

Minutes of the 28th (113th) Annual General Meeting of the St Beghian Society
held in the Whitelaw Building on Saturday, 17th June 2023 at 11.00am.

There were 29 people present, including Carter Croft (President), David Lord (Treasurer), Pam Rumney (Secretary) and Robin Silk (Headmaster).

- 1) **Welcome by the President, Carter Croft.** Carter welcomed OSBs, family and friends to the meeting and thanked them for attending St Beghians' Day 2023.
- 2) **School Update by the Headmaster – Robin Silk.** Robin commenced by reiterating Carter's welcome to OSBs, stating how important St Beghian Society Members were to the school. Robin went on to say that the school was doing well, with 100 students starting the year in September 2022 and it was hoped that in September 2023, the school year would commence with around 125 pupils. He indicated that with increased numbers, the boarding house (School House) was now full, and discussions were taking place regarding the redevelopment of Abbots Court. He mentioned that the school was becoming ever more reliant on international students as there was an increased reluctance from locals to pay for education and also a reluctance from parents to send children further afield for boarding. Currently the school was made up of 50% day pupils and 50% borders, including weekly borders from Cumbria and others from Manchester. International students accounted for 35% of pupils and came from a variety of countries, including Ukraine, Germany, Spain, Turkey, China, Nigeria etc and all spoke English. Robin reported that Full Circle's Danny Wang had been over the previous week for Speech Day and that the school was now beginning to look like an established one. Owing to numbers, they were not yet in a position to field a rugby or cricket team, but the students had had several fixtures this year in sports such as volleyball, Eton fives, basketball, athletics and cross country. In addition, outdoor sports were now built into the curriculum, including kayaking and a very successful Wainwright Club, which also involved parents. He mentioned the school's first international trip to Iceland, which had included 20 students and also the Everest Basecamp trip, which was planned for October 2023. Additionally, he referred to a trip to China in December to visit sister schools. Robin was pleased to report that the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme was being offered again, which he felt helped to create character and build leadership skills. He further advised that academically, maths and science Olympiads had been entered, and the school had undergone its first ISI Independent Compliant Inspection, with a Quality inspection to come. He concluded by acknowledging that not everything was perfect, noting that the tennis courts and cricket nets required attention, but that the library would be painted and decorated by September. Looking at the finances, Robin said that he hoped the school would break even by September 2024 and appealed to OSBs to help with donations, if possible. He concluded by stating that these were positive times for St Bees School, but that there was still a lot to do.
Questions followed from St Beghian Society Members present.
Steve Crossley-Smith asked about exchange students. Robin mentioned that two students from Dongguan were currently in St Bees, mainly to study history, as they didn't cover the subject in China. He also confirmed that in October 2024 a short two-week exchange programme would start for both pupils and staff. He went on to say that St Bees UK would be the mothership and training institution for the St Bees China schools and perhaps other schools.
David Lord asked about the length of stays for the exchanges. Robin confirmed that at present, as the curricula were not yet the same, the stays would need to be short and no longer than a few weeks.
Carter Croft thanked the Headmaster for a very useful and informative summary of the progress being made.
- 3) **Brief Silence in memory of departed OSBs.** The names of those who had passed away since the last AGM were read out and a period of silence held in their honour.
- 4) **Confirmation of the Minutes of the 112th A.G.M. held on Saturday 25th June, 2022 (published in the January 2023 Bulletin).** The Minutes of the previous meeting in June 2022 were agreed as a true and accurate record. They were proposed by Steve Crossley-Smith and seconded by Darryl Davies.
- 5) **Matters Arising –** There were no matters arising from the minutes.

6) Election of Officers:

- a) **President Elect** – Vacant.
- b) **Committee** – Retiring this year were Sara Calvin, Alastair Lord and Anthony Fox.
- c) **Treasurer** – David Lord.
- d) **Secretary** – Pam Rumney.
- e) **Golfing Secretary** – Tom Wright .
- f) **Accounts Checker** – Jason Spires.
- g) **Bulletin Editor** – Tony Reeve.

A proposal to elect all the officers, as above, was made and unanimously agreed. This was proposed by Darryl Davies and seconded by Tim Brown.

George Robson requested that thanks be recorded to all the people mentioned above, many of whom had served for a number of years.

- 7) St Beghian Society Finances and Accounts (2022-2023)** - David Lord, Treasurer of the Society, drew attention to the accounts tabled and in particular the considerably increased income to the Society for the 2022/23 financial year, owing to a generous legacy of £22,500 and a further £2,500, which had just recently been received. The amount generated by the subscriptions appeal had declined slightly from £5942 to £5318, however David advised that this was owing to a reduction in one-off contributions from the previous year but that overall, the annual payments had remained fairly constant. Expenditure on printing, postage and the Bulletin was also very similar to the previous year, but slightly distorted as payments were now required up front by the school for franking machine costs. Pam's salary costs had also increased, owing to additional hours worked, especially in relation to the organisation of the Stuart Lancaster Black-Tie Dinner in June 2022. David thanked OSBs for attending what had been a very successful and enjoyable Black-Tie event. David summarised by stating that although a profit was made last year, this was only due to the legacy, without which, the situation would have been very different. He went on to say that, in his opinion, the Society had enough funds to see it through the next 7-10 years. He reiterated that since the school had closed in 2015, there had been no life membership income, although he hoped, following talks with the school, that this would change in the near future. He informed members that he envisaged a small loss each year but that he hoped that the occasional legacy or donation would enable the Society to continue to function effectively in the future.

John Ogden suggested that the accounts should be signed by the Treasurer as well as the accountant. David said he would query this with the accountants.

- 8) Branch Activities** – A Dinner/Events List had been circulated and Carter Croft confirmed his desire to encourage small splinter groups to come together to create gatherings in relevant areas. He also proposed to try and resurrect the Scotland and Manchester events. Carter mentioned the success of the London Social and Cumbria Dinner, alongside the small, but very enjoyable North East Branch event. He went on to thank Steve Downham and Joe Croasdale for helping to arrange the new South Lakes Social, which would take place in September in Grange.

A dinner on St Beghians' Day 2024 was mooted and he acknowledged the need to encourage more younger OSBs to attend. He also requested ideas for appropriate speakers.

Carter thanked everyone for their support in arranging and attending the various OSB events and concluded by requesting that all those present should also try to encourage friends to attend gatherings in future.

- 9) The 200 Club Report and Annual Draw** – Darryl Davies reported that the online 200 Club membership form, suggested at a previous meeting, had worked extremely well, and had brought in around 20 new members. He confirmed that there was now one large draw a year, which included substantial prizes. The school's Eco Club had been put forward as a worthy project for 200 Club funds. This after-school activity, where students learned about their environment, had subsequently benefitted from a donation from the Club. He confirmed that there was currently £3,500 funding available for worthwhile causes. Darryl informed members that the Headmaster had also suggested the library as a project to receive some funding, however he requested Committee approval, as historically the 200 Club had provided funds for

extra-curricular activities, for which the library possibly didn't qualify. After some discussion a vote was carried, with one against and the rest in favour of a donation of £3,500 being provided to the school for the redecoration of the library.

John Ogden expressed his disappointment at the physical state of the library. During a discussion it was pointed out that the old library furniture had been removed many years ago in 1998, when it was refurbished, and that now, money was being raised to try and update the library, to make it a useful asset once more.

The subsequent 200 Club draw produced the following winners:

PRIZE	No.	WINNER	PRIZE	No.	WINNER
£200.00	12	Howard Graham	£40.00	51	Andrew Johnston
£100.00	25	Terence Mayne	£40.00	76	William Wright
£60.00	73	Derek Kaye	£40.00	65	Sam Ashton
£60.00	42	Bill Affleck	£40.00	2	Gavin Spencer
£60.00	71	Gordon Mathison	£24.00	35	Terence Mayne
£60.00	3	Charles Gray			

10) Any Other Business – John Ogden requested that Pam Rumney leave the room whilst he asked a question relating to a salary review for the Secretary. He was concerned at the apparent lack of a formal review procedure for the Secretary's salary, and he proposed that the salary be reviewed by the Committee annually. This was agreed by the meeting.

The President thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at around 12.00pm.