

**Sibford Old Scholars' Association Annual General Meeting
17th June 2017**

Present:

Ashley Shirlin (President), Harriet Langridge, Richard Hughes, Margaret Shelley, Wendy Finch, Peter Robinson, Toby Spence, Ali Bromhall, Amanda Brown, Ian Weatherhead, Chris Weatherhead, Liz Beebey, Lori Spencer, Erica Strofton, Judith Beeby, Liz Belcher, Richard Wrigley, Pat Wrigley, Pat Phillips, Mark Mercer, Simon Matthews, Lesley Matthews, David Smith, Russell Steed, Janet Steed, Paul Levy, Patrick Smart, Catherine Stokes, Pippa Lacey, Annie Broe, Marion Charlwood, Guy Kingham, Navid Sadrzadeh.

1. Greetings and Apologies: Presented by Ashley Shirlin

Sue Schreiber, Julie Hathaway, Hugh Gibson, Violet Malins, Jimmy Setna, Robert Inverarity, June Ellis, Alfred Holland, Hilary and John Haddleton

2. Obituaries: Presented by Ashley Shirlin

Janet Sewell, Robin John Donald, Clare Smith (nee Southwell), David Long, Simon Austing, Joan Shields, Mick Canning, Ray Guillery, Eddie Goudge, Elizabeth Francis, E. Noel H. Powell

The meeting held a few moments of silence.

3. Minutes of the meeting held on 18th June 2016

The Minutes were unanimously approved by the AGM and signed as a true record by the President.

4. President's and General Secretary's Report – Presented by Ashley Shirlin

Ashley Shirlin explained to the Meeting that the election of SOSA's next School Committee Representative was being brought forward to the beginning of the Meeting so that the elected individual's name could be passed directly to Sibford General Meeting's AGM which was taking place at the same time.

Amanda Brown (Proposed by Richard Hughes and Seconded by Harriet Langridge) was unanimously elected as SOSA's School Committee Representative for the period 1st January 2018 – 31st December 2021.

This is the second and final time that I will be making a report as your President.

When I was invited to become VP and then President I set out to achieve various goals. I wanted to put the Association's finances back on a sound footing, I wanted to modernise the web site. I wanted to restructure the Committee and make decision making more open. I wanted to turn SOSA into a registered charity. I wanted to invest in the archives. I wanted to change the perception of SOSA being an old codgers group.

Looking back on the last 3 years I've had mixed success in achieving these goals. The finances are now on an even keel, the web site has been very successful, the reintroduction of Committee roles such as Reunion Secretary has, in general, worked.

Whereas it was not possible to convert SOSA into a registered charity we do now have SOSC to fulfil that role. We have digitised the SOSA archives and made these available on-line. We continue to struggle in changing the perception of SOSA but maybe subsequent younger Presidents will be able to achieve that.

It has been a privilege to have been your President and I wish all the very best to my successor – Harriet Langridge. Harriet has been an excellent Vice President and has taken much upon herself especially as she has also been Reunion Secretary. Thank you Harriet.

As General Secretary for the last 3 years things have, as ever, been challenging.

With regards to the Committee both Nikki Knott and Cindy Poulton have resigned during the last year. We welcomed Navid Sadrzadeh for the first time and he has already made his presence felt. The rest of the Committee have given invaluable support and I would like to take this opportunity to thank all on the Committee for their commitment to SOSA and the principles of Truth, Honour, Freedom and Curtesy. In particular, we should take this opportunity to thank Richard Hughes for serving as one of SOSA's School Committee Representatives for 12 years.

With regards to the Rocket, Ali Bromhall has once again produced an excellent publication and we should thank her accordingly.

With regards to Membership we have 1,285 Members of whom we have 363 email addresses.

For a variety of reasons SOSC has not achieved its fund raising goals. However, we continue to support current pupils who are in need of financial assistance.

I am delighted to say that SOSA has purchased the clock we spoke of at last year's AGM and we have donated it to the School. We should thank Peter Robinson who went to great lengths to find and acquire an appropriate clock. The clock is a memorial to Mike Finch who, as we all know, was the person who kept SOSA together for so many years. I hope that you will take the time to view the clock which is in the Visitors Room and take a quiet moment to reflect on the passing of Mike."

5. Treasurers Report – Presented by Ashley Shirlin

"At last year's AGM we elected Cindy Poulton as Treasurer but for a variety of reasons she decided to stand down a few weeks ago. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Cindy for maintaining SOSA's records during her time as Treasurer. As last year, when Mark Bennett resigned the day before the SOSA AGM, it therefore falls to me to present the 2016/17 Accounts.

The Association's Gross Income over Expenditure was £2,249 which is an increase over the previous year's surplus of £1,530.

The balance of the Current Account was £10,338 and the balance of the Deposit account was £5,494.

Although we agreed at last year's AGM that we would transfer £1,500 from Current to Deposit for the period ending 31/3/15 and £2,700 in respect of the period ending 31/3/16 Cindy decided to defer both these transfers until we were sure of how much the clock would cost. In the event, this was less than anticipated and so I would hope that we would be able to make this transfer in the near future.

One item that you can see from the Accounts is the purchase of a salver for £500. This item was discussed at a SOSA Committee Meeting in March 2016 as a possible leaving present for Michael Goodwin. The Committee decided however that expenditure of this magnitude on this particular item was not appropriate. Unfortunately, Mark Bennett went ahead with the purchase and wrote 2 cheques to one of his own companies for £250 each on the same day for the salver. The SOSA Constitution states that two signatories are required for amounts over £250. As General Secretary I wrote to Mr. Bennett asking him to return the £500 but he declined. The salver has subsequently been valued at £250. In light of this I will be proposing a change to the Constitution to essentially say that no one can sign a cheque to themselves. With regards to what we should now do with the salver and how we should proceed with Mark Bennett I would welcome the Meetings comments."

Following a general discussion Simon Matthews proposed (seconded by Ashley Shirlin) that the Treasurer monitors the price of silver over the next year to see if the salver appreciates in value. This was unanimously agreed.

Following a general discussion Richard Wrigley proposed (seconded by Ian Weatherhead) that Mark Bennett be removed from SOSA's Membership under Clause 3.f. of the Constitution. This was unanimously agreed (with one abstention).

"As defined by the Constitution the Accounts have been examined and signed by an independent individual. My thanks to Peter Robinson for undertaking this."

Ashley Shirlin proposed (seconded by Ian Weatherhead) that the 2016/17 account be approved. This was unanimously agreed.

"The Committee have received a request from Sibford Meeting House for a donation towards some much needed maintenance of the Meeting House. They are hoping to raise £3,000 and PSFA have already donated £1,000."

Ashley Shirlin proposed (seconded by Erica Strofton) that SOSA donates £1,000 to this project. This was unanimously agreed.

6. Heads report – Presented by Toby Spence

"Last year – wheeled out by Michael. Thoroughly enjoyed 1st year. Warm welcome from all parties – including SOSA.

Michael leaves a tough legacy to follow. Sibford is in good shape. Another 23 families today.

My journey – 10 yrs state sector, 12 independent sector – 5 at Bootham before 1st headship in rift Valley of Kenya.

Bootham role advertised 1 month into my headship. Sibford advertised a year and a term later. Not easy to persuade my wife, Jill and 3 children that UK would be a better bet...

Different type of warmth in Sibford....

During first term I met with just about every teacher and staff member employed by the school. Only the minibus drivers who were upset that I hadn't been to see them! SOSA were the one party who I hadn't got to know as well as I might have liked. Thank Ashley and Harriet for their warm welcome to the SOSA community and how it works – including the infamous Rockets. Yes, I am scared...

There is a good reason for a close interest in SOSA as I have a family connection - As one of his final legacies, Robert Brearley Oddie, Sibford's second head, fully endorsed the setting up of an old scholars association. Most of the other Friends schools had such a body but Sibford had lagged behind. The 'Sibford Old Scholars' Association', commonly known as 'SOSA', was inaugurated on the 19th June 1903. Its first President was Joseph Spence Hodgson, and its first General Secretary was Edward P Kaye.

It turns out that Joseph Spence Hodgson (1st President of SOSA) and I are related. His great grandfather – John Spence of Birstwith (1746 – 1806) is the brother of my great (x6) grandfather – Robert Spence of Hartwith (1742 – 1793). I will leave the technical expression of our relationship to your better judgement. My guess is that Joseph would be my third cousin five times removed!

Quite eccentric and very active. The latter I would like to think is a family trait.

Picture on wall at Ackworth of JS Hodgson - sepia print, in tweed jacket, beard and sideburn surrounded by Persian cats

In 1858 a number of old scholars offered to pay for a new swimming bath and in the spring of the following year it was opened. At a cost of about £470. Forty Years later and a roof and other improvements were provided, largely through the generosity of Francis Godlee (1854 – 1928), a Wilmslow Friend, clerk to the School Committee 1899 – 1924, treasurer 1906 – 1927. After he had spoken at the formal opening on 6 December 1898 ' Joseph Spence Hodgson, after a short spirited speech, dived into the water in black frock coat and tall silk hat, to the surprise and delight of the children'.

No new swimming pool!

Direct link to one of the founding fathers – Mike Finch tells us (31)

SOSA's main aims were and still are:

- (a) to foster interaction between former scholars and staff and present day pupils and staff;
- (b) to further school day friendships;
- (c) to enjoy the mutual benefits that can arise through a sustained relationship with the School and former scholars;
- (d) to encourage a spirit of loyalty amongst present scholars;
- (e) to assist the further development of the School.

2009 change in constitution. (Finch 31)

This relationship is important to me. I hope that during my headship I will have a close and supportive relationship with SOSA. Guardians of the archives – indeed, in many respects you are the walking archive of the school. I look forward to hearing your stories and memories.

Sibford School has a long, varied and rich history. It is a privilege, challenge and honour to be the 12th Head of this fabulous community.

I use the word challenge above quite deliberately. Yes, there are the challenges of leading a complex and diverse community. However, I set the word more in the context of 2017.

We live in changing times, times of increasing uncertainty and a sense of instability.

As old scholars you may well feel that we have 'seen it all before' and you are right. In the 'here and now' I hope that Sibford can lead by example with a strong voice and active role to play in the lives of the community and farther afield.

For me the values of Sibford School could not be more important at this time – equality, respect, diversity, sustainability, peace, honesty, truth, courage – all words which we use regularly around our community.

Driving us at the moment.

Science, Food technology, climbing wall and plans for an astro-turf. SOSA discussion of refreshing the much loved Pavilion.

Review curriculum in for 2018. Work with local state schools and further afield.

Focus upon tracking and monitoring pupil progress – linking strong pastoral care to clear academic targets. Innovative learning approaches. Pupil responsibility for learning.

Work more closely with Friends House and other Quaker schools. That of God in everyone – Each talented. Each different. All valued

On our journey I am very much open to your advice, thoughts and suggestions as we look to build upon the firm foundations of the Sibford community and look forward adventurously to the next 175 years.

I look forward to getting to know you and working more closely with you over the coming months and years.

Thank you for support and friendship.”

7. School Committee Report: Presented by Richard Hughes

“Management accounts to 31st March 2017.

School roll 412 pupils.

Junior School numbers grew during the first two terms to reach 94.

Senior school day pupil is down on budget. A projected deficit of £132,119 (represents 9 pupils).

After bursaries and discounts total income shows a negative variance of £84,877, forecast to be £72,437.

Capital expenditure to date £224,195. The Development group agreed to go ahead with the refurbishment of the class rooms, Food technologies, and three science labs. The building of the climbing walls and upgrade of the Pavilion will not start until 2018.

At the date of this report the cash balance stood at £1,491,329 compared to £1,664,954 the previous year.

Salaries are over budget (£125,686), the reasons are, long term sick, increase to Pensions, increase to N.I., Pay increases.

Maggie Guy retires at the end of this term after 33 years service to the school.

Spotlight presentation were received from the Art dept., PHSE and English dept.

Educational visits were review during the year by John Charlesworth and Sarah Lane.

The following policies were reviewed. Assessment, Sickness Absence, Student Acceptable use of computers, Stress and Wellbeing, Admissions, Missing Children, Computer acceptable use, Medical Capability, Family Friendly, Data Protection.

At each committee meeting the Head presented a report.

In March the School held a Symposium to inform the school’s new strategic plan.

The meeting was informed that the Friends at Saffron Walden will be closing at the end of the summer term, this will leave six Quaker schools.”

8. Proposed Amendments to the Constitution

Ashley Shirlin Proposed (Seconded by Harriet Langridge) that Clause 8b to have an additional sentence:

“No signatory may sign a cheque to themselves or any person or organisation associated with themselves.” This was unanimously adopted.

9. Elections

All the following individuals were elected unopposed:

General Secretary (1/8/17-31/7/20)

Ashley Shirlin (proposed by Margaret Shelley, seconded by Harriet Langridge).

Ordinary Committee Member (1/8/17-31/7/20)

Edd Frost (proposed by Ashley Shirlin, seconded by Margaret Shelley).

Reunion Secretary (1/8/17-31/7/18)

Navid Sadrzadeh (proposed by Harriet Langridge, seconded by Ashley Shirlin).

Ordinary Committee (1/8/17-31/7/19)

Annie Broe (proposed by Ashley Shirlin, seconded by Amanda Brown).

Treasurer (1/8/17-31/7/18)

Richard Hughes (proposed by Ashley Shirlin, seconded by Ian Weatherhead).

Ordinary Committee (1/8/17-31/7/18)

No nominees

10. Any other business

- The Meeting warmly thanked Ashley Shirlin for the work he has done as President.
- Ashley Shirlin announced that Paul Levy had been invited to become the next Vice President. The Meeting unanimously approved this election.
- Harriet Langridge announced that Ashley Shirlin had been invited to become an Honorary Life member. The Meeting unanimously agreed this invitation.
- Some members do not appear to be receiving the paper copies of 'The Rocket'. Ashley Shirlin explained that paper copies were not sent out depending on what preferences members had made on the SOSA web site. The Committee will review this at their next meeting.