

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING OF THE WESTONBIRT ASSOCIATION HELD AT WESTONBIRT SCHOOL ON SATURDAY, 3RD OCTOBER 2009

PRESENT: Corinna Kershaw (President,in the Chair), Mary Henderson (Headmistress), Karen Olsen(Vice-Chair), Ali Warington Smyth(Hon Secretary), Louise Matley (Hon Treasurer),Serena Jones (News Editor),Fiona Stokes (News Distribution), Mary Phillips (Staff Rep), Charlotte Rogers-Jones, Debbie Young and 28 others.

1. APOLOGIES

These were listed in the Marble Hall

2. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Approved and signed

3. MATTERS ARISING FROM PREVIOUS MEETING

None

4. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The President began her report by apologising for the late running of last year's Reunion Day, which was due to a number of unexpected problems and hoped that 2009 would be a better experience. CK reported the deaths of two honorary members, Mildred Naylor & Bob Gates and how both had influenced many of our lives. The Executive Committee had met in November & April, when KO & LM had joined her in the selection of Memorial Bursary recipients. Seven girls were interviewed & the bursary was awarded to two girls. The Leaver's Lunch had taken place in May & in June the first Section Reps Day which was a great success in terms of bouncing off ideas. The last academic year had been difficult striking a balance between responsibilities as a governor with her role as President due to large numbers of emails, the merger with Rosehill and living a distance from the school. The President concluded her report by complimenting the Executive, Debbie Young, Charlotte Rogers-Jones, Mary Phillips and thanking Mary Henderson for her wholehearted and generous support of the Association and welcoming us all to the school.

5. HON SECRETARY'S REPORT

Deaths reported since the last meeting Rachel Cane Sec 2,Nancy Roberts Sec 3,Diana Mathews,Sec 5, Charmian Crossman, Sec 15, Pamela Brake, Sec 15, Nicky Hockey, Sec 20, Pippa Gray, Sec 24. Miss M Naylor (Dir of Mus), Mr Robert Gates (Head Groundsman).

Section Rep Changes A New Sec.Rep is required for Sec 36. Julia Roberts has taken over 59 from Joanne Hibbard, Caroline van Kuffeler 62 from Jane Reid, Jennifer Davidson 37 from Alison Fisher, Gabriella Swaffield 76 from Clare Hooley. Lucy Maclure Smith & Amy Falkenburg are the Reps for Sec. 78. AWS thanked the retiring Reps and the new ones for taking over,

Email : AWS explained that this new system of communicating with members was suffering from a few teething problems and to please be patient. An immediate reply system would be put in place for the next mailing.

6. HON TREASURER'S REPORT.

Copies of the Accounts were distributed to members. To date there was £5631.05 in the Barclay's Bank account, £23,001.00 in the NS & I account and the School is holding £1082.99 for the database. £10255.68 of Association funds comprise advance magazine subscription. A vote of thanks was given to Mr Paul Taylor FCA for auditing the accounts.

7. HON EDITOR'S REPORT.

News this year from the Section Reps was produced in record time and SJ thanked them for being so efficient. 90% of news was now being received by email. CK thanked SJ

8. HEADMISTRESS'S REPORT

Mary Henderson began by thanking us for coming to visit the school today and see the changes that were taking place. Exam results for 2008 were encouraging with 79% of students gaining A & B at A level. 25% got 3 A's and got to the University of their choice. The 6th form scholarship girls from state schools were producing some excellent results and had really learnt to work at Westonbirt.

GCSE results were just under 50% A /A*. The numbers in the school were at 245, same as last year with a packed 6th form and still recruiting. The 6th form now wear jackets and look much smarter and there is a greater staying on rate as well as getting girls from mixed independent schools who want single sex education for A levels. They have a new 29 year old 6th Form Mistress.

Music, Drama & Sport very important within the school. MH reported that Robin Baggs was enjoying his Gap year and was much better. Charlotte Exon was the new dynamic Director of Music. The Drama was going well with 2 new young teachers. There was a new very enthusiastic head of PE who had re-introduced early morning lacrosse training. MH ended her report by saying that the Westonbirt product was the right one but had to "sold". She was looking forward to the 80th Birthday celebrations next year and valued the school's relationship with the Association and thanked the Committee for all that they did.

MH was thanked by CK

9. REPRESENTATIVE TO THE GOVERNING BODY'S REPORT

Jacqui Jones reports that it has been a very busy year for the Westonbirt Board of Governors particularly with the acquiring of Rosehill Prep School which was to merge with Querns. The new school opened its doors in September. JJ had visited the school with CK and were very impressed with what they saw. Major improvements had been made to the Sports Centre and a new manager and been appointed. JJ attended the Speech Day which had taken place at the end of September instead of the end of the Summer term due to a Swine 'flu outbreak in the school

10. AROPS

CK explained that Jane Reid had attended this meeting on behalf of the Association and the report was available for all to see in the room.

11. SECTION REPS DAY 2009

CK reported that a Facebook profile had been set up for Westonbirt and a working party has been organised to arrange the Birthday Celebration for the Association on 20th June 2010.

12. ASSOCIATION ANNIVERSARY

The arrangements for the day would consist of a picnic lunch, choir rehearsal for the “scratch” choir, cake cutting & tree presentation by the Association. There would be a concert at the end of the day followed by Evensong in the Church. Information would be out in November to encourage old girls to come along and attend with their families.

13. ELECTION OF OFFICERS & HON MEMBERS

Serena Jones was voted in at the GCM to carry on being the News Editor. Fiona Stokes is to be replaced in October 2010 after 10 years as News Distribution & Finance. FS explained to the Association what her job entailed and asked for a volunteer to take her place next year.

CK proposed that Robin Baggs Dir of Music 1974 – 2008 be made an Hon Member of the Association. A show of hands agreed.

14. DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING

Saturday, 2nd October 2010 at the School by kind permission of the Headmistress.

15. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

For information:

Open Day was to take place at the school the following week end.
Westonbirt had featured in the latest Tatler School Guide
Jenny Bland - Holford Trust announced that they had had an
Award from English Heritage for work in the gardens and applied for
A lottery grant.