

Minutes of the 23rd (108th) Annual General Meeting of the St Beghian Society
held in the Whitelaw Building on Saturday, 24th September 2016 at 11.15am.

There were 38 people present, including Dacre Watson (President), David Lord (Secretary/Treasurer) and Pam Rumney (Minutes).

1. **Welcome by The President, Dacre Watson.** Dacre welcomed Society Members to the meeting and thanked them for keeping faith and coming back to the school for St Beghians' Day. He continued by giving a brief update since the new Board of Trustees had taken over earlier in the year. He applauded the excellent work of the Trustees and their achievements to date. Dacre acknowledged the OSBs on the Board – Sara Calvin, Mark Roberts, Alastair Lord and Mark Rocca, who had been a superb Chairman, before being posted to Dubai through work. Dacre was pleased to report that some of the original Rescue Team Members had come back on board and one of them, Mark George, had kindly agreed to take over from Mark Rocca, as Chairman. It was mentioned that Mark George would be giving presentations on behalf of the Trustees during the afternoon to which all St Beghians were invited.
2. **The Minutes of the 107th Annual General Meeting held on Saturday, 27th June, 2015** as published in the January 2016 Bulletin were formally adopted, proposed by Richard Stout and seconded by Sara Calvin.
3. **Matters Arising** – There were no Matters Arising as Lonsdale Terrace and the school's finances were to be discussed later in the meeting.
4. **The Election of Officers:**
 - a) **President Elect** – Dacre confirmed that he had agreed to stand for a further year until September 2017. George Robson proposed a vote of thanks to Dacre for all of his efforts during a very difficult time for the school and Society. Dacre went on to say that the Society needed to adopt a far more professional approach with regard to taking on new Society officers. He therefore suggested the creation of a 'President Elect' post, to allow the incoming President to spend a year being actively involved on the Committee before officially taking on the role of President. Dacre therefore proposed the immediate appointment of Peter Lever as President Elect, with a view to his becoming OSB President in September 2017. All members were in full agreement.
 - b) **Committee** – The three Committee members retiring this year, J. M. Dunn, R. Hall and M. N. Roberts confirmed that they were willing to continue. This was proposed by Alastair Lord and seconded by Ian Jordan.
 - c) **Secretary and Treasurer** – Dacre Watson announced that he would very much like to propose that David Lord continue as Secretary and Treasurer of the Society. David, however, confirmed that, as mentioned in previous meetings, he wished to stand down as soon as a replacement could be found. David stated that, after retiring ten years ago, he had agreed to take on the Secretary and Treasurer role for five years, but having completed ten years, he now felt the time was right to hand the job over to a younger person. Hopefully, within the next few months, a decision would be made with regard to the future of the school and therefore David felt it was an appropriate time to hand over to new blood with fresh ideas. He thanked everyone for all their support over the years and agreed to continue until the end of 2017, allowing time for a replacement to be found. Peter Lever proposed, seconded by Richard Hall, that David continue until the end of 2017 by which time it was hoped his successor could be found.
 - d) **Golfing Secretary** – David Lord reported that James Doggett had resigned about nine months previously and that Michael Coffey, who had been the Chairman and the driving force of the Golfing Society for many years, had agreed to fulfil the role of Secretary for the time being. Michael's main concern currently was the retention of their place in various competitions, particularly in the Halford Hewitt tournament, following the school's closure. It was understood that there was to be an important meeting in October where the St Beghian Golfing Society would have to put forward their case to remain part of that competition. Michael had indicated that the Golfing Society did not require the usual funding from the Society at the present time, but asked that he be allowed to come back to the Society at any stage, should the situation change.
 - e) **Accounts Checker** – Jason Spires had continued to provide excellent service to the Society as the accounts checker and David Lord requested that appreciation for him was voiced through the minutes

for his tremendous contribution, which had always been free of charge. This was proposed by Alastair Lord and seconded by Darryl Davies.

5. **Lonsdale Terrace** – Andrew Johnston, the Society's Architect, was asked to give a summary of events since the last meeting. Andrew indicated that an application for planning permission to convert the houses on Lonsdale Terrace back to individual properties had been made. Copeland Borough Council had granted permission but with stipulations relating to the provision of adequate car parking. At the time of the application, an area of land between Grindal and Lonsdale Terrace was also mentioned but no planning permission was sought at this stage.

Andrew confirmed that, once planning permission had been granted, he had put the work out to tender with six local contractors. Four companies had submitted tenders with two indicating that they were too busy, mainly with work resulting from last year's flooding in the county. Since submitting a tender another company had withdrawn. From an initial examination of the information, Andrew reported that the work was expected to cost somewhere between £144k - £173k, plus VAT. It was re-emphasized that all works had to be completed before properties could be sold, including the provision of two car parking spaces per property, which would account for the greater part of the total cost.

Richard Stout enquired whether there would be any access via Grindal, but Andrew Johnston confirmed that this would not be the case, as it would be unacceptable to Copeland Borough Council.

Dacre Watson requested that thanks be recorded for all Andrew's hard work relating to Lonsdale Terrace.

David Lord went on to report that it had been made clear to the Society some time ago that, even if a school were re-established on the site, Lonsdale Terrace would not be required as boarding houses, hence Andrew Johnston's work in securing planning permissions for the properties. However, it was not known yet whether any of the houses would be needed for staff, but it was hoped that this would become clearer in the next few months. David outlined the significant costs necessary to convert the properties and indicated that the Society would not be able to fund the works from cash held in its own accounts. He also mentioned that a year previously, the finances of the school were such that a loan from the Society of £100k was envisaged in order to enable the school to continue trading after April/May 2016. However since this time, the Trustees had worked extremely hard at utilizing the assets and generating an income stream for the school and hence negating this requirement, certainly for the time being. Also, a year ago, the Society had been considering the monies needed to convert and market Lonsdale Terrace along with the envisaged loan to the school, and as a result had had discussions with the Cumberland Building Society. The Cumberland had indicated verbally that they should be in a position to help, but before proceeding further would need a valuation of the properties to be carried out. This had now been done and the report indicated Lonsdale Terrace to be worth £2.2m in its present state.

The bridging loan facility which was being discussed with the Cumberland was for the amount of £500k, but this figure was to include the amount of £150k, being the mortgage outstanding on No.8 Lonsdale. All other properties on the Terrace were free of mortgage. The term of the loan facility would be for repayment within five years.

It had been proposed at the earlier Committee meeting to set up a small sub-committee to determine what happens with, and to make decisions regarding, Lonsdale Terrace. The Trustees of the Guarantee Trust Fund and the Directors of OSB Nominees Limited would be involved, as the decision makers, along with designated St Beghian Society Committee Members.

David Lord reported that he hoped the work on the houses could be carried out by the end of this year or early in the new year, so as to be able to market the Terrace in the spring. A decision still needed to be made between a drip feed of properties, which was David's preferred option, or a blanket sale of all the houses at once. Chris Lamont, an OSB and local accountant, had agreed to help with regard to advice on financial matters, such as VAT, if required.

Steve Crossley-Smith suggested a lease-hold sale and enquired as to the possible benefits. David confirmed that he had an open mind, but that the appropriate path would very much depend on whether a school was to reopen or not.

Stan Holmes asked for clarification as to whether the GTF would also go into liquidation if the school were to do so. David confirmed that, in his opinion, the two were separate legal entities and therefore this would not be the case.

6. School Archives – Dacre Watson asked for an update on the school archives.

Tony Reeve, the school's Archivist, summarised the Archive situation to date. He confirmed that a large amount of material had been delivered on loan to the local Whitehaven Records Office for storage and safe-keeping. In addition, most of the paintings, originally displayed in the staff Common Room, had fetched approximately £8k in sales at Mitchells, a local auctioneers. The remainder of the Archives was currently securely stored in two locations within school. The question of their long-term future was raised and it was agreed that this would require discussion, once the school's future was clearer.

Dacre Watson, commended Tony for his work over many years in preserving the Archives and mooted the possibility of someone working alongside Tony over the coming months/years, to ensure continuity for the future.

7. Grant to Golfing Society – This had been covered previously under 4 d).

8. Accounts – David Lord gave a review of the accounts, as follows:

a) Guarantee Trust Fund (GTF) – This account had been set up at the beginning of the war in 1939 when the school ran into difficulties following falling members and after a proposed merger with Rossall School had failed to materialise. As the school was unable to balance its books, a small group of wealthy OSBs had got together to form the Trust and to provide funds to keep the school afloat. Following the war the money was no longer needed but many OSBs continued to contribute, building up a fairly large cash fund. Over the years, the Lonsdale properties had been purchased from funds held in the GTF account, with the final one, No.8, being bought in 2008. Around 1980, Lonsdale Terrace houses were converted to Girls' Boarding Houses. All the properties on Lonsdale Terrace are free of mortgage with the exception of No.8.

In 2008, a five year composite lease was drawn up between the school and the GTF and this was increased to a 25 year term in 2012 at the school's request. The last rental payment from the school was made in December 2015.

David drew attention to the significant costs (£17k to date) attributed to heating Lonsdale Terrace. He reminded Members that a decision had been taken the previous year to keep the buildings heated through the winter months in order to limit deterioration of the properties. David hoped that over the next 6-12 months the future of the school would become clearer.

David confirmed that a recent valuation of the properties by the Cumberland Building Society had indicated a figure of £2.2m in their present state.

b) Scholarship Fund – In the past this account had been used to provide funds to the school for Bursaries/Scholarships and was therefore no longer required. Due to the uncertainty at the school a year ago, the M&G Charifund units had been sold and the monies received held within the Fund.

c) St Beghian Society General Account – David pointed out that the account no longer received OSB subscriptions. He thanked Society Members who had standing orders set up in favour of the Society, several of which had been running for many years. He also expressed his gratitude to those OSBs who had responded positively to the recent plea made to postal Bulletin receivers, with regard to contributions towards the printing and postal costs. £3,000 had been received towards this expenditure and others agreed to receive an electronic version in future. David confirmed that Pam Rumney's salary was now being paid from the GTF account rather than the General Account.

d) Society Trust Fund (Consolidated Trust Fund) – When the school was open, this account had assisted with the purchase of prizes for Speech Day and therefore was no longer needed.

David reported that, in order to simplify the administration of the Society's finances, he had discussed with Jason Spires the possibility of closing the Society Trust Fund Account along with the Scholarship Fund and transferring the cash balances into the main St Beghian Society General Account. This had been discussed at the earlier Committee Meeting and members present were in favour of this transfer of funds taking place. There were no comments or questions raised from Members present.

9. Branch Activities – Dacre Watson reiterated his view with regard to the importance of Branch activities in keeping Society Members together. He had felt that the North East Dinner had been an uplifting event, mainly due to the good number of 'younger' OSBs alongside older members of the Society. He went on to mention the complexities of communication with younger OSBs as well as the need to identify suitable

venues and events for all ages. Dacre expressed his ambition to find ways to target the younger generation in order to get them interested and involved in Society events.

Dacre thanked Steve Crossley-Smith for arranging a Yorkshire Dinner on the 23rd April, 2017 and also to Tim Crossley-Smith for agreeing to help set up a London Dinner at the RAF Club, sometime during 2017. A date of March 17th has since been agreed.

George Robson mentioned the 1960s video which had been shown at a previous NE Dinner, in case anyone wished to borrow it for a future event.

- 10. The 200 Club** – Darryl Davies expressed his thanks to those who were members of the 200 Club and reaffirmed that by taking part in the draw, OSBs were also helping the Society. As the money raised was obviously no longer required by the school, the funds were now being used appropriately by the St Beghian Society and the OSB Golfing Society on a 50:50 basis.

It was confirmed that approximately £2,000 was held in the 200 Club account.

Darryl informed OSBs that the draw would take place at lunchtime. However, this did not happen but eventually took place on 13.10.16 and produced the following winners:

PRIZE	NOS.	WINNER
£120	64	S.E.W. (Simon) Temple
£40	71	M.P.T. & T.J. (Martyn) Hart
£40	55	M.S. (Michael) Binns
£40	37	P.M. (Michael) Brandwood
£40	29	C.R.C. (Chris) Tetley
£20	46	D.W. & P.M. (Darryl) Davies
£20	45	J.J. (John) Beal
£20	11	E.A.L. (Edward) Thompson
£10	25	C.T. (Christine) McKay
£10	53	D.H. (Don) Williams

11. Any other business

- i. George Robson thanked Tony Reeve for all his work over the years in the production of the Bulletin. In response, Tony advised members that a lot of the material for the twice-yearly Bulletin had in the past been generated from within school. He therefore asked Members to consider contributing articles to ensure that enough pieces were received for future Bulletins.
- ii. David Lord wished to recognise the following contributions which had been made by:
 - a) The five OSB Members of the Board of Trustees for the excellent job that they were doing, and also the amount of work being undertaken by the non OSBs living in the village, which should in no way be understated. Their contribution had been huge. David also mentioned Tom Kelly, the Clerk to the Governors and former parent, who was also doing a superb job and putting in a great number of hours for the school. He also mentioned Kate Wilson from the village, who had recently joined the team to assist with communications and publicity.
 - b) David Lamb, the school's groundsman, who was an extremely loyal member of staff and who, on his own, had kept the school grounds looking immaculate since the closure in July 2015. David Lamb had worked for the school since the early 1980s and David Lord requested that the Society's thanks be minuted.
 - c) Julie and Claire, two of the former catering staff, who had kindly agreed to come back to provide lunch on OSB Day.

David Lord concluded by saying that the last year had obviously been very difficult but that he now felt that the school had a much better feel to it and he thanked members for their support during this time.

Dacre Watson reiterated David's thanks to OSBs and in particular expressed his appreciation for their support and presence at the AGM. He also conveyed his gratitude to David Lord, Tony Reeve and Pam Rumney for their support throughout the year.

- 12. Date of Next Meeting** – A provisional date of September 2017 was mentioned.

The meeting closed at 12.45pm.