



# St Aidan's College Alumni Association

## Minutes from the AGM

held on Saturday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2019

Time: 2pm

The Shincliffe Room, St Aidan's College

### Present

Alex Longman (AL – JCR President), Rob Smith (RS - JCR Policy Framework Officer), Ryan Collins (RC), Joe McGary (JM), David Meijer (DM) and Susan Frenk (SF – Principal).

### By Skype

Emma Fisher (EF – Secretary) and Ben Fisher (BF – Reunions Officer).

#### 1. Introduction and welcome

Emma Fisher (EF) welcomed everyone present and explained the tradition behind starting the AGM by electing its chair.

#### 2. Election of Chair for AGM

SF nominated AL, seconded by EF. It was agreed on a general aye.

#### 3. Apologies for absence

Jan Collinge.

#### 4. Minutes of the 2017 AGM

Agreed as an accurate record by those who had been present.

The responses to the actions throughout were as follows:

**Action - Committee to produce a flyer about the Alumni Association to put into next year's freshers packs.** EF reported that this had now been done and thanked Josh Stocco for putting it together. SF said that this could go out to next year's Freshers with the pack that goes out from College. A discussion took place

about how many first years had opted into the association at the start of this year and SF explained that college had asked Event Durham for this information twice already but still hadn't received it. BF asked how many people were in attendance for this weekend's recent graduates' weekend. AL said they were expecting 120 attendees at tonight's dinner and that about two thirds of them would be recent graduates. SF said that she wanted to push to go back to opting-out as she felt this was likely to lead to more sign-ups.

**Action - BF to forward the e-mail trail about the gala dinner money to SF.** BF reported that he had done this but, without a copy of this year's accounts, we couldn't be certain that the money had been refunded. SF said she would chase it.

**Action - SF to put CS in touch with someone at the careers service.** EF reported that CS couldn't be present this year and hadn't submitted a report but she was fairly certain that nothing had happened with this. SF said that she was hoping there could be some ad hoc careers work taking place whilst After Aidan's wasn't working and that it would be nice to have alumni, current students and PG students all involved together on this.

**Action - CS to work with Kate Anderson & others to work out what the gaps are with After Aidan's currently. Committee to work out the best way of raising these with DARO.** EF reported that none of this had been able to happen because all of DARO's work to put a careers mentoring platform had stalled due to the system they wanted to use no longer being suitable. They are currently considering new systems to use. EF explained that the Colleges' Alumni Associations Group were meeting on Monday (18<sup>th</sup> November) and that Tristan Alltime from DARO had been invited to give an update on what was happening with this. Since EF was no longer able to attend, it was decided that RS would go in her place and would report back on what was discussed.

**Action - CS to put together an initial proposition on what sort of careers event SAAA could run instead of the careers fair that morning.** EF reported that this hadn't been done.

**Action - SF to do some investigative work with DARO about the reliability of the database and how to effectively target people.** SF explained that the DARO database does appear to have shrunk and that there seems to be fewer contactable alumni. She discussed plans for College to put together their own database based upon asking alumni for permission to contact them.

**Action – EF to investigate the disparity between e-mails sent to alumni with DARO.** EF explained that she had asked DARO the question but that the only explanation they could give that was last year's initial AGM e-mail reminder had gone to four people more than the follow-up e-mail which probably meant that four people had unsubscribed from receiving e-mails between the two mailouts. BF said that DARO were always quick to get e-mails out when requested. SF wondered if we could successfully contact alumni through LinkedIn and BF said that there already exists a St Aidan's LinkedIn group with about 800 members on it. AL said that the JCR President could encourage finalists to join this each year.

**Action – Clara Ohayon to provide EF with names of last 5 JCR secretaries so that EF can ask them if they'd like to become a newsletter officer.** EF said that Clara had passed on three out of the five addresses and that EF had e-mailed them all but had got no replies.

New actions coming from the discussions about last year's actions:

**Action - SF to send out the flyer about the Alumni Association in next year's Freshers pack that goes out from College.**

**Action - SF to chase what has happened with the forwarded e-mail trail about the gala dinner money.**

**Action - RS to attend the Colleges' Alumni Associations Group meeting on Monday 18th November to report back on Tristan Alltime's update on what is happening with the careers mentoring platform.**

Committee members reports:

**a. Treasurer**

EF explained that she had not received a report or the year's accounts from the treasurer, Matt Spencer (MS). In the absence of this, EF was able to explain that a small amount of money had been spent on the display case this year for some missing parts, that a newsletter had been produced in January which probably cost the usual figure of around £5000 and that no information had come through yet about this year's subscription fees. EF said that, the last time she had heard from Matt, he had said he would stand down as treasurer.

**b. Newsletter**

EF explained that we currently have no newsletter officer on the committee so there was no report for this. She explained that a band of three volunteers had been formed who had put a newsletter together which went out in January 2019. She had asked them if they wanted to continue with the next newsletter, but none of them did. SF said that she had recently spoken to Jan Collinge who had suggested offering bursaries to current students to help put a newsletter together. SF would like to see something continued annually and it could be printed in college. EF thanked Sophie Roche, Sam Forster and Yoanne Tong for their hard work on putting the newsletter together.

**c. Archive**

Alex Tarrant Anderson (ATO - Archivist) had provided a report which EF read out.

“The archive team have continued to update the display in the entrance to the College, to increase the visibility of some of the items stored in the archive, and to educate visitors to the college on the colourful history of St. Aidan's. This year we displayed a historic scarf from the Rowing Club for example. We are planning to update the display over the weekend of the AGM with a new display. Part of our plans are to create a directory of past displays on the Alumni website, as well as sections on the website that detail the archive collections both held within the college and at the Palace Green Library. We intend this to help generate ideas for new displays, as well as encouraging any donations of items which represent gaps in the collections. Our other priorities for the future include ensuring the collection held in the college is securely stored and the items within it are properly recorded.

We are searching for volunteers to help manage the display case. We are looking for Alumni that still live near to St. Aidan's to create a team of local volunteers that will be partly responsible for using our materials archived in the Palace Green Library to create interesting displays to inform and inspire everyone that passes through the entrance to the college. We would like to be able to update the display two or three times each year, with one of these updates coinciding with the Alumni AGM in November. We are also keen to work with the JCR on this, as student volunteers will always be well placed to help update the cabinet, with Alumni assistance and appropriate training.

We are, of course, always grateful for donations of memorabilia for our archive; we would love to see anything that might help build up a picture of the eclectic history of St. Aidan's College and potentially form part of a future display.

Materials of interest include:

- Diaries, letters and scrapbooks
- Records and memorabilia/clothing from student organisations and clubs
- Flyers, posters, invitations and other memorabilia from events and social activities
- Photographs and audio and video recordings of the college and student or alumni events
- Copies of student publications.

If you have something that might be of interest we are happy to have a facsimile if you wish to keep the original, this is something you can either do yourselves or we will gladly do it for you.

You can get in touch with us at [archive@aidans-alumni.org.uk](mailto:archive@aidans-alumni.org.uk)".

EF said that ATA was standing down as Archivist as he felt it was a role that could really only be done well by someone living close to Durham. SF said that, during Jan Collinge's recent visit, she had changed the display to one showing pictures of various college buildings from various points in time and that she had also done a good sort out of the archive material in the stacks.

#### **d. Reunions**

BF explained that he had organised an informal drinks evening in London in April. He booked out a section of Champagne Charlie's underneath Charing Cross station and around 30 alumni had attended from a reasonable spread of years. BF said that he needed to stand down as Reunions Officer but that, since this event had been quite simple to organise, he'd be happy to arrange another if time allowed.

#### **e. Digital Communication Officer**

EF explained that Paul Cohen had not sent a report but that he was standing down from this position. BF said that he had been keeping an eye on things and that there had been a bit of interest on Facebook. Emma Wilson had also been doing some twittering and RS said that he could do some posting. BF suggested that, if college were tweeting, alumni didn't need to duplicate and there was no need for 2 twitter feeds. AL questioned the need for a Digital Communication Officer. BF thought that it would be great to have one but that we could manage without.

#### **f. Careers Development Officer**

EF explained that Chris Smith had not sent a report but that he was standing down from this position. He had reached this decision because he had not had time to do very much towards the role this year but BF said it was important to note that he had brought lots of enthusiasm to the role and that the situation with After Aidan's would have been very frustrating for him.

#### **g. Secretary**

EF said that there was very little to report as she had received very few e-mails. She said that she would be standing down from her position.

### **5. Election of officers (where necessary)**

Treasurer – EF reported that Matt Spencer is stepping down as treasurer. She said that, at last year's AGM, Alex Tarrant Anderson had said that he could take on the role from now as his exams would be over and he would be qualified. He had very recently expressed that this was still the case. Alex Tarrant Anderson was voted on a general aye. EF said that Matt had been treasurer for quite some time and that his reliability at the role meant that no-one else ever had to worry about what was going on with the finances! She thanked him for his hard work.

Newsletter – There was no-one present that was interested in the role. It was felt that it was important to keep the newsletter going and that this was something that the JCR/SCR might be able to help with. AL said that he would discuss newsletter production with the JCR journalism committee.

**Action - AL to discuss newsletter production with the JCR journalism committee.**

Archive – There was no-one present that was interested in the role. AL said that maybe this could become part of the JCR President’s role but SF warned that it wouldn’t be sensible to overload that role and that it wouldn’t work well in years where there was a President who wasn’t keen to take it on. EF said that keeping a check on the archive and updating the display case might be a nice job for any students that had an interest in the history of the college. AL said that he would look into any interest for a JCR-based committee.

Action - AL to look into any interest for a JCR-based committee.

Reunions – BF said that he was stepping down this year but there was no-one present that was interested in the role. He said that the feedback at the 2017 reunion suggested that the greatest demand was for the next reunion to be five years later which means that this role could remain vacant for a while. EF said that preparation for a 2022 reunion would need to begin two years beforehand. It was agreed that this role could remain vacant until next year.

Digital Communication Officer – RC said that he would be happy to take on this role. He was voted on a general aye.

Careers Development Officer - There was no-one present that was interested in the role. Since the greater part of this role involved working on After Aidan’s which has stalled for reasons beyond our control, it was agreed that this role could also remain vacant for a year.

Secretary - There was no-one present that was interested in the role. EF explained that, if you ignored the general overseeing of the association that she was involved in and focused on the role of secretary in particular, it really only involves organising and minuting the AGM and responding to the occasional e-mail. Since a lot of the e-mails are queries that are better placed with college anyway, SF suggested writing a bounceback message on the secretary e-mail account directing people to the appropriate college contact. AL suggested that the JCR Secretary might be able to take the minutes at future AGMs. He also suggested that a JCR alumni committee might help to keep things ticking over generally.

Action – EF to write a bounceback message on the secretary e-mail account directing people to the appropriate college contact.

## **6. Review of Association aims set at 2018 AGM (see 2018 minutes)**

The aims set at the 2018 AGM were read out:

1. Continue to build up the Association’s archive of College memorabilia – BF asked if Clara Ohayon had collected any memorabilia for this year and AL said he would check. It was agreed that this aim should be ongoing.
2. Look to arrange an “informal” alumni event - perhaps away from Durham – BF said that he would be happy to try and do this again next year to keep the aim ongoing.
3. Update the Association’s website and develop its social media presence – It was agreed that this aim should be ongoing.
4. Help College Officers to move forward the planned Alumni careers mentoring service for current students - “After Aidan’s”. It was agreed that this was ongoing but acknowledged that it couldn’t be taken any further for now.
5. Ensure the continuation of a high-quality yearly newsletter. It was agreed that this aim should be ongoing.

Action – AL to check if Clara Ohayon had collected any memorabilia for this year.

## **7. Any other business**

EF thanked Matt Spencer, this year’s newsletter team, Alex Tarrant Anderson, Ben Fisher, Paul Cohen and Chris Smith for their involvement with the committee.

SF wanted to give EF huge gratitude for her involvement with the Association for many years.

The meeting closed just before 4pm