

# **DOWNING COLLEGE ALUMNI ASSOCIATION**

## **95th Annual General Meeting**

**held in the Howard Theatre**

**at 17:00 on Saturday 24 September 2022**

### **DRAFT MINUTES**

1 Professor Barry Everitt, President Elect of the Association, chaired the meeting and welcomed the attendees. Professor Everitt explained that the President, Mr Charles Harpum, was unable to attend the Meeting as he had committed to making a trip to Greenland and Northern Canada before he had been appointed President.

2 The Minutes of the 94th Annual General Meeting were accepted.

3 There were no matters arising other than those covered in the Agenda for the present meeting.

#### **4 President's Review: Mr Charles Harpum**

I am unfortunately unable to attend Alumni Day as I am on an expedition cruise in the Arctic. This was booked some years ago before I knew I was going to be President of the Association. This was necessary to secure a single cabin. I apologise to Old Members for my absence.

The academic year, 2021 – 2022, has seen the gradual return of the College to something approaching normality. College alumni functions have resumed. Since Alumni Day last September, the Association has been able to offer merchandise for sale at a number of those functions, and, in particular, at the London Carol Service in December, at the Reunion Dinner in April for those who matriculated in a year ending in 2, at the MA Ceremony in May and at General Admission on 1 July. The sales on all of those occasions were good. These sales are important. They constitute the only fund-raising that the Association undertakes and the profits are used to provide grants for students in financial need. I hope that you will feel able to buy some Association merchandise while you are here to support that worthy cause. These sales are only possible because of the kindness and goodwill of a number of volunteers who give up their valuable time to attend the functions and sell the goods. I would like to express my warm thanks to them for all that they have done and continue to do.

This year has been important for two further reasons.

First, the Development Office has taken over the production of the College Magazine in its entirety from the Association. The production of what was formerly called the College Newsletter had hitherto been a significant function of the Association. As was mentioned at last years' AGM, this change prompted the Association and the Development Office to review and codify their respective complementary roles in a Memorandum of Understanding, which I drafted, and which was finalised in the course of the present academic year.

Secondly, the Association celebrates its centenary. The Association will be 100 years old on 7 October 2022. This milestone is to be marked in a number of ways (and there may yet be more events to come).

First of all, Barrie Hunt, a former Secretary and President of the Association, has undertaken the monumental task of investigating the history of the Association from its records. His researches have already borne fruit. There is, as you may have seen, an excellent short account of the history of the Association in the College Magazine. That was distilled from Barrie's work by Jenny Ulph, the College Archivist. It is intended that in due course there will be an online exhibition recording the history of the Association. I am very grateful indeed to Barrie and Jenny for the great deal of work that they have done.

It is also hoped that a tree will be planted to commemorate the centenary of the Association. While I had wished that the planting ceremony might be held on this Alumni Weekend, the drought over the summer has ruled that out. It is, in any event, better to plant trees later in the autumn. Subject to the approval of the relevant College committee, the tree to be planted will be a sessile oak. That is the indigenous British oak and a large and magnificent tree. It will be planted in the Paddock where it can be enjoyed by alumni and current students alike. I hope that there will be a planting ceremony at some stage in the autumn that can be photographed for the College Magazine. For the record the tree will be a personal gift to both the Association and the College by me. I am also hoping to donate a sweetgum tree to commemorate the centenary of the Cranworth Law Society, of which I became a member 50 years ago.

It is wholly fitting that the incoming President for the centenary year will be someone who has had a profound connection with Downing for many years and who has done so much for it, Professor Barry Everitt, a Fellow of the College from 1976 and Master from 2003 to 2013. The College is greatly in his debt. It is in fact all-change with the officers of the Association. Peter Whittington stepped into the breach after Simon Walker to take on the Secretaryship of the Association. He stands down and is to be replaced by Paul Jarvis, who has kindly agreed to take on the Secretaryship. Peter has been an exemplary Secretary and his knowledge of the Rules of the Association has been invaluable to me, as has his assistance on many occasions. The Association also says goodbye to David Riddoch as Treasurer, an office which he has held for a number of years with great distinction. I have been extremely impressed with David's knowledge of the Association's accounts and his willingness to attend Saturday morning meetings by Zoom, even when he was the other side of the world in New Zealand. He will be succeeded by Miles Storey, who has had a distinguished career as a banker. I am very grateful to Peter and David for all their hard work. I am also grateful to Paul and Miles for their willingness to take on these new burdens.

Finally, I would like to mention the Alumni Association Photographic Competition that exists due to the generosity of Neville Tait. The theme for this year's competition was "New Normal" and the judges were Neville, Vicki Ambery-Smith (the Master's wife), Dick Taplin, and myself. The entries

were considered on 16 June and prizes were awarded. Honours were shared for first prize between Louisa Denby and Aurelia Eulenburg. There were some very fine photographs, though not all of them adhered to the theme.

## **5 Treasurer's Report**

Dr Riddoch presented the Report and the Annual Accounts which had been circulated before the meeting. It was agreed that the Accounts should be adopted.

## **6 Sales of Merchandise**

Ms Sharon Gimson, Chair of the Merchandise Working Group reported that profits to the end of June 2022 were better than compared to the same period last year:

2021/22 sales income £8156 (profit of £5,778)

2020/21 sales income £6093.53 (profit £4474.98)

2019/20 sales income £8109.95 (profit £4278.73)]

£3250 of income was due to sales of Quentin Blake's Griffin Prints and the Association is very grateful to him for these. He has given 50.

The Association is also grateful to Vicki Ambery-Smith, not only for the solid silver and red gold Neo-Classical Cufflinks which she makes for us, but also for her design for our silk scarves which were introduced last year and which have sold well.

The Association is also fortunate to be able to sell artwork created by Downing students past and present. There are new greeting cards designed by Downing post-graduate Sophie Hoath and digital images taken from previous Alumni Association Photographic Competitions. Details of all merchandise items are available on the Downing Gifts website.

Our merchandise sales are to raise money for the Association's Alumni Student Fund. This provides small grants for students in need. This year 69 grants were made, distributing £6,461.41. We aim to distribute even more next year.

We have been selling merchandise in person at Alumni Day today and have, according to our latest figures, raised c£1900.

## **7 Address by the Senior Bursar, Mr Gavin Flynn**

I have just completed my second year as Senior Bursar and it is fair to say my tenure has not been as I would have expected! When I joined the College the country was six months into the pandemic. During my first year we identified nine different ways to run the College which has subsequently proved to be a very helpful. The graduation ceremony at the end of my first year was an extraordinary experience with guests being outside on the paddock watching the ceremony on big screens. My second year has seen a return to normality which for me has been a new and wonderful experience. There has been a May Ball, MCR seminar nights and all activities have resumed. The student body is in good shape.

Operationally it has been a hard year. At times the kitchen has had 40% of the staff it needs. Housekeeping is finally at full strength and the College is trying to help staff with the cost of living. There are season-ticket loans and excess food is made available. Hardship funding for students has been higher and the College is looking at ways in which it can help students further.

The College lost about £7 million as a result of the pandemic, a combination of lost rental income and

no conference trade. Fortunately, the College did not have to borrow thanks to the Bond that had been issued at Susan Lintott's instigation not long before she retired. The College will be in deficit this year and next year, not least due to increased costs, for example it is having to spend an additional £400,000 on fuel. The College is looking to raise income through the bed and breakfast initiative, conferences and summer schools. However, it is expected that the international summer schools will not return to the same level that they were before the pandemic. A strategy has been agreed with the Fellows which puts the student at the heart of the College's development.

## **8 Election of Officers, proposed by the Executive Committee**

President

From President Elect: Professor Barry Everitt

President Elect

Mr Simon Walker (1975)

Vice President

Mr Neville Tait (1962)

Honorary Secretary

Mr Paul Jarvis (1997)

Treasurer

Mr Miles Storey (1982)

Members of the Executive Committee

Ms Elizabeth Bostock (1983)

Ms Sadie Hubbard (1983)

Ms Anish Desor (2009)

The appointment of Dr J S L McCombie and Mr R K Taplin as Honorary Auditors was seconded and approved.

## **9. Any Other Business**

None

## **10. Date of Next Meeting**

Saturday 23<sup>rd</sup> September 2023.