

STERNIANS' ASSOCIATION
ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING
10.00 am SATURDAY, 19TH JUNE 2021 via ZOOM
MINUTES

1. Welcome and Apologies:

John welcomed 16 members to the AGM. He thanked all attendees for their commitment to this key element of the Association's year. Apologies were received from: Rod Giles and Patrick Rendall.

2. Minutes of the 2019 AGM (published in The Sternian 2019): These were available for inspection. They were approved as an accurate account of the meeting.

3. Births, Deaths and Marriages:

Notified Deaths since last AGM

Tom Copas 940 (2 June 2021 aged 82)
Randolph Jenkin A264 (10 May 2021 aged 75)
Peter Harris (Porter) (April 2021 aged 72)
William Alan Barry Dance A322 (22nd March 2021 aged 74)
Robin Thompson 779 (27th January 2021 aged 85)
Kenneth Morton (former Caretaker at Junior House 1964-2002) (12th January 2021)
Neil Sanderson B385 (13th December 2020 aged 59)
Michael Anthony Hutley QPM 667 (24th November 2020 aged 86)
Janice Marion Harding ZB02 (5th November 2020 aged 95)
Alan Dennison 681 (November 2020 aged 87)
Mike Reggler (Bursar 1981-97) (21st October 2020 aged 89)
Clifford Ashby (LWC Physics teacher 1950-60) (28th October 2020 aged 95)
James Page B810 (October 2020 aged 55)
John Stanley Morris 737 (7th June 2020 aged 84)
David Wagstaff A195 (4th June 2020 aged 76)
Guy Dodd (Headmaster 1982-93) (8th May 2020)
Harold Morgan 82 (7th May 2020 aged 105)
Simon Coldicott A900 (May 2020 aged 62)
Trevor Hammond 693 (4th April 2020 aged 85)
Gerald Bryant 325 (24th March 2020 aged 96)
John Fooks 410 (22nd March 2020 aged 95)
Frederick Sampson A379 (6th March 2020 aged 74)
Martin Greenwood 964 (March 2020 aged 82)
Geoff Bayliss 544 (10th December 2019 aged 89)
John Pogson 394 (22nd November 2019 aged 94)
John Matson (Junior Housemaster / Sternian Central Administrator) (19th November 2019 aged 89)
Robert Williams 524 (5th October 2019 aged 89)
Philip Hildesley (former Director of Music) (2nd October 2019)
Douglas Greatbanks A747 (29th September 2019 aged 65)
David Hicks 545 (10th September 2019 aged 88)
Tony Whibley (Hazelveare Housemaster) (25th August 2019 aged 85)
Stanley Davies 274 (7th August 2019 aged 96)
Francis Dunn A323 (27th July 2019 aged 71)
Johnathan Sheppard B169 (1st July 2019 aged 58)
Harry Loe A023 (30th June 2019 aged 79)
Charles Lilley 500 (13th June 2019 aged 91)

Information on births and marriages where provided is published annually in The Sternian magazine.

4. Treasurer's Report: Chris Huffam

Chris began by thanking Ben Forman for his help in presenting the accounts in a professional format. These accounts are available to view on the Sternians' website.

During 2020, Covid restrictions had prevented the running of the many activities normally organised for Sternians. This situation is naturally mirrored in the accounts.

Commenting on the accounts for 2020 Chris reminded the meeting how events and key expenses such as the Sternian magazine are funded. LWC covers this expenditure from the Development Office budget and liaises with the Sternians' Chairman/Committee on suitable activities and items to help Sternians keep in touch with each other and LWC. Such key expenditure covered by LWC included:

- The Sternian - £9,629 (2019 - £9,627)
- LWC Connect – (£7,560) The running of the new communications system enabling Sternians to stay in touch, to look for jobs or to post opportunities, to increase social and business networks, create or join various groups, publicise events and much more.

Movements through the Sternians' bank account:

- Income into the Association's bank account is mainly from Sternians by way of Donations (£960) which was slightly up from 2019 (£756).
- Expenditure from the Sternians' bank account consisted of Donations to the Trust Fund (£621). Larger amounts had been paid in earlier years to finance special projects, as in 2019 when Steve Pennington's generous legacy of £10,000 was donated to the Design and Technology department for special equipment.

The balance in the Sternians' bank account as at 31st December 2020 was £11,640 (2019 - £11,705).

When reporting the 2021 accounts we will publish a summary of movements in and out of the Sternians bank account along with a bank balance as at 31st December 2021. We will no longer report on the various items of expenditure covered by the Development Office, for example the Sternian magazine and the running costs of LWC Connect. The Rules and Constitution of the Association will have to be amended to reflect this approach. Selected items where expenditure that could be regarded as relevant to the Sternian community will be included in the Chairman's report, but without detailed numbers.

Questions from the floor:

Guy Consterdine asked how the recently-announced Centenary Book was to be funded. Chris replied that costs were to be covered by the Development Office, and Sam Corfield anticipated that eventual sales would cover the costs.

Approval of the accounts

Proposed - Graham Barnes

Seconded - Paul Cameron-Taylor

Unanimously approved.

5. Trust Fund Report: Paul Richings

Paul explained the historical context of the fund, which had been established in 1961 and hence was now in its sixtieth year. Typically in the early years its focus was on provision of small grants towards items such as school trips and musical instruments. In recent years, as resources have grown, its work has been targeted almost exclusively towards assistance with school fees. All candidates for support are recommended by the college and are accompanied by a detailed financial case, and the fund considers these cases on the basis of the academic merit and potential contribution to the life of the college, supported by input from house parents and tutors. These grants now regularly make the difference between pupils being able to remain at the college and having to leave, most frequently at the point between completing the 5th Form and the commencement of 6th Form studies.

The capital of the fund has accumulated from many sources. In the past fifteen years perhaps £100,000 has come from a group of donors, with each often giving a small regular monthly amount. Over that same period the fund has benefitted from a number of significant legacies which have added a further £250,000. All of these contributions are added to the capital of the fund, with all grants paid from interest received on the investments.

Those investments are not immune to market uncertainty, but the trustees have flexibility to use unspent funds from previous years, with grants totalling £40,000 in 2020.

Beneficiaries have included Foundationers and others, supported by external charities up to the 5th Form, then requiring assistance into the 6th Form, while other pupils have encountered difficult circumstances in the current economic climate. It is expected that the number of cases for support will increase.

The trustees meet regularly to consider the financial health of the fund, and to review requests for support. Not all applications are approved. The fund's portfolio is allocated between three investment managers, with yields consistently around 4% annually.

In closing, Paul thanked:

- All donors, including the several dozen regular contributors
- His fellow trustees for their continuing commitment to the work of the Fund
- Chris Bellairs as Independent Examiner for the accounts of the Fund
- And Dudley Lewis, who stepped down from the trustees in 2020 after 25 years

From the floor, Charlotte Greer-Read was pleased that, through the Sternians Trust Fund, we can support pupils through school – very positive during these times of Covid-19. Headmaster Adam Williams echoed those sentiments, emphasising the transformational impact that the Fund's grants achieve for so many pupils and for the life of the school.

6. Chairman's Report: John Bacon

John reviewed the past two years, reflecting on the impact of Covid-19 on Sternian activities.

After the 2019 Summer Reunion, life for LWC and the Sternians was following the traditional pattern:

- 13th September – President's Drinks in the Prideaux Building at LWC to introduce new staff to Sternians
- 26th September – South West reunion in Tormarton

- 11th November – Remembrance Day parade LWC
- 29th November – over 60's lunch at the Farmers' Club, London
- 11th December – LWC Carol Service at Odiham Church
- 8th February 2020 – 5th Form Mock Interviews in Sutton Sports Hall
- 10th March - Foundation Day in the Gavin Hall

The work of the Executive Committee was progressing, with meetings in the new Sternian Room at LWC in October 2019 and March 2020.

But by the time of the excellent Foundation Day event, Covid-19 had started to affect our lives, to the extent that the elbow-bump was starting to replace the handshake, and the school had to make decisions to maximise safety ahead of any firm guidance from government.

- Friday 13th March 2020 – the Careers Fair planned for Tuesday 17th March was cancelled
- Tuesday 17th March – the London drinks and Bournemouth Reunion planned for 23rd and 30th April respectively were cancelled
- Friday 20th March – Gill Kelly and others working from home
- Monday 23rd March – PM announced first lockdown, ordering people to stay at home – effective from 26th March
- 1st April – LWC support staff furloughed

Naturally, the Summer Reunion planned for June 2020 was a casualty of the crisis. This was particularly disappointing for your Chairman and two of the Executive Committee who had been eagerly anticipating a big anniversary reunion.

Work of the Committee was able to continue to the extent that archivist James Marshall organised a formal letter of thanks from both the college and the Association to Sternian John Gates for his work over the years to document the life and times of our founder.

For many, the summer of 2020 saw the start of a return to normality, with the relaxation of earlier restrictions. At this time we also saw the well-earned retirement of Alumni Relations Manager Gill Kelly after some seventeen years.

Peter Booth and I were invited to LWC in September to discuss the way forward with Adam and Sam. We have been fortunate to have Kate Boyd from the Development Office effectively diverted from her usual role to stand-in on the alumni front, which among other things has allowed us to continue the uninterrupted publication of our Sternian magazine for 2020. Kate and Sam have also been creative in devising ways of maintaining contact between LWC and the Association, by means of the Virtual 5k event in September, and through the series of LWC Focus sessions. The seven such virtual meetings to date have covered an impressively wide range of topics:

- Finance – by Richard Saunders and Paul Richings – both Sternians
- Entrepreneurship – by Shelley Lawson and Claudia Gwinnutt – both Sternians
- Sports Agent – by Akin Solanke-Caulker - Sternian
- Communication Technology – by Dr Jide Adeniran – LWC parent
- 'Make My Money Matter' – or Ethical Investment, by Ben Holden and Tara Gillespie – both Sternians
- Focus on Law – by The Rt. Hon. Lord Justice Coulson and Simon Clements – both Sternians
- Endurance Training – by Toby Leyland – LWC parent

At the administrative end of things, Executive Committee meetings have resumed, with virtual meetings in April and May 2021.

It should also be noted that Covid-19 has provided opportunities for LWC and Sternians to excel:

- Claire Liggins in the Design and Technology department made good use of the laser cutter purchased with Sternian Steve Pennington's generous legacy, to produce much-needed PPE at the height of the first wave
- Congratulations to Mark Proctor (C877 Sutton 1998), Senior Director, Global Supply Chain at AstraZeneca, made CBE in the 2021 Queen's birthday honours list

Back to normality? The Executive Committee will continue to work closely with LWC to resume normal operations as soon as is feasible. Provisional plans are coming together for President's Drinks and the Farmers' Club lunch in the Autumn term. The resumption of these and other reunions and Sternian sporting events depends on society opening up and continued relaxation of restrictions.

At Executive Committee level I plan to resume and complete work to update the Rules & Constitution, particularly around an updated financial process. And there is an obvious need to consider succession planning, at least for my role as Chairman, and to introduce fresh blood into the Committee.

Questions from the floor:

Guy Consterdine observed that no readable biography of our founder exists. This omission had been the subject of recent discussion among Sternians. It had been suggested that one of three possible routes could be taken:

- the task could be handed over to a professional biographer, subject to appropriate costs, or
- suitably qualified/equipped Sternian(s) might undertake the task, or
- could this be a learning opportunity as, perhaps, a 6th Form History/English project?

Peter Booth confirmed that such a project is close to his heart. He had discussed the subject with Jonathan Lilley and Chris Radmann, Heads of History and English respectively, and with Kate, Sam and Adam. All were agreed that Lord Wandsworth's legacy, especially in this approaching Centenary year (academic year 2022-2023), is very important, with a general desire to progress this as restrictions ease.

James Marshall expressed his desire also to be involved with this project, considering his recent contacts with John Gates. James was sure that John Gates would be very pleased to hear of these plans, and James would love to talk this over with John.

7. Headmaster's Report – Adam Williams

LWC are still dealing with Covid restrictions, but continue to be cautiously ambitious, also radically optimistic in all that we try and do here.

For another year, GCSE and A Level grades are to be based on Teacher Assessed Grades, so we are responsible for setting, marking and invigilating, with grades to be issued later in the year.

A programme of twice-weekly lateral flow testing is in place to keep Covid at bay, or at least to recognise it. Throughout the pandemic there have been only two cases at the college. So we have been really blessed to have a very low level of Covid cases to date, although quite obviously we are still taking a lot of care with our community.

For a second year we have another online Speech Day, with astrophysicist Maggie Aderin-Pocock sharing her thoughts with us. Events such as Speech Days, Sports Days, Leavers' Balls are continuing, alas with no parents in the vicinity.

Pupils and staff have proved very resilient throughout, but there are understandable signs of Covid fatigue. Everyone is feeling a bit exhausted by it. While this is a challenge across all industries, it is particularly so in the Education sector especially. But the staff have been remarkable, as have the pupils, and mental health has been a prime consideration.

Academically, teaching is delivered in person, and now without masks, but the earlier remote learning has meant that the children are where they should be academically, they have covered the work, which is a phenomenal achievement.

On the co-curricular front it has been refreshing to see two real life plays in the last three weeks, The 39 Steps a couple of nights ago – a brilliant and funny 6th Form performance of that, and the 3rd Form performed Chicken! which explores mental health issues, and it is really wonderful to have children back in the theatre in the Gavin Hall.

On the cricket field we have recently seen the boys and girls play against the MCC, with the boys narrowly losing while the girls thrashed the MCC ladies. Ladies managed to get up to 99 in 20 overs and our girls knocked them off for one wicket after twelve and a half overs. A couple of the LWC girls, Finty Trussler and Gemma Lane, now have professional contracts with the Southern Vipers, and could go further. Just phenomenal.

New staff include:

Baz Bennett – Chief Operating Officer - it's the evolution of names but Bursars are now called COOs, Baz Bennett joined us from the military where he ran Falkland Islands for 2-3 years. He was the head of the army's diversity and inclusion section, and briefed the government on all sorts of elements. Also a former commando.

Richard Lovell - Head of Outdoor Learning. We will genuinely try and use the 1200 acres of space to its absolute maximum and become a sector leader in that.

Nicola Hurst - Head of Futures. Includes careers, but it is not really that role any more, it has so much evolved. Working with children but also with the young Sternians as they leave. This straddles both communities, and that is so important to us.

Pastoral care within school remains very strong. Another national award appeared a few months ago around looking after vulnerable children. This doesn't mean we're the best in the country at it, or always get it right, but it means we're doing it really well.

We are now beginning to evolve our plans for the future. You may have heard me talk before about our Project Beanstalk, our 10 year strategic vision. We are now working on this, the Senior Team had their first meeting with an outside agency on Tuesday to articulate the next 10 years of what we are planning. And I look forward to working with you all and sharing it with you.

Campus:

We have just opened our new girls' cricket arena on the Hazelveare and Summerfield sports area.

The Science Centre is looking amazing, the last piece of glass in the front has gone in. All looks well for a January 2022 start, although it should be finished before then.

The Music and Drama theatre will be refurbished and enhanced during the Summer Holiday thanks to a very generous gift from one of our Sternians. We really look forward to enhancing that space further. Drama is thriving here and that links to the

Aspirations campaign, that will move ever onwards and upwards. There's a real, ever-evolving culture of philanthropy.

Student numbers - We will be at record numbers again in September. We are blessed to be in the space that we are, and doing what we're doing. I suspect it will be 650-660 The demand remains strong. Junior House is looking fabulously full, in a good way, and that sets us up for the future. Retention into the 6th Form is solid. In this year it will be nearer 70% than 65%, which is terrific, and where we are aiming to be, with twenty new students joining. And foundation numbers I am delighted to report will be above fifty again, which will be as high as they've been for a period of time. As you know, the Foundation is the heart of the college, and keeps us striving and driving forward.

It has been an incredibly difficult year as you are all aware, but there is just a sense that there is normality round the corner. Although, actually, we have got quite a young staff, so they've not all had their second vaccination – hopefully that will come in time.

Thank you for listening.

Questions from the floor:

1. **Guy Consterdine** – Asked Adam about the record numbers at the school, and was anxious that the drive for increasing numbers should not be at the expense of losing the ethos of the school.

Adam agreed that he had always felt that 650 was perhaps the optimal size, for what is a local boarding and day family school, with the Foundation at its heart.

The recent collaboration with local prep school, St Neot's, which is a big feeder prep school for us, will help us grow in a different way. We never want to lose the essential philosophy and vision of the school, which is also why staff and governors want to play a part in this institution.

2. **Guy Consterdine** – Asked where do Foundationers come from?

Adam replied that a few Foundationers are full boarding, some from East London where we have links with certain charitable organisations there, but that most are now from within one hour of the school. Simon Clements, Sternian governor, and Pete German have recently conducted a review on this, and produced a paper for the governors.

Sam Corfield added that boarding schools have changed a lot over recent decades. Families have changing needs, and those will be considered in any review or expansion of our admissions process.

Adam added that £1.4m is invested each year to fund the Foundation, and reported that the Head Boy and Head Girl are both Foundationers this year, as frequently tends to be the case.

3. **Hugh Podger** asked for details of the numbers of full boarders, weekly boarders and day pupils.

Adam replied that there was a roughly 60:40 split between boarding and day pupils

- 12% full boarding
- 12% weekly boarding
- 36% flexi boarding – 3 nights a week – popular with parent body

There is some flexibility around this, and 60:40 is currently where we want to be. It is possible that there may be more demand for flexi or weekly boarding going forward, which could push the ratio towards 70:30 for boarding and day pupils in the years ahead.

4. **Peter Booth** took this opportunity to mention that, able to visit the college as an invigilator, he had never seen it looking so good and excellently maintained. The atmosphere within the college reflects that, in spite of Covid. He also expressed thanks to Sam, and to Kate for stepping in with Gill Kelly's departure, especially for producing the Sternian magazine, which Kate didn't sign up for. And Peter welcomed the good news on the imminent appointment of a new Alumni Relations Manager.

8. Officers for Election

John Bacon was re-elected as Chairman for a second and final 3-year term

Peter Booth was re-elected as President for a further 3 years

Chris Huffam was re-elected as Treasurer

Bruce Buckland was re-elected to the Committee

James Marshall was re-elected as Archivist

Charlotte Greer-Read was re-elected to the Committee

Ben Forman was re-appointed as Independent Examiner

9. Election of Vice-Presidents and other members

The following vice-presidents were elected:

Richard Janaway – re-elected

Gill Kelly - elected

Gill's appointment in recognition of her many years of work for the Association, most recently as Alumni Relations Manager.

10. Any Other Business

James Marshall asked when it would be possible to access the LWC site and resume his work on the Sternian archives.

Sam Corfield replied that LWC are beginning to let visitors in again, and Sam would arrange for James' access, particularly with work on the Centenary Year approaching, and to progress other projects. Peter Booth also expressed an interest in being close to this work.

There being no further business, John thanked everyone for attending and closed the meeting.