

ST GREGORY'S SOCIETY

142nd Annual General Meeting

Downside, Easter Sunday, 21st April 2019 at 11.30 a.m.

Butler Room

1. Minutes of the last Meeting and Matters arising
2. Consideration and adoption of the Accounts
3. Appointment of Examiner of Accounts
4. Election of Councillors
5. The President's report
6. OG Medal
7. Any other business

ST GREGORY'S SOCIETY

141st Annual General Meeting held in the Butler Room at Downside on Easter Sunday, 1st April 2018, at 11.45 a.m.

The President, Rupert Orchard R74, welcomed the 25 members present and, in the absence of the Chaplain, Dom Leo Maidlow Davis B72, said the Opening Prayer.

1. MINUTES OF THE LAST AGM AND MATTERS ARISING

The President noted that the minutes of the last AGM, held on 16th April 2017, had been posted on the Notice Board in the Main Hall of the School throughout the Easter Retreat. The minutes were accepted and signed; there were no matters arising from the minutes. John Scanlan S54 proposed and Mary Jane Platt Ra76 seconded.

2. CONSIDERATION AND ADOPTION OF THE ACCOUNTS

The President noted that the accounts for the year ended 31st December 2017 had also been posted on the Notice Board in the Main Hall of the School throughout the Easter Retreat, and reported that they had been approved at the last Council Meeting, on 25th February 2018. The President drew attention to the growth of the Society's investment portfolio which had increased from c. £328,000 to c. £361,000 in the last year. No questions arose; the Accounts were adopted. Stephen Stokes C78 proposed and Fiona Cadwallader B78 seconded.

3. APPOINTMENT OF AN EXAMINER OF ACCOUNTS

It was proposed and approved that Davies Rowbottom & Co continue as Examiners of the Accounts. Michael Daly R49 proposed and Jamie Francis-Jones B84 seconded.

4. ELECTION OF HONORARY TREASURER

Nicholas Morgan C86 was stepping down as Honorary Treasurer with effect from the end of the meeting. The President thanked him *in absentia* for the great job he had done during his six years in office, and reported that Benedict Jennings R05, a qualified accountant, had indicated his willingness to take on the role. Benedict Jennings was duly elected Honorary Treasurer with effect from the end of the meeting. John Scanlan S54 proposed and Mark Steed C71 seconded.

5. COUNCILLORS

Two new Councillors had been co-opted to serve on the Council during the last year and were elected as Elected Councillors:

- Fiona Cadwallader B78 - proposed by Mary Jane Platt Ra76 and seconded by Cosima Benson-Colpi C12
- Peter Paul Brenninkmeijer S11 - proposed by Mark Steed C71 and seconded by John Scanlan S54.

6. PRESIDENT'S REPORT

The President was greatly honoured to have been elected at the last AGM. He was proud to be following in the footsteps of his late father, Peter Orchard B44, and had very much enjoyed his first year in office.

The President was grateful for all the support he had received from the OG community. In particular, he thanked Dom James Hood B72, who had stepped down as Honorary Secretary in June 2017, and Dom Leo Maidlow Davis B72, Chaplain. He also thanked Jane Vines, Downside's Director of External Communications, and Sarah Kerr, Hon. OG and the Society's Executive Secretary, for all their hard work on behalf of the Society. Finally, he expressed thanks to the other members of the Council for their support and, in particular, Vice-Presidents/Past Presidents for their wise counsel.

The President had enjoyed his many visits to Downside over the last year. They included attending Prize Day, Armistice Day, 1st XV matches and, most recently, a superb performance of *Les Misérables*. All these occasions had provided evidence of great talent and endeavour and were shining examples of the many good things happening in the School.

On the OG front too, there had been plenty of activity. The numbers attending the London Dinner last November were slightly down on previous years but the evening was much enjoyed by all those present. The Prior Administrator, Dom Leo Maidlow Davis B72, had attended an OG dinner in Sydney last September. There had also been OG dinners in Bangkok and Hong Kong, and an Old Benedictine weekend in Brazil.

Forthcoming OG dinners were planned for Edinburgh, Brussels, New York, Los Angeles and, hopefully, Dublin. The President thanked Guy Knapton and Michael Flynn U75 for organising the dinners to be held in Brussels and Los Angeles respectively. He commended the effort of Michael Flynn in coming all the way from Los Angeles to attend the Easter Retreat, and affirmed his appointment as Honorary Vice-President of the Society for the USA - West, taking over from Paul Johnston R71.

Edward Westlake S05 had kindly taken over the running of Bruised Reeds in London from Jake Francis-Jones B55. The President commended the importance of Bruised Reeds in helping OGs who had fallen upon hard times, and encouraged the Society's members to give it their full support.

Safeguarding in the School was now operating at a very high level, thanks in no small measure to the efforts of the acting Head, Andrew Hobbs - a fact that was noted by one of the expert witnesses during the IICSA hearings last December.

A letter from the new Chair of Governors, Adrian Aylward, published in the most recent OG e-newsletter, outlines the latest governance developments and the progress made towards the appointment of a new Head (to be announced in May). In the meantime, two new School Governors have been appointed: John Ludlow C82, CEO of AIRMIC, who is a current parent and a member of the Council; and Hugh Dickinson, a City solicitor, who was formerly in the Irish Guards.

The Monastic Trustees are still considering the future relationship of the School and the Monastery. The President encouraged all to pray for vocations to the Monastery. The time and commitment pressures on the existing members of the Monastic Community are very high, hence the Monastery has been unable to provide a new Honorary Secretary to the Society. The President expressed the hope that members of the Monastic Community would be able to have the time to attend AGMs of the Society in future years.

Finally, the President remembered two OGs who had died in the last year: Mike Brufal B56, who had started The Old Gregorian magazine; and John Poland B43, who had died very recently. The President also remembered those who died the aeroplane crash at Downside – there will be a special mass in the Abbey to mark the 75th anniversary of this tragic event, on 15th May 2018. Mark Steed C71 also mentioned Anton Simon B70, who died shortly after Easter last year, and whose efforts and success in fundraising for the School were considerable.

7. OLD GREGORIAN MEDAL

The President announced that the Old Gregorian Medal 2018 has been awarded to Christopher Dick C53, for his outstanding work over many years on behalf of the Downside Fisher Youth Club in Bermondsey, and also for his contribution to many other good causes, including Bruised Reeds. It is hoped that he will be able to attend Prize Day at the School to receive the medal in person.

8. ANY OTHER BUSINESS

- The Old Gregorian magazine (TOG). It was noted that for the last few years, TOG had been combined with The Raven. Stephen Stokes C78 stated that owing to necessary prioritisation of the Society's funds and insufficient revenue from sales, it was not viable to resurrect TOG as a stand-alone publication.
- Online Presence and Publications. It was suggested that links to any online OG articles could be included in the monthly OG e-newsletter, if emailed directly to Sarah Kerr, and that a full list of online publications and forums be included in the next OG e-newsletter (e.g. Facebook Page, LinkedIn Group, Mass homilies published on Sound Cloud, Instagram accounts, etc.).
- General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR). Mark Steed C71 enquired about the Downside Development Office's preparations for GDPR, due to come into force on 25th May 2018. Jane Vines said that the Development Office had a legitimate interest in retaining contact details for all those OGs who have elected to be members of the Society. She also pointed out that there is an 'opt out' option in each monthly email. All newsletters and other communications sent out are therefore 'community news', and the mailing list is a 'community facility'. Fundraising communications are sent by post, which is less problematic.
- Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA). It was agreed that when IICSA publishes its report on Downside, the Society should stand as one with the School and the Monastery in responding to IICSA's findings, although this may not be for some years to come. It was noted that Abbot Aidan Bellenger had left the Monastery, and it was agreed that his decision to do so should be fully respected. Finally, the President urged members to continue to support the Monastic Community in every way possible, and emphasised how important this support was.
- Real Tennis. James Leeper C75, expressed his thanks for the support he had received in putting together an OG team for the Cattermole Cup, and encouraged any interested, younger OGs to make contact with him.

- Talk by Sir Konrad Schiemann. Guy Knapton informed the meeting of his invitation to Sir Konrad Schiemann, a member of the Court of Justice of the European Union 2004-2012, to speak at the School. The talk will take place on 6th June 2018.
- Vote of thanks. John Scanlan S54, fully endorsed by all, thanked Rupert Orchard R74, President, for all his work over the last year, and all his efforts to come in the next two years. He also thanked the Development Office for all their efforts on behalf of the Society.

There being no further business, the President closed the 141st Annual General Meeting at 12.25 p.m.