

Minutes of the AGM of the Alumni Society
Saturday 16th September 2023
Platnauer Room Staircase 2

1. Welcome

- Narmada Thiranagama, President, welcomed everyone to the AGM.
- 20 members of the Society were in attendance.

2. Apologies

- There were apologies from Penny Andrews, Secretary, who was unable to attend, and Nigel Bird, Treasurer, who was unable to attend on Zoom in this particular location. Also, from Alexandra Marks.

3. Approval of minutes of the previous AGM

- The minutes of the meeting held on Saturday 17th September 2022 were approved.

4. Matters arising

- There were no matters arising not already covered elsewhere on the agenda.

5. Treasurer's report

- Copies of the Society accounts were distributed. Drusilla Gabbott pointed out items of note.
 - The finances of the Society remained healthy with closing funds on 31 July 2023 of £10,080.00.
 - She explained that these funds had been generated over time by surpluses from previous annual dinners and summer parties.
 - The funds were being spent in line with the agreed Society purposes and priorities. Expenditure included a subsidy of £100 per event for Society Alumni Drinks at the Red Lion in London, as money behind the bar to encourage prompt attendance, and an agreed subsidy of £123 for a year-rep initiated summer party event led by Miles Overton, 2015, in Regents Park. A small deficit of £44.25 had been incurred on the summer party which was not unusual as surpluses and deficits varied from year to year on this event and funds were retained to underwrite it. There were no questions on the accounts.

6. Election of President

- Dan Chambers, the current Vice President, was put forward as President. Multiple members of the Society agreed to propose him among them, Jane Johnson as Proposer and Amanda Holland as seconder, and Dan was approved by the AGM.

7. Election of Vice President

- Jane Johnson was put forward as Vice President with the introduction that she was a long-term committee member. Again, there were multiple proposers and seconds, including Amanda Holland as proposer, and Rosie Duthie as seconder. She was approved by the AGM

8. Election of Treasurer

- It was announced that Nigel Bird, the current treasurer was stepping down after nearly 20 years in service having been elected at the AGM on 18th September 2004.
- Amanda Pullinger, a Past President and History Graduate was put forward to replace him. Again, multiple members of the Society proposed and seconded this candidate, including Jane Johnson as proposer, and Dan Chambers as seconder.
- The AGM approved this choice.

- It was explained that Nigel Bird would be staying on for a year as an ordinary committee member to perform the handover to Amanda. The Society Treasurer also received support from the College Accountant.

9. Election of other non-officer committee members.

- It was explained that Ex-presidents and College representatives were ex officio members and did not need re-election.
- 10 individuals were put forward as committee members, Nigel Bird, David Bradbury, David Clark, Paul Dawson-Bowling, Rosie Duthie, Penny Gilbert, Drusilla Gabbott, Amanda Holland, Sarah Jackson, Alexandra Marks.
- A nomination came from Jane Johnson and seconding by Ed Bispham. These non-officer members of the committee were elected by those present.

10. Vote of thanks to two Officials or ex officio members stepping down

This was made by Drusilla Gabbott, who made the following points:

- The Society had been very fortunate to have Nigel Bird as Treasurer for so long. In 2004, after a prolonged hiatus in which there had been no Society accountant, Nigel had done much-appreciated work in rationalising, simplifying and modernising the Society bank accounts. He had consistently dispensed wise advice, keeping a strong relationship with the College Accountant, arranging prompt payments and dealing efficiently with any special needs. Nigel had been College Accountant at Pembroke and brought much appreciated knowledge of the Oxford College system with him.
- The Society had similarly benefited greatly from having Sir Paul Silk as a recent President. His wide range of connections, whether long-standing, or new ones forged in the course of his presidency led to him hosting a successful and very popular President's Summer Party at the Charterhouse. He had also facilitated a committee meeting at the Chelsea Arts club. Paul had been active in arranging the celebrations for Alexandra' Marks' retirement as Secretary. He had consistently reminded the Committee of the importance of UK Nations and Regions events, and we undertook to keep this at the forefront of our minds going forward.

11. The President updated the AGM On Society activities during the year

- The Party at Unison had attracted a large number of younger attendees and 89 people in total. Various committee members said that this had been very enjoyable and supported the view that attendance was stimulated by this being a different type of venue for the Society being the largest public service union in Europe and the home of the Elizabeth Garrett Anderson museum.
- Two pieces of strategic work had taken place in the past year: the writing of a survey of alumni alongside the DO on what activities the alumni would like to see, which was due to be sent out later this year. Also, a spending protocol for the society's funds. The Society uses these funds to underwrite the summer party but it has also decided to set aside a limited budget for 'seed' investment: either getting special interest alumni groups off the ground or supporting younger alumni cohorts, particularly those before their first gaudy or affected by the Covid period to run get together to help them into the habit of keeping up BNC relationships. Two such events had run for the first time this year. The president circulated photos and brief reports on Miles Overton (2015) and Rosie Duthie's (2016) parties.
- A walk was arranged by Drusilla Gabbott, David Clark, David Bradbury and James Drace-Francis in Putney on April 17th.

- There was a planned walk to Binsey church on the day after the dinner and all were welcome.
- The year Sept 2024- Sept 2025 will be the 50th anniversary of Brasenose becoming mixed. There will be some form of dedicated celebration. The Society and the 1974 Womens' network, a branch of the alumni society have been in active dialogue with BNC over ideas for this and the President said that the plans look very exciting.
- The president gave a thank you to the Committee for supporting her in her 'learning curve', to John Bowers in his absence, to Ed Bispham and to all staff in the alumni office for being delightful to work with and their personal kindness and generosity whilst supporting her in the role.

12. Brief update from BNC Development Office and the Vice Principal

- Julia Diamantis gave a brief report saying this year the DO had put on a full programme of events particularly focussing on the cohorts that had gone through Covid, on subject reunions and the Principal's Conversations. Feedback on the Notes was invited.
- The 30 new Frewin bedrooms meant all undergraduates could now stay in college for the full term of their degree. There are a greater number of courses that now stretch over four years rather than three and a decreasing number of affordable rooms for private rent in Oxford. The new building will be occupied from October 2nd.
- Julia presented architects' drawings outlining the plans for Frewin Hall explaining there was a requirement from Oxford City Council to renovate particularly sensitively due to its extreme historic importance. BNC also want to provide some amenity space.
- Some questions on fundraising were asked. The strategy for this was outlined. Paul Dawson Bowling suggested BNC make it clear that *any* level of donation is worthwhile citing his experience of a previous Frewin Hall appeal. Julia indicated that at a later date she would open out invitations for donations more widely.

13. Year Reps Report

- Drusilla Gabbott gave the Year Reps' report. A few posts were vacant, and David Clark read out the relevant years. She explained the purpose of the Year Reps is friend-raising not fundraising, bringing a year together on a purely social basis. She referred with appreciation to Duncan Greenland and Donald Rushton's long-standing party for 1966. Alexandra Marks had also run a garden party this year for 1977 and adjacent decades. Thank you quotes from this indicated very many had appreciated the opportunity to meet informally at home. Julia Diamantis said Rep activities were very valuable in getting people together who wouldn't come back to BNC or building confidence to do so.

14. Upcoming society events

- The President said that next year's summer party in London would be organised by Dan Chambers. The date for this and the annual dinner were to be confirmed. She confirmed with Drusilla Gabbott that the Hadrian's wall walk in April 2024 was fully booked.

15. Other votes of thanks

- The President gave a final thank you to the president and fellows, DO, Bursar, staff and AGM and also to Penny Andrews for her support during her year in office.
- Amanda Holland thanked Narmada on behalf of the committee and the AGM, particularly citing how much she had enjoyed her excellent party at Unison.

16. AOB

- There was no other business
- The meeting closed at about 6.40pm