



Minutes of the OWBA AGM

Sunday 15th September 2013

11.00

Club Room, JESC, West Buckland School

Present: Neil Kingdon (Chair), Adam Crispin, Roger Jackson, Peter Williams, John Whitfield, William Popplewell, Stuart Smith, John Avens, Angela Avens, Robert Clarke, Mike Tucker, David Walker, David Cummins, David Avery, Richard Heywood, Mark Popplewell, John Vick (Headmaster), John Light (Foundation Chairman), Valerie Bishop (Minutes)

1. Apologies

Chris Ponder, Andrew Broggio, Kirsti Ryall, Jamie Conchie, Ian Blewit, Barnaby Newell, Guy Avery.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last AGM were agreed.

3. Matters Arising

There were no matters arising.

4. Reports from the President/Hon Treasurer

NK explained that as Andrew Broggio was absent he would present this joint report. He thanked John Light (JL) for the invitation to the Foundation Trustee Meeting on 13th September. NK began by commenting that there were many who had not heard of the OWBA within the school and read out a statement written by Chris Boulden which outlines the aims and purpose of the association.

Key points of the President's Report were as follows:

OWBA Administration Support

The new OWBA support structure has been in place for 12 weeks, where administrative and financial duties are carried out from the school. There are clear lines of management and support. NK commented that the new team, Valerie Bishop and Lucy Lancaster have been nothing but constructive.

Communications

A communication strategy has been produced which will ensure that OWBA members receive one printed copy of the Buckland Brief a year (June/July) and one emailed version (January). This will reduce costs. The OWBA website will be updated and social media will continue to be used as a conduit for communication.

Membership

NK explained the differences in membership. Associate members are staff, Trustees of the Foundation and Governors. Full members can vote and sit on the committee. Honorary members can vote but not sit on the committee. Associate members cannot vote or sit on the committee.

Careers and Higher Education Support

NK noted that the OWBA is well placed to give this support, and some students have already benefited from it. Discussions are on-going with Matt Brimson to see how this can best be given.

Events

The OWBA has continued to host events in the past year. NK raised the issue of ensuring cost effectiveness for all events, and asked whether a single flagship event was currently cost effective given that it attracts a

similar cohort each year. He questioned whether it would be more economical to set up regional events to provide variety for members. Mark Popplewell (MP) asked whether there was a way to tell where there were clusters of members across the country to ensure that events were in the most appropriate places. VB explained that there are computer programmes which chart this for you. She said that there are already plans to pilot a regional reunion in Bristol at the end of January 2014 to see what interest it would attract.

Financial Report

NK thanked the Foundation for preparing the accounts and Roger Jackson's (ARJ) Bursary team for independently auditing them.

Income

NK identified the majority of OWBA income in 2012-13 as coming from life membership charges to Year 7s (and new students) (£5000). £2381 came in from regular givers and a small amount was raised through tie sales. MP asked whether there was the potential to increase these amounts. NK explained that the issue of giving had to be handled sensitively. OWBA members would pay money to the OWBA to fund events or other association activities. More substantial giving should go through the Foundation.

Expenditure

NK brought the attention of those present to the fact that the vast majority of expenditure (£6889.98) is on dinners. And the majority of this is spent on the London Dinner. David Walker (DW) commented that this is because the OWBA subsidises dinners for recent leavers and students. John Vick (JFV) said that from a school point of view the March Dinner is one the 'perks' for those students attending and it would be disappointing if it didn't happen. David Cummins (DC) requested that in future if he is needed to sort out accommodation for students he be given more notice to do so. Val Bishop (VB) noted this down as an action point.

There has been no expenditure this year on the Buckland Brief which was sent out by email. Feedback from members has been overwhelmingly in favour of returning to a magazine format. In future there will be one paper publication annually and one emailed copy. Stuart Smith (SS) stated that some old boys not on the internet will be disappointed not to receive a paper copy of this. VB explained that some paper copies will be posted out, but it will be necessary for the committee to weigh up postage costs against the numbers of paper copies needed. DC asked whether it would be an option to ask members to pay for copies of publications. DW suggested that the committee look at the demographics of supporters before requesting an increase to subscriptions. NK assured all present that communications were very much on the committee radar and being dealt with.

Smith and Williamson

NK explained that £30,000 has been invested with Smith & Williamson recently.

He concluded by stating that the committee were intending to look at resource and financial management and would have a financial strategy ready for the next AGM.

5. Report from the Foundation Chairman

Financial Update

JL explained that disruption in staffing has impacted on the Foundation over the past year although Kate Harvey and Anna Rutter Jerome were able to keep on top of commitments. The income budget was £193,000 and only £113,000 was achieved. The difference has been due partly to no charitable trust income (budgeted at £25,000), less events income than expected (£6,800 instead of £20,000) and no legacy income. Expenditure has also been down, due partly to lower than budgeted staff costs. Soft targets have seen some regular givers being lost, no increase in legacy pledges and finding fewer "lost" alumni than intended. The Foundation has £1.85 million split between investment accounts, capital projects and a current account.

Bursaries

The Foundation is funding six 100% bursaries with the assistance of the school and one in Year 13. There are also smaller bursary subsidies given to other students across the school. Bursaries account for approximately £50,000 expenditure a year. One bursary recipient won a Headmaster's prize this year. JFV said that all beneficiaries justified their support. The Bursary programme has started for 2014-15 entry.

NK invited JFV to outline the new Capital Development Project to those present. JFV explained that the governors intend to build a Sixth Form co-educational boarding facility for 70 students which will include a study area, alongside a Sixth Form day centre which will help to integrate all day students and boarders to form a coherent community. This will be a substantial investment to earn money and mean a bigger boarding community. It will be attractive to the international market, important as the UK boarding market is depressed. The governors aim to open the new buildings in September 2015. This is a tight timescale. There is a momentum but planner's permission is needed although they have agreed in principle.

SS asked what money the Foundation had for capital projects currently; JL explained that there was approximately £100,000. The Foundation will be underwriting the interest cost of a loan for the school in addition to providing some funding up front. It is not unachievable, but challenging. JFV said that if the school does not do it, the boarding community will diminish and boarding income is vital to school finances. It accounts for about 25% of income. ARJ explained that there is an opportunity to go into a market place not looked at previously with the facilities which the school will then have, however this will impact on current holiday group lets.

David Avery (DA) said that when the OWBA lost its charitable status they also lost the ability to help old boys who had fallen on hard times. He asked whether it would be an option to use some of the OWBA money as a charitable fund for people who were in need of support. NK agreed that this would be included within the committee's financial assessment and they would report back to DA directly with the outcome. ARJ commented that it could be necessary to form a completely separate charity given the specific nature of charitable objectives.

6. Report from OWBA Governor

DW stated to those present that the Governors continue to be stretched by the Headmaster and the challenging economic climate. Pupil numbers have suffered, particularly in the Prep School where alternative state primary schools are both cheaper and provide a high standard of education. However the ISC has given a glowing report of the Prep School. The Governors have reviewed the nursery system and have decided to continue a limited service within the Prep School. Numbers in the Senior School are also down. The ability to offer flexible boarding is popular and needed, the proposed new build will help this. The Governors remain committed to strengthening resources to improve numbers.

Education standards are exemplary. The GCSE results were the best ever: 59.9% A* and A grades; 94.9% A* - C; 97.6% of students received 5 or more A-C grades; 20 students out of 83 received A* and A grades. The retention from Year 11 to the 6th form has been very good. A Level results were also good: 67.2% were A*-B and there was 99% pass rate. WBS is known as a centre of excellence of education and beats most competitors including all 3 Taunton Schools and Blundell's.

Financially the school is in great hands under ARJ and works to tight margins. The fees are realistic and affordable but it is a balancing act. Private education is a luxury.

DW commented that Speech Day was the most inspiring one he had ever been to, specifically mentioning the speaker Martin Nesirky, spokesman to Ban Ki-Moon, and the Fortescue Medal Winners as highlights. The Governing Body is proud to be associated with the school. The chairman thanked DW for his contribution.

7. Election of Officers

NK announced that Guy Avery, Chris Boulden, Kirsti Ryall, Ralph Patel and Andrew Broggio are stepping down from the Committee.

DC proposed that Neil Kingdon be elected as President. DA seconded this motion. Motion carried.

NK proposed that Stuart Smith, Jamie Conchie and Ian Blewit be elected to the Committee. DC seconded this motion. Motion carried.

NK explained that because of the big changes on the committee it is difficult to nominate somebody to the position of Vice President until the next AGM. DC proposed that Mark Popplewell be co-opted as a Deputy Vice President until such time as a Vice President is elected in the future. JFV seconded this motion. Motion carried.

NK proposed that Peter Williams be co-opted onto the committee as a link between the OWBA and Parents' Association (Clare Williams, his wife is currently Chair of the PA). DW seconded this motion. Motion carried.

8. Change in Constitutional Wording

NK explained that there are 2 main changes to the constitution apart from smaller changes in grammar and wording (all of which are available to see on the website):

1. The list of definitions of "Executive" which includes "two other full members".
2. In the membership section honorary members may vote but not hold executive office.

MP asked whether there should be more clarity as to when an Extraordinary General Meeting shall be held. NK proposed changing the wording so that that it reads:

*"An Extraordinary General Meeting shall be held within seven weeks of the receipt of a written request signed by **2 of either the below:***

- Ten Members
- The President
- A 2/3 majority of the Committee."

MP seconded this proposal. Motion carried.

NK proposed that the changes to the wording in the constitution were adopted. Adam Crispin (AC) seconded this. Motion carried.

9. Review of Membership Fee

ARJ explained that at present Year 7s and new students are invoiced for an OWBA life membership fee of £50 when they join the school. NK commented that this is low in comparison to other old boys' associations. He stressed that anything agreed on by the members today would have to be put to the Governors. NK suggested raising the fee by £10. DW said that he felt uncomfortable in raising these fees as the OWBA is currently sitting on a surplus of funds which are not being used. DA proposed authorising the committee to

discuss the issue and take a document later in the year to make a recommendation to the governors concerning this matter. SS seconded this proposal. Motion carried.

10. Election of Honorary Members

NK said that no nominations had been received. DW said that he was surprised to see that Lady Arran was not on the list of current Honorary Members. DW proposed that Lady Arran be elected as an Honorary Member of the OWBA with the remit given to the committee to review any other names put forward to them. MP seconded this proposal. Motion carried.

11. AOB

There was no other business to discuss.

The meeting ended at 1pm.