

Minutes of the Annual General Meeting of Sibford Old Scholars Association held on Saturday 18th June 2016 in the Main Hall at Sibford School at 15.00.

Members and non-members attending the Annual General Meeting were warmly welcomed by the President, Ashley Shirlin. There were 45 members and attenders present.

1. **Greetings and Apologies:** Presented by Ashley Shirlin

Hilary Waterfield, Timothy Phillips, Guy Kingham, Jenny Wilson (nee Lamb), Judy Beattie (nee Davidson), Simon Barfoot, Mark Bennett, Nikki Knott, Wendy Finch.

2. **Obituaries:** Presented by Ashley Shirlin

Margaret Elizabeth Rhodes (nee Richards), Philip Gray, Debbie Schwartz, Marina Holder, Beryl Powell (nee Whitaker)

Mike Finch remembered by Paul Frampton

I am afraid it is not possible to say what I have to say about Mike in a few words. I am sure all Old Scholars have their own feelings for and memories of Mike and we will surely be sharing them over this weekend here at the place he loved Sibford School. We will also be thinking of his beloved Wendy, their sons Andrew and Richard and of course the wider family.

The timing of Mike's death a week before Old Scholars and Open Day has given us the perfect opportunity to recognize his unique and extraordinary contribution to Old Scholars and Sibford School. I don't know who works these things out but the one thing I do know is that I am extremely grateful – Mike and Wendy so deserve to be held in the light this weekend by us all.

But I am sure he would want the show to go on. We must have a pint at the Wykham, celebrate his life and perhaps Rockets could be a little different this year- a special Old Scholars send off! It was Mike who introduced Rockets in the late 1950's with Nick Bennett and Leslie Baily. Bending down and touching his toes would have been a lot easier for him then.

Mike was born in Birmingham on 30th May 1938, his Grandfather Jack and Father Fred were Quakers and he came to Sibford a year after his brother John in 1949 and left in 1954. After a successful career in the engineering industry Mike was appointed Estate Manager at Sibford in 1982 and in 1992 became the first Development Officer widening the community offering Sibford had to make. It was when he joined to staff he met Wendy who was the School Housekeeper and they were married in October 1985 – I remember it well – such an enjoyable day and the beginning of a wonderfully happy marriage.

Mike's involvement with Old Scholars began in the 1950's and he has been the rock on which SOSA has stood for over 60 years. How do you describe his contribution? SOSA simply would not exist today without his determination, commitment and passion for Sibford.

Serving on the Old Scholars Committee in every possible role almost continuously Mike also represented Old Scholars on School Committee and was Chairman of the Finance and

Premises Committee before his appointment in 1982. He was President in 1980 and with Wendy again in 1999.

Mike's keen interest in history and particularly that of Sibford inspired him to secure and collate all the School Archive together with that of Old Scholars much of which would have been lost I am sure. Wendy too has been central to this effort.

But this was still not enough. Mike had an ambition to write a history of the School 1842-2010 and after years of research and effort 'A view from the Hill' was published in 2009. Sibford was the only Friends School not to have a published history and Mike remedied that in his own deeply emotional way.

As Michael Goodwin wrote - Mike's love of the School could not be better illustrated.

So much for the contribution what about the person.

I have had the privilege of knowing and working with Mike through Old Scholars for nearly 40 years. In all that time I have witnessed his warmth, humour and generosity towards everyone connected with Sibford. He had a special, very personal and longstanding relationship with all of us – quite remarkable given the diverse nature of Old Scholars and the Sibford School community.

Mike was a genuinely lovely man and a wonderful example of what Sibford has always been all about. Sibford and SOSA have lost a true Friend and great advocate. We shall miss him greatly and none more so than Wendy.

The meeting held a few moments of silence.

3. Minutes of the last SOSA Annual General Meeting held on 13th June 2015: Presented by Ashley Shirlin

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

At last year's AGM I raised 4 main points for discussion:

I. Makeup of the Committee

The reintroduction of a Reunion Secretary has been a great success with Harriet Langridge undertaking this role during the last year. She has taken over a lot of the tasks that I undertook in 2015 and I have enjoyed working with her on the Reunion. Ali Bromhall has again edited the Rocket and, I personally feel, that the edition that went out in December was the best of Ali's so far.

Wendy Finch, now as our elected Membership Secretary, continues to do a splendid job maintaining the SOSA and School Alumni databases.

Where we have been less successful has been in the co-option of 3 younger old scholars to the Committee. However, we are still trying to address this situation as will be seen during the Nominations.

Another area which has caused problems relate to the position of Treasurer. Mark Bennett unfortunately suffered a stroke recently and so it has fallen to me to prepare the Accounts. Mark, in fact, resigned as Treasurer yesterday morning. Richard Hughes and Margaret Shelley continue to serve on the School Committee and we are extremely grateful to them for undertaking these responsibilities along with those of the SOS Committee.

Amanda Brown and Nikki Higgs are 2 of our Ordinary Committee Members. They are also Trustees of SOSC and again I would like the Meeting to thank these individuals for their commitment to both SOSA and SOSC over the last year.

II. Membership and the Web Site

With regards to Membership and the Web Site we have now consolidated the SOSA database within the Web Site database in order to make administration of the Association's records easier. For example, where Harriet or I have received updates we change the records ourselves rather than having to burden Wendy. Also, where we have email addresses I continue to send periodic e-Newsletters to members. Currently we have 1,255 Members of which 14 are addresses unknown making a total of 1,241 contactable members. This is an increase of 126 on last year. Last year we reported that we had 259 email addresses; this number now stands at 348, an increase of 89.

With regards to the web site this continues to go from strength to strength. At last year's AGM I reported that the site had received about 4,700 unique visitors who had viewed about 25,000 pages since the web site had been relaunched in April 2014. The numbers now stand at approximately 9,900 unique visitors viewing approximately 45,000 pages.

III. Voting

At last year's AGM we agreed that we would introduce postal, electronic and proxy voting subject to a rule change being presented to this year's AGM. The proposed changes have been available on the web site for several months and were also circulated with the Reunion Invites. We will return to this subject under point 8 of the agenda.

IV. 175th Anniversary

The 4th point I raised at last year's AGM concerned the 175th Anniversary of the founding of the School which will take place in 2017. Sadly there has not been an influx of donations for this project and so the SOSA Committee has been considering comparatively inexpensive options.

Peter Robinson suggested that SOSA purchase a Hook and Spike clock and went on to explain the Quaker connections to such an item.

Additionally Peter went on to outline possible plans for the replacement or refurbishment of the pavilion.

A general discussion took place on the merits of supporting these two items with reference to the 175th Anniversary of the Founding of the School and in relation to a memorial to Mike Finch.

Ashley Shirlin proposed (seconded by Simon Mathews) that £2,500 is allocated to the 175th Anniversary and/or a memorial to Mike Finch. This was unanimously agreed with the final decision regarding what should be bought left to the General Committee.

A new item that I would like to report on is the Sibford Old Scholars Charity that was discussed some length last year.

I'm pleased to report that in the first 12 months of SOSOC's operation we managed to raise just over £17,500. This is clearly significantly less than the £50,000 we had targeted but nevertheless it is a reasonable start. Also during our 1st year we managed to support an existing parent by contributing £1,500 towards their child's school fees. We work closely with the School in assessing individuals who might need assistance.

Since the SOSOC yearend we have raised a further £5,000.

Following discussions with the School we have also set aside money for 2 new projects:

- a. A SOSOC Leavers Fund of £500 p.a. which will be given to a pupil going on to Further Education who would need assistance with the purchase of items such as books.
- b. A SOSOC Learning Difficulties Fund of £3,500 p.a. to help support parents of prospective or current pupils.

The SOSOC Trustees appreciate that there may well be more deserving charities than SOSOC which SOSA members may wish to donate to but in the words of one of our major sponsors: "I always feel that without Sibford I would never have enjoyed the life I have and therefore feel very pleased to be in the position to help pupils and families of the school."

Although only 5 people out of our membership of 1,200 have donated to SOSOC I would again ask you to Donate. With Gift Aid your donation increases by 25%. You can donate via the web site or by completing one of the leaflets or include SOSOC in you Wills.

5. Treasurer's Report: Presented by Ashley Shirlin

At last year's AGM we agreed to change the Financial Year to run from 1st April to 31st March which is why the Income and Expenditure Account shows a previous period of 8 months compared with a current period of 12 months.

The Accounts are also distorted by the fact that an old scholar inadvertently paid her SOSOC donation into the SOSA Bank Account and this was subsequently rectified in a different year.

As Peter Robinson reported last year, the Association's Gross Income over Expenditure was £4,885 which dropped to £1,530 when the SOSC adjustment was applied. This year's Gross Expenditure over Income is £2,973 but becomes an Income over Expenditure of £2,711 when the countering adjustment is made.

I'm therefore pleased to report that the Association's Accounts have now been back on an even keel for 2 periods following the significant losses of the previous periods which arose from the Association gifting £50,000 to the School.

The Current Account at the 31/3/16 stood at £8,108 and the Investment Account stood at £5,475.

I have been at odds with the Treasurer over this balance between the two bank accounts. Although the Investment Account attracts very little interest it is my belief that it would be useful to ring-fence any annual profits or losses within the Investment Account whilst being mindful of cash flow throughout the year. Also, some significant donations have, in the past, been given to SOSA for specific projects. On occasion the original purpose of these donations has been forgotten as the money was swallowed up in the Current Account. Again, I believe that these funds should be ring fenced within the Investment Account.

Ashley Shirlin proposed (seconded by Simon Mathews) that we transfer £1,500 from the Current Account to the Investment account in respect of the period ending 31/3/15 and that we transfer £2,700 in the autumn once we have paid the Reunion Costs. This was unanimously agreed.

As defined by the Constitution the Accounts are "an independently signed Examination of Accounts". My thanks to Peter Robinson for undertaking this.

6. Head's Report: Presented by Michael Goodwin

Michael welcomed all old scholars to the School and outlined progress that had been made during his tenure.

Ashley Shirlin thanked Michael for all the support that he had given SOSA over the years and the entire meeting warmly wished him the very best for the future.

7. School Committee Representative's Report: Presented by Richard Hughes

Richard outlined each of the following areas:

Spotlight Review – English

How is the department addressing the demands of the new GCSE syllabus at KS4 and KS3.
How is independent reading being developed in English lessons?
To what extent does feedback from teachers help pupils to know how to make progress?
How well do the lessons address the needs of all pupils.

Review of Educational Visits Summer Term 2016-06-14

Policy Reviews

Computer acceptable use.

Medical Capability.

Family Friendly.

Finance and Premises 23rd May 2016-06-14

Budget for 2015-16 based on 400 pupils, and the roll shows 414.

Income for the Junior school is marginally down on the budget, with a predicted deficit of £8562 at the year end.

The overall forecast for year-end identifies a surplus of £22,778.

Debtors report to March 31st March 2016. Current debts stands at £61611 compared to £87226.

Facilities and Premises Report

Four bio-mass boilers are now installed and operational.

New boys' toilets, green room and corridor are nearing completion.

Staff kitchen in the Hill building has been refurbished and the bathroom in the nFielding houseparent flat has been replaced.

Policy Review

Data Protection

Richard informed the meeting that he would be standing down from the School Committee on 31/12/17.

8. Proposed Amendments to the Constitution: Presented by Ashley Shirlin

At the last AGM it had been agreed that electronic, postal and proxy voting be allowed by the Constitution. The General Committee had agreed revisions in light of this, details of which had been available on the web site for several months and had been circulated with this year's Reunion Invitations.

Ashley Shirlin proposed (seconded by Ian Weatherhead) that these changes be adopted. This was unanimously agreed.

9. Elections: Presented by Ashley Shirlin

Reunion Secretary	Harriet Langridge	1/8/16 – 31/7/18
Proposer: Ashley Shirlin	Secunder: Amanda Brown	
Committee Member	Navid Sadrzadeh	1/8/16 – 31/7/19
Proposer: Ashley Shirlin	Secunder: Amanda Brown	
Treasurer	Cindy Poulton	Immediate – 31/7/18
Proposer: Harriet Langridge	Secunder: Ashley Shirlin	

The above Committee Members were unanimously elected.

10. Honorary Life Membership and Vice President: Presented by Ashley Shirlin

With regards to HLM it came to my attention that a large number of previous Presidents and Heads have never been invited to become HLMs. The Committee therefore authorised me to invite all those involved to become HLMs. Although a few people failed to reply I only received one rejection of the honour and so would like to announce that the following have agreed to join our select group of particularly honoured members:

Past Presidents

1969	Lorraine Brown
1970	Michael Van Blankenstein M.A
1976	Grace Beckerlegge
1995-96	Margaret Fairnington
1997-98	Julie Greenhill
1998-99	Lucinda Poulton
2001-02	Simon Barfoot
2002-03	Guy Kingham M.A
2007	Chloe Bennett
2008	Margaret Shelley
2009	Bryony Veysey
2009-10	Richard Hughes
2012-13 and 2014-15	Edd Frost
2013-14	Caroline Mills (nee Bond)

Past Heads

John Dunston
Michael Goodwin

In addition to the aforementioned previous Presidents and Heads the Committee believed that two other individuals should be invited because of their significant contributions towards SOSOC:

Joan Huddleston (nee Collett)
Nikki Knott (nee Higgs)

Those of you who attended last year's AGM may have noticed that we did not announce a new Vice President. I shall be continuing as President for another year but I am delighted to announce that Harriet Langridge (nee Jones) has agreed to accept the position of Vice President.

The above nominations were met with unanimous approval.

11. Any Other Business

Richard and Pat Wrigley were congratulated on their Golden Wedding Anniversary.