



St Aidan's College Alumni Association

Minutes from the AGM

held on Saturday 18th November 2017

Time: 2pm

The Shincliffe Room, St Aidan's College

Present

Emma Fisher (EF – Secretary), Ben Fisher (BF – Reunions Officer), Ed Smith (ES - Reunions Officer), Alex Tarrant-Anderson (ATA – Archives Officer), Natasha Alevropoulos (NA), Luke Hollander (LH – Chair of meeting), Jaisal Patel (JP), Pdraig Alton (PA), Chris Smith (CS – Careers Development Officer), Evan Bolle-Jones (EBJ) and Stefan Klidzia (SK – Acting Principal)

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

Ben Fisher (BF) nominated Luke Hollander (LH), seconded by Alex Tarrant-Anderson (ATA). It was agreed on a general aye.

3. Apologies for absence

Josh Stocco (Archive Officer), Kenneth Sandman (Web Manager), Matt Spencer (Treasurer) and Graham Brady MP.

4. Minutes of the 2016 AGM

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

The responses to the actions throughout were as follows:

Action - College Officers: create a narrative for incoming students about the role of an alumni association and the benefits of belonging. EF reported that she had put a narrative together that had been agreed by all the College Officers and the current and former JCR Presidents. However, it hadn't been published anywhere other than the JCR website for this year's Freshers. Stefan Klidzia (SK) said he would make a note to try and include it in other places next year.

Action - College Officers: email to finalists about SAAA; encourage any potential opt ins. EF reported that this wasn't done by College.

Action: College Officers to provide information to PGs at January and June/July congregations and to graduating PGs who are unable to attend the ceremonies. (nb numbers at the January ceremonies have dropped following the changes in visa regulations over several years). EF reported that this wasn't done by College either, but that the narrative she had written for freshers was also suitable for this purpose. SK said that he had made a note of this for next year.

Action: Emma Wilson (EW) to put Josh and new SCR president in touch. EF reported that she thought that EW had provided Josh with the SCR President's e-mail address.

Action: JCR President to send stuff to Ethan for JCR promotion e.g. copies of the Badger. ATA reported that this is ongoing - he had exchanged some e-mails with Ethan about this, but it hadn't got far.

Action: Wait until Feb/March to see if DARO have succeeded in launching the careers mentoring platform. Otherwise, do something else. It was agreed that this would be discussed during Chris Smith's (CS) report.

Action point: get SACBC engaged in organising a sports related event for the reunion. BF said that this was started but hadn't happened in the end - it is no longer a necessary action as the reunion has already taken place.

5. Committee members reports:

a. Treasurer

LH read a report sent to EF by Matt Spencer (MS).

"A bit more going through the accounts in 2016/17 than usual and some more items going through in 2017/18 too. I think it is good to see the association spending its money although we need to be careful not to leave ourselves with none!

We had two lots of subs paid in. As these accounts are down on a cash basis rather than accrual I have recognised both in the 2017 accounts meaning there will be no income next year. Subs are significantly lower than the last 2 years (£6,325.00 in 2015/16 and £6,483.33 in 2014/15. I have not enquired as to why it is lower although I think this should be investigated. As usual, a major cost out is the newsletter through Etempa/Alphagraphics - 10% more expensive than last year but slightly more prepared and sent (750 copies vs 700)

We made a deposit payment for the new display case in the hall of approx. £4k. The remainder of the cost (£8.4k) was paid in August 2017. The expense of this has significantly decreased our cash reserves - with another newsletter expense expected this year, the alumni event and subs already paid I would expect our reserves to be down to about half what they are now.

The Alumni event which took place in July had a net expense of £320 - this will be accounted for next year. I have put some expenses down as prepaid in this year's accounts.

We haven't had any travel awards this year (for the third year running).

College have not paid us the £925 from the Gala Dinner (£5 per head). However, we also owe them £159 for one guest's expenses so they currently owe us a net amount of £766.

The sketches of Sir Basil Spence - who ended up paying for these? I have some emails suggesting that we were going to pay for them, but I have never been asked for any more.

I am happy to restand as treasurer and Charlie Hamilton (nee Liles) is happy to restand as assistant.

Charlie Hamilton and I are the current signatories on the account.”

Regarding the question about paying for the Basil Spence sketches, EF said that she thought that the Association had repaid the JCR the Basil Spence sketch money but that she would chase this up.

With regard to what MS had said about the subs being lower, BF suggested that he may not be aware of the opt in process. SK said that, from this year, freshers are automatically charged the Alumni Association fee so have to actively opt-out if they don't want to pay it. BF suggested that the drop might reverse if that were the case. SK reiterated that he would chase where the narrative about the alumni association is going with EW.

Ed Smith (ES) asked why the travel award isn't being made. EF said that we had told College that we were happy to award it so didn't understand why we weren't either giving it or being asked for the money for it. SK said he would explore why we haven't been charged for them as they were awarded.

BF said he would chase College for the missing money from the gala dinner.

Action – EF to chase up who paid for the Basil Spence sketch frames.

Action – SK to chase where the narrative about the alumni association is going with EW.

Action – SK to explore why the association haven't been charged for the travel awards.

Action – BF to contact College (Lesley Peak) regarding the gala dinner money.

b. Newsletter

EF reported that she had not received a report or any recent correspondence from the newsletter officer, so it is unknown what is happening with the newsletter. She said that, after the last AGM, there were two newsletter officers - Lauren Polson, who had e-mailed EF to say that she had been unable to work on the newsletter so was stepping down from the position and Hannah Futter (HF), who hadn't been in touch for over two months. A discussion followed about how the newsletter had been put together in the past and what we might need to do in the future. ES said that we shouldn't compromise on quality. Evan Bolle-Jones (EBJ) suggested we should get a bigger group of people to do it by splitting up the roles. Recent graduates don't have much time to do this, so we might need to target older alumni, which would be a good way to bring more people into the work of the association. We could send a targeted advert to the alumni. It

might interest older alumni or a more recent graduate that wants to or is working in publishing. We need to find out from HF what is happening. We could aim for a summer production if that would be easier. LH asked what the timescale for getting a group of alumni to work on the newsletter would be. BF suggested we should aim to get a committee together for the New Year so that something could go out in late spring.

Action – EF to put out an ad to get a newsletter committee together for the new year aiming for a newsletter to go out in late spring. This would involve breaking the Newsletter production into several smaller roles.

c. Archive

ATA read a report sent to EF by Joshua Stocco (JS).

“It has been a great year for the archive, we have successfully received and installed the display case in the entrance, I would like it to be noted in the minutes that this is entirely thanks to the relentless hard work and perseverance of Jan O'Brien, who I believe was at some point pouring over concept plans for the case whilst on a ship in the middle of the Med in order to have it ready in time for the 70th anniversary event! So, a huge thank you to her is in order. We have also framed and hung the original concept drawings for the college by the stairs, thanks to Alex Tarrant-Anderson and the college officers for their work with that project. Also thanks to all the alumni that donated items for the display on the 70th and to the members of the JCR that helped run the event.

I plan to stay on in my position for another term, as I feel that I have only just begun to get to grips with the role. However, since taking the role I have unexpectedly moved abroad which makes it quite difficult, so I would love to have any number of additional volunteers to help myself and Alex out, particularly (but not exclusively) if you live near to Durham.

Finally, I will make my usual plea, if anyone has any interesting memorabilia from Aidan's cluttering up their home that they would like to donate to the archive, please get in touch. It may eventually end up on the display to inspire and inform current students and visitors to the college. Emma has my email address”.

ES announced that he had brought all of his Aidan's t-shirts with him to donate to the archive. LH said he would put them in the stacks. BF said that we would need to make it clear who had donated them and when to be in keeping with the way that Palace Green store memorabilia.

ATA said that he was happy to stay in post but was limited on what he could do now that he was no longer 'on the ground' in Durham. For this reason, it would be good to have a local volunteer. He added that the team have some initiatives in the pipeline.

d. Reunions

BF said that we had a very successful 70th anniversary reunion in July. It was attended by over 200 alumni spanning all 70 years of the College's history. BF said that he and EF had received huge amounts of positive feedback regarding the weekend. There was a really friendly atmosphere throughout which is typical of the Aidan's spirit and ethos. There is a write up of the event on the website. It was the largest reunion event Aidan's has held since the 2007 reunion. Prior to that, the last alumni event of this size was the 50th anniversary gala dinner in 1997. EF and BF did the bulk of the work which is hard when living a long way from Durham. Attendees gave positive feedback and would like another! Five years until the next one seemed most appropriate – getting the date in the diary for 2 to 3 years in advance seems a good plan. BF

asked the question what other types of reunion activity should we arrange in the meantime. We've had two London events in the last two years – one successful and one less successful. Something informal in London would be good. Organising events in Durham is hard and getting people up is hard.

It was suggested that holding Recent Graduates Weekend at the same time as Lumiere is problematic because travel is more expensive. Lumiere is double-edged. It hasn't attracted older people to this AGM. We need to think about that in two years' time.

SK thanked BF and EF and all the other helpers for their hard work in organising the reunion.

ES reported that the first WeHARR weekend that the committee arranged was good but last year only four people came to a similar event. EBJ suggested we could run multiple events such as HoRR, drinks and careers networking in one event. BF said we would have to pick something that attracts enough people. A simple drinks session might not be enough. EBJ suggested e-mails could be targeted.

BF and ES both said they would continue in their roles

Action - BF & ES to look to put on some kind of alumni event in London in the Spring.

e. Web Manager

LH read a report sent to EF by Kenneth Sandman (KS).

"We have now transitioned to the website hosted by the University.

It is easier to use and suits all of our purposes.

Ben is also trained in its use, so we have two people who can make changes.

I have not been requested to change anything recently so I assume everything is going well!

We have had the old URL renewed for another few years thanks to Emma.

Very little to report!"

BF added that we are now on a site supported by the Uni which is good and it's easy to use. There is still some content to develop.

f. Digital Communication Officer

EF reported that she had not received a report or any recent correspondence from the digital communication officer. LH asked what happens if you don't hear from anyone. EF explained that in the new constitution to be looked at later, we had included the clause "Elected members of the Committee who have not engaged either through meetings, discussions or via correspondence within a given 12 month period shall be deemed to have resigned". SK suggested that 12 months might be a bit long. EF agreed that 12 months hadn't helped with the newsletter situation! BF suggested that six months might be better. It was discussed that Ethan (ET) had made a good start and that this had only tailed off recently. It would be good to have a bit more of a presence.

g. Careers Development Officer

Takeaways from last year

- Established a new Careers Engagement Role to work with DARO
- Expectation was that DARO would have further updates on the After Aidan's platform in Spring 2017

- Decision to monitor this and re-assess in March/April

After Aidan's

Overall frustratingly little progress

- Contacted DARO in April 2017, there are still blockers to going live
 - Current students don't have DARO accounts
 - Set up 'Aidan's style' web pages
 - Safeguarding
 - Support strategy
- There is limited capacity for alumni to take this forward- has to be driven by College staff owing to data protection etc. Expectation from DARO is that this is a job for College staff.
- SK and EW met with DARO in September to discuss this further.
- Delayed by college staff illness/absence.
- Discussion with current student today (18/11/17)
 - Feeling among students is this would be v useful
 - "Isn't this the whole point of Colleges?"
 - "Why not do something more informal on LinkedIn?"
 - "Especially useful for international students"
 - Can we repeat this user case more informally ourselves? We think this is just some tweaks to the website and publicity in the JCR. Achievable.

The Future

- Follow up with college staff.
- Even if we could go live tomorrow, we (the AA) would not be ready:
 - How to publicise to JCR members, CS to form a plan with LH?
 - How to publicise to Alumni members, CS to form a plan with EW?
 - Other?
- Expand role
 - Career mentoring outside of After Aidan's
 - CV/Careers surgery around recruitment fair
 - Suggestions?
 -

BF, EF and CS met with a current student about her wanting to get in touch with alumni. The help we could manage was really useful to her. We have learnt that we can publicise ways we can help more informally for now. CS said that he was happy to carry on for another year and try to expand the role. We could try and form a careers surgery around the careers fairs in October. We'd need to work out how to drive it forward. SK thanked CS for his persistence with the matter.

ES said that it's taken longer than we all expected. Can we do stuff that isn't constrained by the university?

SK said that alumni organised events would be great. We should have the platform up and running by the end of the academic year.

BF said that EF had learnt from a meeting with the VC that he is keen to see this work established through the associations.

EF added that Rose Mallison has stepped down from the other careers development officer role.

Action – EF and BF to ask Deborah Wood at DARO if she could help us again with other informal requests to put current students in touch with Alumni.

Action – If the above action is possible, CS and LH to work together to publicise it with the JCR and CS and KS to work together to publicise it on the website.

Action – Committee to decide on other ways to offer support to the JCR – e.g. Career mentoring outside of After Aidan's, CV/Careers surgery around recruitment fair etc

h. Secretary

There have been a few of the standard e-mails such as sending change of contact details, sending info for the newsletter and trying to trace old friends. The reunion created a bit more correspondence than usual as it generated queries about the event. Our most recent train of enquiry was from a current student wanting career mentorship from alumni members.

ES asked if DARO is an effective resource for careers advice. BF expanded on the story of the student outlined by CS - ES questioned why we can't leverage this.

BF said that we should ask DARO if they can continue to help in the same way until the platform is up and running.

SK asked if the careers service offer anything to graduates.

EBJ said they weren't happy to do anything for him when he tried and LH said that they won't help him and he's still in Durham!

SK suggested letting the VC know that the careers service should offer something to recent graduates if they want alumni to give something back.

Action – CS to speak to the careers service about what they are able to offer graduates and if they might be able to help us with our informal careers plans

6. Election of officers (where necessary)

EF ran through what was and wasn't necessary. It was concluded that no elections would be necessary.

CS said we should put out a wider call for people to get involved.

Action – EF to advertise for alumni volunteers to help with work of the Association

7. Review of Association aims set at 2016 AGM (see 2016 minutes)

The aims set at the 2015 AGM were read out:

1. Continue to build up the Association's archive of College memorabilia – BF said that we had a lot more of this from the reunion but it is an ongoing project.
2. Look to arrange an "informal" alumni event - perhaps away from Durham – BF said that we will try and do that again.
3. Update the Association's website and develop its social media presence – BF said that we've got the new website but we need to continue with the social media presence aspect. ES said that we should keep developing the Association online presence.

4. Help College Officers to move forward the planned Alumni careers mentoring service for current students -“After Aidan’s”. This had already been done at length but is still ongoing.
5. Review and update the Association’s constitution. LH said that we would turn to this later in the meeting and asked if there was anything to add.

EBJ said that we might want to include something for the newsletter. ES said that this should be “Ensure the continuation of a high quality yearly newsletter”.

8. Update on Colleges' Alumni Associations' meetings

EF explained that, at the end of last year, she was invited by the Alumni Association Secretary of Hatfield College to a meeting of Alumni Association representatives from a range of other independent college alumni associations because the VC had expressed a desire to meet with representatives from them to discuss with them the University Strategy and the role he saw them playing in that. BF and EF attended the first meeting in February to prepare for the meeting with the VC and to also use it as an opportunity to share good practice. EF then attended the meeting with the VC several months later. The meeting with the VC went very well, he was very complimentary about the work of the alumni associations and, in particular, he saw them as being crucial in establishing careers mentoring networks between current students and alumni. Following that meeting, it was agreed that it would be useful for them to continue so we will now have them twice a year – once in London and once in Durham. BF and EF will attend the next of these meetings on Monday 20th November at St Mary’s in which we will establish the aims of the group going forward and will also meet with the PVC and University Secretary to discuss how our group might contribute to University policy.

9. Funding

Due to current students being able to opt out of paying the Alumni Association fee, CS explained that we may have a potential point at which many students opt out every year and we might start to lose our money. Therefore, we might need to think about how we raise money going forward. CS explained that he had looked at other colleges and many of them charge £10 to £20 annually as an alumnus and then receive a hard copy of a printed magazine, invites to college events and discounts on coming to Durham etc. Do we want to do something similar?

ES said that, when we revamped the alumni association, we tried to think about whether we could deliver something before we ask for something back. Some colleges have more established systems in place.

BF said that we would have to make a distinction between raising money for the college and raising money for alumni association activities. For the latter, we don’t have a huge problem at the moment. Although this year, the cost of the newsletter was higher than subscription income.

ES said that we need to start having some ideas of what people will be willing to pay for.

BF added that the reunion cost us £350.

ES said that, now that we’ve done that, we should be doing things that make us money. We are like a charity so should be looking at charitable models or should we just target people who will give it for nothing?!

SK explained that you can give to the University and specify that it goes to the College. You can even specify where that money will go.

JP asked why we couldn't just ask for people to make a donation via the website.

BF said that they would need to be clear what they're donating too. Why would you give to the Association when you could give directly to the College?

SK agreed that people have got to know what they're contributing to.

EF pointed out that it was difficult to promise to regularly offer newsletters and reunions etc when they are being produced by volunteers as there is nothing to guarantee them consistently happening.

ES said that we should let people know that we would like to do more and we want them to help us to do more. We need to showcase what we've done.

CS offered to get in touch with DARO to see if fundraising is an easy thing to do via the website. The Mary's page looks identical to ours and they offer it. CS will work with DARO to look in to this. Could do something around 1947.

ES suggested we review this next year.

SK recommended we make sure we are not offering something we can't deliver.

Action - CS to get in touch with DARO to see if fundraising is an easy thing to do via the website.

Ratification of the new constitution

EF explained that we're proposing that the AGM formally adopt the new constitution. It was reiterated that, earlier in the meeting, when discussing the clause "Elected members of the Committee who have not engaged either through meetings, discussions or via correspondence within a given 12 month period shall be deemed to have resigned", it was agreed that the duration of 12 months would be changed to six months. BF proposed and ES seconded. Taken on general aye. In light of this, it was agreed that we would keep the first four Association aims set at the 2016 AGM and replace the fifth one about the constitution for the new one about the newsletter. Thanks were given to Andy Gates for putting the constitution together.

Action – EF to amend 12 months to six months and then publicise the new constitution to alumni.

10. Any other business

LH explained that the JCR would like the alumni's support in the accommodation fees campaign.

ES said that if people knew what the situation in Durham was they would want to do something about it. What can be done?

LH explained that PresCom are looking to the alumni because they are powerful.

BF said that the Aidan's Alumni Association is willing to listen to proposals from PresCom.

BF asked SK to pass on best wishes to Susan from the Alumni Association.

The meeting closed at 4.01pm