and make a lasting impact.

- Social media expansion continues to build momentum:

    - Instagram account launched in February 2025
    - LinkedIn page affiliated with the Woodhouse Grove School profile, launched in January 2025

    - Facebook (4 Nov 2024 – 30 Oct 2025):
        - Content interactions: +474%
        - Page visits: +164%
        - Page follows: +474%

- Email communications via the Old Grovian database continue to perform strongly, with an average open rate of 51.2% and an average click rate of 6.2%.
- A 99% sign-up rate was achieved among 2024/25 Year 13 leavers to receive OGA news via email - a process now embedded as an annual tradition.

Grovian Voices Podcast

The Grovian Voices Podcast, launched in March 2025, has quickly become a standout initiative for digital engagement. With 2,861 downloads across 317 cities in 42 countries, the podcast has

successfully connected the Grovian community worldwide.

- Season 1: 15 episodes, Season 2: 4 episodes live

Guests include Old Grovians, former and current staff and current students.
The podcast has fostered meaningful relationships across the community, with multiple messages of positive feedback received from alumni, former staff and a former Headmaster.

Sixth Form and Alumni Engagement

Collaboration between the Development Office and the Sixth Form team continues to strengthen. Old Grovians are regularly invited back to school as guest speakers and to share career profiles, which are displayed in the new Sixth Form Building and on the secure digital platform for students.

In November 2025, the OG Ambassadors initiative will launch, enabling Sixth Form students to assist with school tours, events and future engagement ideas.

Archives and Heritage

The school archives represent an untapped but highly valued resource. Over the past year, selected archive materials have been featured at OGA events including Coffee Mornings and Reunions - to excellent reception. Plans for archive engagement events in 2026 are currently in development.

3., 4., 5. Optimising Donor Stewardship, Strengthening Data and Reporting, Adapting to Financial Challenges

Optimising Donor Stewardship

Research is underway to recognise and honour donor contributions within the school through the creation of a Donor Wall recognition feature, celebrating the generosity and impact of those who support the Foundation.
Database and Systems Review
Following a thorough review of the alumni database provider, it was agreed to renew the three-year contract with Blackbaud, securing a favourable renewal price and ensuring continuity of data management and engagement systems.
Build Data & Reporting
The Development Office will continue to work closely with the Finance Team to monitor and report on income and Gift Aid, ensuring transparency and accuracy in financial reporting.

The Development Office continues to work astutely to optimise revenue streams and identify new opportunities for income generation, helping to mitigate the financial challenges faced by the school.

6. Priorities for 2025/26

Looking ahead, the Development Office will continue to build on the year's momentum, with key objectives including:

- Further strengthening alumni relations through targeted engagement and communication.
- The launch of the Annual Giving Campaign, including the Foundation's first Giving Day.
- Celebration of 100 years of the House System, incorporating recognition of donors and supporters.
- Publication of an Impact Report to share the tangible difference of philanthropic support.

Eve Corry (st24-)
Development Officer