

Minutes of the 24th (109th) Annual General Meeting of the St Beghian Society
held in the Whitelaw Building on Saturday, 23rd September 2017 at 11.00am.

Dr Tony Reeve (Archivist and Editor of the Bulletin) and Pam Rumney were initially asked to remain outside of the meeting whilst a discussion took place with regard to their becoming full members of the St Beghian Society. It was proposed and agreed unanimously by members present that full membership should be awarded to Tony and Pam for their support and commitment to the Society over many years.

There were 48 people present, including Dacre Watson (President), Peter Lever (President-Elect), David Lord (Secretary/Treasurer) and Pam Rumney (Minutes).

- 1) **Welcome** – The President, Dacre Watson, welcomed OSBs to the meeting and thanked them all for their continued support of the Society.
- 2) **Minutes of the 108th A.G.M. held on Saturday 24th September, 2016 (published in the January 2017 Bulletin)** – The Minutes of the previous meeting were addressed and agreed. This was proposed by Tim Brown and seconded by Richard Hall.
- 3) **Matters Arising** – There were no Matters Arising.
- 4) **Election of Officers:**
 - a) **President for 2017-19 – Peter Lever.** Before introducing Peter Lever as the new President of the Society, Dacre Watson began by reflecting on what had been an extraordinary last three years for him. He had initially thought that the Presidency would be fun, but that there would also be a lot of hard work involved. However, he went on to say that nothing could ever have prepared him for the holocaust that was about to happen. He thanked David Lord, Tony Reeve and Pam Rumney for all their help and encouragement, for which he was deeply grateful and he also thanked the Society members for their valuable support during his time as President. The excellent OSB Dinners which he had attended he also felt had played a great part in keeping Society members together at a very difficult time, and he was particularly pleased with the new overseas get-togethers which had recently developed, such as, in Hong Kong, Singapore and New York. He further remarked that he was hoping to arrange and attend a Vancouver Dinner in early 2018 as a follow on to the New York event. Dacre encouraged members to attend the 3pm presentation by the new Headmaster and suggested asking any questions that people might have about the way forward for the school. He concluded by introducing Peter Lever, who had shadowed him for the last two years, thereby enabling a smooth succession to take place. Dacre thanked those present and handed over to Peter as the new President of the Society. Peter expressed a huge debt of gratitude to Dacre and quoted from Dacre's inaugural Bulletin piece, where he had described the learning curve as being vertical. Peter deemed this as extremely apt for an airline pilot and that, unfortunately, a lot of turbulence had also followed! Peter commented on Dacre's tremendous patience and said that he had been the perfect person to have been in charge of the Society for the last three years. He then read a list of the names of all the Society members who had died over the last year, and a minute's silence was observed to remember them. Peter went on to recollect his own time at school and explained that he had left before his A' levels and therefore felt that he had never really fulfilled his potential. When he had heard that the Society was looking for potential future Presidents, he had got in touch to see if he could assist in any way.

He commented on some Society statistics with regard to age, gender and location of members in relation to attendance at dinners and other Society events. He concluded that as OSBs are spread so far and wide it is always difficult to achieve a high turnout, but he expressed his appreciation at the numbers present for the 2017 St Beghians' Day. Peter concluded by explaining that he was also a Director of the Joint Venture Company of the school and described its make-up.

- b) President-Elect** – Currently vacant.
- c) Committee – retiring this year are Mrs Sara Calvin, Alastair Lord, Anthony Wills and Anthony Fox.** David Lord reported that Sara Calvin, Anthony Wills and Alastair Lord were all willing to continue and that although he had not been able to speak to Anthony Fox yet, he was sure he would also agree to continue on the committee. David confirmed that he would speak to Anthony Fox in this respect.
- d) Secretary and Treasurer – David Lord.** David reiterated that he wished to stand down as Secretary at Christmas, as his wife tended to think that St Bees School was more important to him than his family! He went on to thank Dacre, who had apparently been in Senior Studies when he had started school in 1960, but, David joked, thankfully he hadn't had to fag for him! David continued to say that he had been a Society member since the mid-1960s and then Society Secretary and Treasurer since 2006. He confirmed that, although he would be standing down as Secretary at the end of December 2017, he was prepared to continue as Treasurer for another two to three years. He thanked Pam Rumney for agreeing to take on the role of Secretary from 2018 and also went on to thank all the Society members for their tremendous support over the years. He said it had been an absolute privilege and had enabled him to keep in touch with so many people. However, he did confirm that he would be more than willing to offer help and support, as and when needed, in the future. Peter Lever described David as having been 'Mr St Bees' for a very long time and stated that he had done a tremendous job in running the Society. All members present accepted David's decision to stand down as Secretary (and Pam Rumney's taking over), but to continue as Treasurer for another two to three years. This was proposed by Tim Batho and seconded by Mike Brandwood.
- e) Golf Secretary – Tom Wright.** Michael Coffey, President of the Old St Beghians' Golfing Society had recently advised that Tom Wright, a young OSB, had taken on the role of Golf Secretary. All members present were in favour.
- f) Accounts Checker – Jason Spires.** A partner at Robinson and Co (Accountants), Jason is a very supportive OSB and is willing to continue in this position. This was proposed by Mike Brandwood and seconded by Anthony Wills.

- 5) The re-opening of the school** – Peter Lever, as a Director of the school JVC (Joint Venture Company), explained that the contract between the two parties was to be signed in the very near future and that the School Trust would have a 25% share and the Full Circle Group 75%. He confirmed that the JVC would include three Directors from the School Trust, with three members from the Full Circle group. He went on to say that the Senior Management Team would comprise the new Headmaster, Jeremy Hallows, Jayne Scott, Director of Finance and Operations, and Jackie Walkom, the Marketing and Admissions Director. Peter described Jeremy Hallows as a very interesting person, a caring individual, someone with great ideas and one who had had experience in China through his previous appointment as Head of the Senior School at Bromsgrove School. Jayne Scott had worked previously at Austin Friars and Dulwich College and had had much experience abroad, and Jackie Walkom had come from a similar marketing role at Sedbergh School. Peter confirmed that during the previous week a full survey of the school had been carried out by architects, along with gas and electrical specialists, which would form the basis of a refurbishment plan for the future.

He advised that Full Circle had already committed £250k capital into the school which had been matched by £75k from the School Trust as agreed, and that the school would be reopening in September 2018 with, it is hoped, around 100 pupils. Peter drew attention to the incredible achievements to date and commented that it was a labour of love for many of those involved. He concluded by referring to the new Edmund Grindal Society, which was to be launched following the AGM, and he also encouraged OSBs to attend the 3pm Question and Answer session with the new Headmaster.

6) Lonsdale Terrace – David Lord gave an overview of the situation to date with regard to Lonsdale Terrace. He explained that in late 2015 the School Trustees had advised that the Terrace would not form part of any new school and therefore plans were prepared and submitted to Copeland Borough Council with a view to converting the properties back to individual residential units. A cost of £200k had been estimated to carry out the required works, including two car parking spaces for each property, as stipulated by Copeland BC. However, at the beginning of 2017, the Society was advised that Lonsdale Terrace would be required by the school after all, initially for staff, but possibly as a boarding house in the future. The plans that had been drawn up were therefore shelved. David reported that Lonsdale Terrace was currently being used by the new Headmaster and other staff and that the JVC would start to pay a rental to the Society in the near future.

7) Society Accounts – 2016-2017:

- a) Guarantee Trust Fund** – David Lord advised that the School Trust had ceased paying a monthly rental for Lonsdale Terrace in December 2015. These payments in the past had covered the mortgage on No. 8 and the cost of employing Pam Rumney. The Society/GTF were now covering these costs. Architects' fees, Copeland Borough Council planning applications and other associated costs with regard to the conversion of Lonsdale Terrace back to individual residential properties had amounted to almost £25k, although David felt that this might not all be wasted, particularly if there was a need to sell either some or all of the properties in the future.
- b) The Scholarship and Trust Funds** – David mentioned that, as agreed at the AGM a year ago, the Scholarship and Trust Funds accounts were closed in January 2017 and the balances (£165k and £23k) transferred to the main St Beghian Society account.
- c) St Beghian Society Account** – David commented on the high postage costs, which were due to additional mailings of the Trustees Newsletters to OSB members along with two years' worth of recharges from the school, instead of the normal one. These recharges included items such as photocopying. David also reported that other assistance given to the St Bees School Trust included a payment of £2.5k towards a Times Educational Supplement advert for expressions of interest in the school, along with a sum to cover the School Clerk of Works' salary, whose responsibilities included maintenance issues at Lonsdale Terrace. David confirmed that from September 2017, the latter would be paid by the JVC.

Tim Batho asked about Lonsdale Terrace as a boarding house. Peter Lever advised that the costs of refurbishment would need to be carefully considered. Stephen Edwards expressed his concerns with regard to retaining the lovely features of the Regency buildings. Andrew Johnston confirmed that, as the Terrace was listed, all external features would need to be maintained and as the heating had been kept on, internally the properties were in a fairly good condition. He therefore didn't expect the school to make too many alterations. Stephen asked about unifying the properties with regard to colourings. Andrew advised that there were some painting issues that needed resolving but that all hood stones were now the same colour. Peter Lever stated that from meetings with the new Finance and Operations Director it was clear that there was a strong desire to bring the school back to its former glory and therefore he had faith that this would be achieved over time. He stressed the importance of offering quality, so as to ensure that pupils were attracted to the school.

Acceptance of the accounts was proposed by Mike Brandwood and seconded by Tim Brown, with all being in favour.

At this point in the meeting Danny Wang came into the AGM and was introduced by Peter Lever to the OSB members – Danny explained how and why he had decided to get involved with St Bees. He mentioned that he had run schools in China for a few years and that his connection with Laurence Gribble (OSB SH 02-09) had introduced him to this great opportunity. He commented that it was an honour to talk to the OSBs and that without their support and contributions what had been so far achieved could not have happened.

David Lord summed up the background to Danny Wang’s involvement as a result of his friendship with Laurence Gible at Cambridge. Peter Lever confirmed that Danny had run a school in Shenzhen for about 6 years, which had around 6,000 pupils, 4,000 of whom paid fees. He also went on to say that Danny and Laurence had recently opened a school in Cambodia and that he was confident that the Chinese had a strong desire to succeed here. David Rowlands enquired as to what other interest there had been in the school. It was thought that there had been limited interest but that PA Consulting, who had been appointed to look at the various options, were clear that Full Circle had been identified as the best way forward.

George Robson mentioned the proposed joint Armistice Day service in 2018 and asked about the religious orientation of the school in the future. Peter confirmed that he believed it would have a strong Christian element and that the Headmaster was keen that the chapel would have a central role to play.

8) Branch Activities – Bill Dove reported that the North East Dinner would be taking place on November 8th and that invitations would be going out in the next two weeks. It was also confirmed that the date for the Scottish Dinner was Saturday 25th November at the Royal Scots Club in Edinburgh.

9) The 200 Club Draw – The draw was taken and the following winners were identified:

£160	70	A. Lord (Alastair)	£40	8	M. Roberts (Mark)
£40	6	P. & S. Etchells (Philip)	£40	39	D. G. Beeby (David)
£40	41	H. & J. A. Upton (Harry)			

10) Any Other Business –

- a) John Moore (F 41-44) presented his war medal to Peter Lever for the Society. Peter thanked John for his kindness and donated it to the Archives for safe keeping.
- b) Derek Wright asked for clarification as to whether the school would have charitable status once it reopened. Peter Lever confirmed that it would have charitable status.

The President then thanked members for attending and closed the meeting at 12.30pm.