



Minutes of the OWBA Committee Meeting Friday 13th February 2015

4pm, Downward Room, West Buckland School

Present

Neil Kingdon (President)
Jamie Conchie (Vice President)
John Vick (Headmaster)
Valerie Bishop (Foundation Manager)
Monica Carter-Burns
(Events & Communications Officer – Minutes)

Mark Baglow
Ian Blewett
Stuart Smith
David Walker
Pete Williams

1. Apologies

Apologies were received from Lesley Banbury, Adam Crispin, David Cummins and Bill Geen. Neil Kingdon welcomed Mark Baglow as a co-opted committee member. He also advised that Bill Geen has been elected as Chair of the Foundation.

2. Minutes of the Last Meeting

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed and signed by Neil Kingdon (NK). One small alteration from AOB was changed from “*which NK believed would work*” to “*NK believed would not work*”

Matters Arising

It was agreed that the minutes of each meeting are to be circulated to the Parents’ Association and displayed in the staff common room. NK reported that he has been in contact with Richard Statton who recommended the regalia be insured for no less than £3k.

Action: Regalia to be photographed

Valerie Bishop (VB) to ensure that minutes are circulated to relevant parties

3. Finance & Events

Finance

Valerie Bishop (VB) shared the Financial and Activities report with the committee. NK explained that the financial year runs from 1st August until 31st July each year. NK commented that comparisons to the income of the previous year were favourable at this time. Stuart Smith (SS) advised that merchandise stock comprising of OWBA ties, cufflinks and lapel pins were good assets and that that alumni often wish to buy such items at reunions. VB agreed and reported that cost price per unit for the ties has reduced, thereby increasing profit.

NK reported that VB & NK met with the OWBA Masonic Lodge who kindly presented the Foundation with a cheque for £1k towards the Capital Campaign.

Events

NK reported that the Remembrance weekend was a success.

There was much discussion centred on The Plymouth Lunch (Nov14). There had been some issues with the catering culminating in some of the attendees voicing their dissatisfaction. After written correspondence with between the OWBA and Yacht Club the issues were resolved to everyone's satisfaction.

NK commented that the venue has ample parking and is a stunning location; he recommended however that in future years alternative catering options are selected. The question was raised as to whether last year's guests would be willing to go back to the venue this year & it was suggested that Exeter may be a suitable venue for 2015, alternating between Plymouth & Exeter on a bi-annual basis.

Rod Boyce has offered to organise a lunch in Exeter if requested. VB suggested that a date be chosen that does not conflict with Mark Wightman's Chartered Surveyor's Dinner or Speech Day. It was suggested that with the Hitchins' family's permission The Plymouth Lunch will be renamed, The Tom Hitchins' Lunch.

Action: NK/JC to speak with Terry Curtayne, Rob Boyce & Bill Hitchins to enquire as to the possibilities of alternating the location of The Plymouth Lunch.

Action: The office to investigate possible alternative locations including, Brend Hotels, Gidleigh Park, Sandy Park & Michael Caines Restaurant in Exeter.

VB reported that the Bristol reunion (5th Feb) was a success. It was a different age group (mainly 60's leavers) and the feedback had been very positive. The numbers were down on 2014's Bristol reunion and it was agreed to look at alternative city locations for 2016's regional reunions.

Monica Carter-Burns (MCB) reported that numbers for upcoming events are building. Manchester (25th Feb) currently stands at 10. There are still spaces available for the Exmoor Experience and the lack of changing facilities had not deterred competitors for the Exmoor Run. Jamie Conchie (JC) offered to investigate the possibility of using portable showers for the runners.

Large numbers of alumni are anticipated for the 70's/80's reunion on 20th June. VB advised that a buffet menu has been selected to accommodate more people.

Careers Lunches

Ian Blewett (IB) reported that he attended a careers lunch in January along with Tim Fauchon (69-78G), Mike Bowles (62-66G), Al Denyer (98-05F) & Ben Yates (01-05F) representing careers in the armed services. The students came for a variety of reasons; those who expressed a general interest, those who required recruitment/selection advice and those who were looking at specific branches of the armed services.

IB recommended that in order for all students to maximise the value of these lunches, they need to be highly organised, focused on being informative, sharing personal experiences and advice on what steps/paths need to be taken to reach the students' goals. He also suggested that each guest be given a specific remit prior to the day.

Action: A meeting has been set up with IB, VB, NK & Matt Brimson (Head of Careers) on 3rd March to look at how OWBA can support MB in exceeding career advice expectations.

PIF Mail out

VB reported that the Personal Information Form has received a 50% response rate (average Direct Marketing response rates vary between 2-10%). Anna Duckett (ex-pupil) has been recruited on a

temporary basis to input the returned information into the database. The response has been very positive with alumni wishing to become involved with careers advice and attend events.

4. Events Planning 2015-16

Plymouth Lunch

It was agreed that the Tom Hitchens Lunch take place in 2015, (date and venue to be confirmed).

London Dinner

There was much discussion focussed on the London Dinner. VB reported that numbers have been dwindling and the cost of an overnight stay in London can become prohibitive. JC advised that the London Dinner used to be an iconic date in the OWBA Calendar and there may still be a need for a formal dinner. It was suggested that the Rifles Club could be a possible venue for either a London Dinner or for a more informal drinks reunion.

Peter Williams (PW) suggested that rather than London, the dinner could be held in a more local venue and to not discount the appeal for many of coming back to school. JC suggested that there may be a possibility of using Castle Hill for a formal dinner.

Action: IB to look at options & costs for Rifles Club.

Action: VB to speak with Lady Arran and look at the possibilities of holding a Formal Dinner in the evening of the next June Weekend Reunion.

Speech Day

It was agreed that the Fortescue medallists from the 1940's who missed out on their original presentation have lunch provided for them in the Karslake. John Vick (JFV) also agreed to host coffee in the JESC Clubroom. VB reported that this year's speech day will also coincide with the opening of the new Sixth Form facilities and Senior School Library.

Action: VB to discuss catering options with School, and investigate how to integrate it successfully with the Opening Event.

5. TOR Concerning Inviting Guests to OWBA Events

Guidance was sought as to whether the OWBA puts a cap on free tickets for each event as on occasion the complimentary places have almost equalled the paid ticket numbers. David Walker (DW) advised that there was plenty of money in the account and the OWBA should encourage the strengthening of relationships with the school.

It was agreed to monitor on a case by case basis.

6. Campaign Update (VB)

Update

VB reported that the current figure stands at £482,340 just £18k off the target. The response from individual givers has been very generous and there have also been some contributions from Charitable Trusts.

Sponsor a Room

The Sponsor a Room brochure has been sent to former boarders, parents of former boarders and parents of current boarders. Prior to the mail out 4 rooms had already been sponsored and there has been wide spread support for the initiative. JC suggested that contacting regular suppliers might be an additional method for room sponsorship.

Telephone Campaign

VB reported that the telephone recruitment campaign was now underway. 12-15 Year13 and recent leavers will be selected to work on the telephone campaign in July. NK stressed that it is really important that people give their agreement to being contacted. VB concurred and advised this is

already part of the process. No cold calls will be made. Along with a good hourly rate, callers will also be offered incentives such as Somersault tickets, work shadowing opportunities and a reference from Campaign Champion, John Light.

8. Constitutional Changes

NK reported that there are some minor changes to be made to the current constitution document.

Action: Changes to be drafted to present at the next meeting and circulated no less than 30 days prior to the AGM

9. AOB

International Reunions

John Vick (JFV) shared with the committee his feedback from Dubai & Hong Kong. Numbers for Dubai started at 10 but illness & last minute business commitments saw the numbers for dinner reduce to 4. JFV advised that whilst small, it was really beneficial to catch up with international Alumni and hear about their successes, they have all been very positive about WB.

The HK reunion saw numbers in excess of 50 past pupils. HK recruitment differs from that of mainland China. Building relationships with international agents is a long term process which is due course should yield some good results. JFV also has a trip to Kiev planned and advised that Nigeria is an emerging marketing in UK school recruitment. The reunions tie in well with the school recruitment exhibitions.

Action: MCB to contact Dubai attendees and with a view to providing stories for next Buckland Brief for an international flavour.

80's Disco

PW advised that the Parents' Association will be holding an 80's disco on 13th March at the school. All are welcome to attend.

10. Date of Next Meeting

Next Meeting Friday 5th June 4pm.

The meeting ended at 6pm.