



## OLD BANCROFTIANS' ASSOCIATION

### Minutes of the ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING On Monday 20th March 2023 at 6.15pm At Bancroft's Dining Hall

#### Present:

- In person: Amanda Campbell; Gemma Wicks; Michael Watts; Claude Lavender; Susan Day; Kevin Campbell; Julian Blake; David Ridell; Adam Kodish; Paul Corney; Harry Sternschuss; Rachel Pau; Merfyn Jones; Stuart Fairhead; Tom Steel; Gordon Brown.
- Via Teams: Alex Findley; Fred Thomas-Bowman; Peter Neville; Martyn Sumner; Steve Sonis; Anthony Le Cras; Tony Barritt; Ian Sanders; Franklyn Davis

#### 1. Apologies for absence

Simon Marshall; Jeremy Bromfield; Stephen Thirsk; Angus Abbot; Stephen Dodd; Peter Dixon; Peter Warner; Roy Holloway; George Moon; John Dadson.

#### 2. Minutes of the AGM held on Monday 21st March 2022 and matters arising

The Minutes were approved unanimously.

#### 3. Treasurer's Report - Accounts for 2022 and 2023 (Michael Watts)

The accounts show another good year with our income being at a similar level to the previous year. Within expenditure, there is a reversal of some of last year's stock adjustment, which is due to some of the stock that was held at the School being missed in the previous year due to building work that was going on, making access difficult to that area. The Grants for the year were a donation to the Sixth Form Scholarship Fund, which was provided to support to Ukrainian students, which will be discussed later on the in the meeting. Retirement gifts were not made in previous years due to Covid restrictions and therefore there has been a catch up in the current year. The balance with the School substantially reduced, following a payment in January 2022, during Covid, payments due from the School were not chased.

#### 4. President's Report (Gemma Wicks)

As the tenure of the Presidential role has moved to be more in line with the School's academic year, I took up the post of President of the Old Bancroftians' Association in September 2022 and so, I am nearly half way through my year.

- My first event was the OBA Dinner on 21 October. After a quick ceremonial handing over of the gong with recent Past President Steve Dodd at the coat rack at the drinks reception, it was a pleasure to sit down to dinner with OBs and members of the wider Bancroft's community from a wide range of year groups. We tested the idea of shorter and fewer speeches for the first time this year, which seemed to work well, and Angus Abbott led the Heads and Tails game to raise money for the Foundation during the evening. There was a great atmosphere and my thanks go to Susan Day, Angus, Amanda and Kevin for all their efforts in organising an enjoyable evening.
- I unexpectedly became a little more involved in Bancroftian life in my year as President than I had first envisaged, having returned to work at the school in October for a maternity cover, teaching in the PE & Games Department.
- The next event of the year was the Bancroft's community wine tasting on 24 November, when 40 OBs, staff, former staff, former parents and current parents from the Prep and Senior Schools came together over a shared love of wine, I mean the School, at 8 Rocks bar and deli in Loughton. There was a great atmosphere during the evening, with a number of attendees asking if we could make it an annual event.

- I have also had the opportunity to represent the OBA at the School's Remembrance and Carol services. Both of these were excellent occasions, involving many areas of the School community, including CCF, Sea Scouts and Cubs, in addition to the Bancroft's Singers, solo music performances, readings and Junior and Prep choirs who were all a credit to the School.
- Most recently, I attended the Francis Bancroft Memorial service at the School and had the privilege of reading the commemoration of benefactors which paid tribute to all OBs who have passed away this year, including former Head, Mary Ireland, who sadly passed away at the start of the year. Mary will be much missed and we are anticipating that there will be a memorial service at the School in due course, as well as the establishment of a plaque in the chapel on OBs' Day, in honour of her memory.
- We have recently also received the sad news that OB Geoff Crome has recently passed away. Geoff was an incredible servant of the OBA in so many ways over so many years and he also served as a Governor of the School for a number of years.
- We have also received news of the passing of a number of OBs. These are: Geoffrey Maycraft, Geoff Springett, Sean Hurley, George Spence, Norman Hammond, Jessica Homes (nee Shubrook), Robert Brown, Richard Robertson, David Harding, John Williams, Paul Kilmartin, Roger Windsor, Brian Folkes, Andrew Herbert, John High, Martin Barker, Philip Degen, John Smith, Ian Jeffery, Mohammed Azad, George Hickinbotham, Conrad Bayliss, Graham Manning, Derek Vertigen, David Austin, Roger High, John Cochrane, Hugh Kindell, Richard Whiteley, Emma Harrington, Richard Shervington, Alan Palmer, Brian Giffin, Beric Seward, Stanley Gray.
- I also had the opportunity to address the current U6 cohort alongside Mrs Susan Day, to encourage them to sign up to Bancroft's Connect and to share their contact details with the OBA and to look to engage them with the activities of the OBA.

There is much more still to look forward to in my year of office and it has been my honour and a privilege to serve as President to date.

## **5. Chair's Report (Amanda Campbell)**

As life has returned to normal, I am pleased to report that there has been a return to activities for the OBA.

The General Committee has met regularly to discuss OB matters. This last 18 months has seen regular meetings taking place between the School and OBA as we look to the future and how we might find better ways of working that enable the School and ourselves to combine forces on some events. I hope that in 12 months we will have been able to unveil a plan that will help both the Association, which is made up of a volunteer force, alongside the School where Susan Day is based. This will require a Constitution and rule change and at some point an EGM to bring the changes to the membership. As an Association, we are a member of AROPS which is a body linking alumni associations together.

As Chair, I am pleased to attend many events at School alongside the President and other OBs. My thanks to the School and the Governors for their invitations and continued support of The OBA.

- 5,10 and 15 years on reunions

These took place on the same night in May 2022 and were very well supported by the respective year groups. For some it was the first time they had been back to School since they left. Reconnecting with their peers and staff saw laughter and sharing of school days. General Committee members are encouraged to support this event so they can promote the work of the OBA in an informal format. This reunion format will be rolled out again this May.

- OBs Day 2022

This was an excellent day with good weather which allowed for the football, netball and cricket to take place alongside crazy golf in the Quad. Last year we experimented with having a Prosecco bar on the Chapel Assay which will happen again this summer. The ice-cream van to keep the children entertained also proved a popular choice. Lunch was well attended with 200+ in the Great Hall and the Association was pleased the retiring staff also joined us to receive a gift from the OBA.

- Leavers Evening

The School introduced a change to Visitation day in 2022 with no formal prize giving across the School. However a Leavers prize giving and celebration of their school days was conducted late in the afternoon.

I was delighted to introduce our newest OBs to the association and present them with their ties and bracelets before tea in the marquee.

- **OBA Dinner**

The 2022 Dinner had a lower than expected attendance but it was still a good event with time to meet with others from across the generations. This event is a difficult one to pitch as timings and day of the week have proved to cause difficulties for some who would like to attend but for religious reasons would not be able to come on a Friday. The Association is considering moving it to a Saturday evening; however this will come at a considerable rise in the cost of a ticket.

- **Membership**

The OBA has a total membership of circa 5500 registered on the database. Obviously, as with most Associations, groups numbers registered is high but active members is a much smaller representation. We now actively manage one database directly through the OBA office with approx. 4000 email addresses and updated records. Membership increases by approx. 120-140 each year. The membership is managed via the Foundation office in School by Susan Day.

- At the start of 2023 we received the news that Mary Ireland, previous Head at school had sadly died. I was privileged to attend her funeral along with Marwan Mikdady, her deputy Head and Steven Foakes who was Chair of Governors during Mary's tenure. Mary has been remembered fondly by many for her pupil-focussed approach and many remembered her as a person always on the games field when home fixtures took place, cheering the school side on. This OBs Day, we will remember Mary with a tribute in chapel when a plaque will be unveiled and Simon and Fergus Ireland will be with us for that occasion.
- My thanks to my fellow officers Michael Watts and Claude Lavender and the support of the General Committee during the year. My thanks to Steve Dodd and Gemma Wicks for their roles as President, Finally, I would like to say a special thank you to Susan Day in the OBA/ Foundation office. Without her support, the Chair's role would be much harder as all of the events we run are attributed to her hard work.

## **6. Elections:**

- **To be proposed for election as officers under rule 6(b):**

Chair - Amanda Campbell; Treasurer - Michael Watts; Secretary - Claude Lavender  
Proposed by Gemma and seconded by John Hasselgreen

- **Election to the General Committee**

Angus Abbot, Tony Barritt, Alexander Findley, Anthony Le Cras, Adam Kodish  
Proposed by Gemma and seconded by Julian Blake

- **Election of Independent Examiners of the accounts for the coming year under rule 7.**

Independent examiners Stuart Fairhead and David Riddle  
Proposed by Michael and seconded by Merfyn Jones

After a show of hands, all were duly elected or re-elected.  
There was a vote of thanks for all.

## **7. Reports from the School and Bancroft's Foundation (Simon Marshall)**

- Update on school news

Apologies for my absence this evening – I am still in the process of recovering from Covid. Here is a brief outline of some news from the School.

- Recruitment continues to be very strong for both Prep and Senior Schools
  - We are over-subscribed at 7+ and 11+ and more pupils accepted this year than in previous years – yet again we will welcome a 6 Form entry in next year's 3rds
  - Recruitment at 16+ is more of a challenge as there is now far greater competition from the very selective 16+ state academies but numbers remain reasonably strong, although we tend to find more late applicants in August once GCSE results are known.
- Despite the increased competition for places at the top universities, our students continue to receive excellent offers from the most competitive courses at a full-range of the top universities. We were delighted that 14 of our students received offers from Oxford or Cambridge this year; but we are equally delighted that more of our students are applying for and being accepted for Degree Apprenticeships – these allow students the chance to pursue a degree at an excellent university alongside working for an employer (and receiving a salary) – feedback

from the first students to pursue these courses has made clear how brilliantly they have prepared those students to gain a head- start on their 'degree-only' peers.

- Both Schools are now running full co-curricular programmes again – this school year is the first 'completely normal' year since the academic year 2018-2019. Overseas trips recommenced in the autumn and we have found the appetite for such trips to be huge – we have had to take to balloting for places on some trips. We will finally get to run a boys' and girls' hockey trip to Argentina (that was cancelled from 2020) during summer 2023.
- School music and drama has returned to fully-fledged performances and the Musical earlier in the Spring Term Crazy for You was a real treat, with a great number of pupils showcasing their talents in acting, singing and dancing. Recently a group of pupils rehearsed and put on a series of performances of Saint-Saens' Carnival of the Animals. This was notable for being an entirely student-run and student-performed production. They also performed for the local community and put on a separate 'autistic-friendly' performance for some local schools and charities.
- CCF, Sea-scouts and Duke of Edinburgh awards (Bronze, Silver and Gold) are also all back in full swing and recruitment remains as strong as ever.
- We are now routinely hosting large UCAS, Careers and Competitive university events – these are not just for Bancroftians, and we now welcome a wide range of local state schools. For the careers event in particular we are extremely grateful for the support that members of the OBA continue to give so generously – their advice and support for our pupils is much appreciated by our pupils and I would like formally to thank all who have participated recently and in previous years. As a result of such support, we feel our pupils really are receiving up-to-date and excellent information about the current opportunities in employment.

- Foundation:

We have the final round of interviews for two candidates next week for the position of Head of Development and Fundraising. Both candidates have considerable experience with fundraising, both in schools and in the wider charity sector.

## **8. Reports from Charities**

### **a. The Educational Development Fund (Kevin Campbell)**

Our year 2021 to 2022 was much quieter than the previous year. We helped 1 OBs and 2 Pupils during COVID but as we came out of lockdown and the school was getting back to normal we made just 2 grants.

However, the School has now started educational trips again, so we have had an unprecedented number of applications.

So far this financial year, we have made 7 grants to pupils for educational trips, music or sports tours and one to a past pupil towards their medical elective. A total of £7680.

In 15 years I have been treasurer, we have made 176 grants: £60,000 to 88 pupils and nearly £100,000 to 86 OBs. That is a total of £160,000 at an average of £10,600 per year.

Our investments have continued to serve us well and provide us with sufficient income for an average year. However, our average will continue to increase as costs rise and more families find it challenging to provide for the "add-ons" to school fees.

A number of our longstanding donors have passed away over recent years and we have just 3 OBs sending us an annual donation. As you can see we continue to full fill our trust aims and objectives so if you feel you can make a contribution towards supporting future requests from Bancroftians of all ages and make a real difference, I have some standing order forms available.

We have recently appointed Tony Le Cras as Secretary, replacing Chris Butler who has done a fantastic job in modernising the way we operate and ensuring we are compliant with the Charity Commission requirements. We are also about to appoint a new trustee from the existing committee to join myself, Steve Dodd and Janice Bissett and so have a few committee vacancies to fill.

### **b. The Sixth Form Scholarship Trust (Adam Kodish)**

We are currently sponsoring 4 scholars in the Sixth Form which is a record number.

This comprises our regular annual scholars for the last 2 years as well as 2 Ukrainian girls, with three scholars currently in L6 and one in U6.

The OBA have also provided financial assistance for the Ukrainian scholars.

However, due to our additional sponsorship of the Ukrainian scholars, we will not be sponsoring a new scholar for entry in September 2023.

In early 2024 we will decide whether to sponsor a new scholar for entry in September 2024.

We are currently in a position where we have to sell assets periodically to cover the gap between school fees and income.

Since the Bancroft's Foundation was constituted we have not attempted to raise new funds as we don't want to conflict with their fundraising.

## **9. Reports from Clubs and Societies**

- OB Golf (Adam Kodish)

The society has almost returned to a pre-pandemic level of activity.

Our Captain for 2022-23 Malcolm Fleet remains as Captain for 2023-24, with Adam Kodish being Vice-Captain.

We visited a new venue for our Autumn Meeting, East Sussex National near Uckfield.

In order to overcome difficulties in engraving our trophies, we have fitted new square plinths to them. This allows for machine engraving flat plates for the plinths. The cost of the project was £130 but will be recouped in only a few years by significantly reducing engraving costs. They also provide for at least the next 50 years of winners.

We are very pleased to learn that golf is on the agenda at Bancroft's for 5<sup>th</sup> and 6<sup>th</sup> formers. James Foley is in charge of this and we have arranged a 9-hole meeting at Wanstead on 14 June to which pupils and staff will be invited. James has appealed for donations of unwanted golf equipment and we have been able to donate 6 bags of clubs and some miscellaneous items.

Our Spring meeting is taking place at Ipswich GC on 21 March and our Captain's meeting at Canons Brook on 6 June. Our Autumn meeting is at Stoke by Nayland on 27-29 September. Our Centenary year is in 2024. We have a meeting at West Essex on 7 May 2024, exactly 100 years since the first recorded meeting at that venue.

We have expanded our social media presence.

Roger Booth has established a WhatsApp group and we regularly post events and news to Facebook, Bancroft's Connect and [oldbancroftians.com](http://oldbancroftians.com).

- BANCROFT RFC (Stephen Thirsk)

Like all clubs at grass roots level, we have since the resumption of playing activity after the Covid lockdown, experienced a severe drop in playing numbers. The result of this is that we have been obliged to withdraw from the leagues, but we still manage to field a team of older players from time to time to play friendly fixtures. This drop has been experienced by all clubs in our area, and indeed the country; and certainly two clubs in the locality have folded altogether. We have certainly not reached that point. We are optimistic that next year, if we enter the Merit Tables, we should be able to field a regular Senior XV again. In the meantime, the Junior Section continues from strength to strength, and more recently we have acquired a number of girls who are doing very well. This part of the Junior Section particularly, is experiencing major growth.

Socially we continue, and our income is strengthened by regular bookings for functions from outside persons and bodies.

We host a local football team, who participate socially as well.

Whilst these are difficult times for clubs at our level, we are confident of overcoming this and continuing on a sound basis.

- Hockey (Gemma)

There will be a match between Leavers and OBs on the 31<sup>st</sup> March 23 at Old Loughs at 5pm. There are girls' and boys' teams. All the members of the OBs' team are from the last 3 years after leaving.

**10. Any other business**

- There was a discussion about next year's President's nominations. Names will be put forward soon.
- Dinner: numbers are declining. Angus is very pro-active. We need to find a day other than Friday. The possibility of bringing other half and of moving venues is being explored, as well as a subsidy from the OBA. The atmosphere in School is not very conducive to having Dinners there. We need more input from younger OBs.
- It would be good to have some feedback from OBs who joined the AGM on Teams. Is this something we should consider on a more permanent basis?

*The Meeting ended at 7.35 pm*