



Old Pangbournian Society
87th Annual General Meeting
Tuesday 20 October 2020, 1830
Conducted Via Zoom

MINUTES

Committee Members Present: R. Shuttleworth (President), Dumas (Vice-President), R. Knight (Hon. Vice-President), R. Paine (Vice-President), I. Williams (Hon. Vice-President), D. Nicholson (Chairman), P.J. Plato (incoming Chairman), J. Spencer (Hon. Secretary), K. Hartshorn (Treasurer), T. Garnier (Headmaster), A. Scott-Priestley, J. Fisher, W. Donaldson, A. Wells, W. Skinner, M. Nicholson, L. Howard, D Metcalfe, P Lawrence

Apologies: W. Donaldson, C. Morphy, C. Parry, A. Sterling

- Welcome:** The Chairman opened and welcomed everyone to this second OP Society Meeting being conducted virtually by video conference. He looked forward to the resumption of “normal” meetings in the future when government restrictions allow. However, he remarked that such virtual meetings have enabled several other OPs to join the AGM including some from as far afield as New York & Illinois. This was most welcomed as was the attendance of the new College Chairman of Governors, Patrick Roberts.
- Minutes of Meeting of Thursday 14th May 2020** (Chairman) - These were approved and will be signed by the outgoing Chairman and returned to the Secretary in due course as a true and full record of that Meeting.
- Retiring Officers/and or Committee Members – The following was noted:**
 - The OP Society President, Richard Shuttleworth retires at this AGM.
 - David Nicholson is standing down as Chairman and welcomed as new Chairman, Phillip Plato (1973 – 1977), a former Chief Cadet Captain of the College.
 - Anna Sterling expressed her wish to step down and we wish her well for the future of course.
 - The following members have served the first three-year term as OP Society Committee members and were elected for a further three years: -
 - Claire Morphy
 - Will Skinner
 - Andrew Scott-Priestley
 - David Nicholson
- Election of Honorary Officers – The following were nominated for the roles indicated below:**
 - Honorary President – Mark Dumas
 - Honorary Society Chairman – Phillip PlatoIn light of his service to the Committee and in recognition for his contributions as outgoing President, Richard Shuttleworth was nominated as Honorary Vice President and all these nominations were accordingly approved by the Meeting.

OP Society Treasurer – The Meeting was advised that as part of a reorganisation that the College has been compelled to undertake during the current pandemic, Karen Hartshorn is leaving the College and cannot continue to undertake this role. In the absence of any nominations for Treasurer at this AGM, Phillip Plato as incoming Chairman advised he will attempt to recruit a new Treasurer in the near future and will update the Committee at the next Society Meeting.

5. **Nominations for the Committee** – There were no other nominations to consider.
6. **Ex Officio Committee Members** – Mr Charlie Parry & Mr Paul Lawrence were co-opted on to the Committee as ex-officio members for a period of 12 months from October 2019. Charlie Parry has asked that he wished to take a step back from the Committee but wished to maintain his commitment to the OP Golf Club. The Committee thanked him for his assistance and were delighted that Mr Paul Lawrence would be willing to continue his service for a further 12 months.
7. **Honorary OPs** – The Headmaster had tabled a proposal for reviewing criteria for awarding Honorary OP Status and had included a list of 25 former & current members of Staff that he proposed for being given Honorary OP status. (A copy of the list and the HM Proposal is annexed to these Minutes.) As this proposal had only been received by the Committee a few hours before the AGM it prompted considerable discussion at the meeting. Many Members upon hearing the Headmaster’s case for revising the criteria for awarding the Honorary OP designation, were supportive of his proposal. However, It was agreed that a sub group should be formed consisting of Ian Williams, David Metcalfe, Paul Laurence & Lawrence Howard to be chaired by Phillip Plato with the objective of considering this matter and to report to the Committee on its findings at the earliest opportunity
8. **Chairman’s Report** - The Chairman advised his report would be brief as little had happened mainly due to the pandemic. He was sorry that yet again we would have to undertake this meeting via Zoom but at this stage there was no other option. In terms of events, the idea of a joint OP/Conway/Worcester/General Botha, event was still some way off and therefore could hopefully still take place. Proposed dates for this Grand Reunion of the 4 former nautical colleges (which also represent the centenary of the General Botha) are 14/15/16 June 2022.
The Chairman advised that social visits to the College are possible in the foreseeable future but only in limited numbers and with prior arrangement.
An OP Dinner was inappropriate to plan for due to the current public health crisis but hopefully the proposed Falklands event in October 2021 might go ahead and double as a opportunity for a Dinner. Looking at the proposed event with Conway/Worcester in June 2022, the Committee commented that we hope to include both organisations into future OP events, given that for many years they are now both closed, have no new members and are in declining numbers. Phillip Plato advised he plans to attend the General Reunion in Falmouth to represent the Society but hopes other OPs will also attend as he hopes Pangbourne can become the spiritual home of the Old Conway & Worcester Associations.
9. **Headmaster’s Report** - The Headmaster reported that the Summer Term when the College had been effectively closed, had been conducted as a “virtual” term but that the online education had worked very well. For the new term, all pupils had now returned to the College, and the social distancing requirements had been adhered to and although this had produced many challenges, it had worked very well. He reported no cases of Covid-19 in the school. This term has meant that no large-scale term events had been able to go ahead. 30 members of staff have been working from home and again this seems to have worked really well on the whole. Another national lockdown was likely, but the Headmaster reassured the Committee that although the College has had to take some difficult decision, (the redundancy of Karen Hartshorn and reorganisation of her dept being one) the College’s finances were sufficiently robust to sustain this difficult period. He assured the Committee that there were no proposals to cut the budget to the OP Society and new personnel were being recruited.

- 10. Treasurer's Financial Report** – Draft accounts had been circulated to the Committee prior to the Meeting. These show cash at bank of circa £46,000 but it was noted there are two unpaid debts totalling £2,146 which have remained outstanding for some time. Phillip Plato questioned why, and it was revealed that no authorised signatory for the OPS Bank Account was currently serving on the Committee. Phillip Plato said this was totally unacceptable and this would be made his first priority as Chairman to resolve.
- 11. AOB** – Phillip Plato welcomed Patrick Roberts as the new Chairman of Governors and extended an open invitation from the OP Society to him or any representative of the Board to join any future OPS Meetings. Mr Roberts responded similarly by inviting Mr Plato or an OPS rep to attend future Board meetings.
- 12. Date of next meeting** - Tbc but the next AGM will be held in October 2021, venue also tbc.

Attached – Report by HM re Nominations for Honorary OPs and proposals for future Honorary OP status.

B. Proposal for review of criteria for Honorary OP status

I believe the current criteria are outdated and should be reviewed. In nearly all schools, anyone who has worked at the school - certainly as a teacher - automatically becomes a member of the alumni society on leaving. Whatever their capacity, all have contributed to the development of the students in the school.

This is certainly true of Pangbourne, a close community in which the contribution of teaching and support staff has an impact on the formation of every Pangbournian.

It seems to me illogical that a pupil may join the College for as little as one year, contribute nothing during that time, and still be a life member of the OP Society, whereas the contribution of a member of staff who has performed their role to the best of their abilities has to pass the scrutiny of the OP Society Committee.

The recent email discussion about two former members of staff is a good case in point. Who can say how much formational influence was exerted by a former Chaplain (3 years) and a housemaster (6 years)? With respect, certainly not the OP Society Committee, I would venture. And if a former member of staff wishes to engage in later life with their former pupils, why should they be restricted in doing so? What is to be gained by denying former staff membership? And how much could be gained by their inclusion?

Whilst some discretion may be needed, in the very small number of cases where someone has left the College under a cloud, membership of any organisation is on the basis of continuing positive engagement. Pangbourne is a place which believes in fresh starts. The OP Society has shown an understanding of this in regard to OPs, I recall, welcoming to the Centenary Dinner one OP who had spent a significant part of his life in prison - rightly and, for him and his contemporaries, obviously positively.

I believe that all employees of the College should automatically become Honorary OPs on leaving. Whilst still in employment, there should be a threshold and ten years seems reasonable, although for housemistresses/masters and others in significant positions of pastoral responsibility it should be lower - perhaps five years. I believe this would support the objective of encouraging more engagement by younger and/or female OPs.

Respectfully, I suggest that now is a good time to adopt a broader view of membership of the OP Society.

Thomas Garnier
Headmaster