

Old Alfredians



MINUTES OF THE AGM; SUMMER 2011

The Dinner took place in the Resources Centre King Alfred's Centre Site, (formerly the Hall and then the Library).

The Secretary, Mike Haddrell, said Grace. After an excellent cold buffet dinner provided by the School Catering Service, President Richard Taylor gave the Penney Toast to absent friends.

Simon Spiers, approaching the end of his first year in charge and redesignated as Headteacher rather than Principal, reported from the school. He spoke of endeavours to raise the profile of the Old Alfredians and encourage more current students to join the Club. Two current staff members who attended King Alfred's were present at the dinner, as was Hannah Warne, a Year 13 leaver this year.

The soccer match had been revived on a Wednesday afternoon in March. The timing enabled students with weekend jobs as well as sporting commitments to participate, reviving a tradition. (I insert here the report from the school staff briefing which historians especially will critique for partiality with due consideration of provenance. Sec.) *"After a closely fought match, the College came away victorious thanks to goals from Major and the winner from Maddern: a fantastic result given the strength of the opposition (thanks to Des Williams' contacts virtually a Letcombe/Wantage Town select!!). The King Alfred's squad, comprising of members of our U19's team and teaching staff started the brightest, going ahead on 31 minutes after an opportunist strike from Chris Major, following up Matt Bowler's header that the 'keeper could only parry back into the box. The Old Boys struck back early into the second half before Maddern sealed the win from close range soon after. The defence held firm despite renewed pressure from Wantage Town (sorry, Alfredians) to seal the bragging rights, for this year at least. This proved to be a good spirited game that was played in glorious sunshine on Centre Site, finishing with post-match teas in the Sixth Form Common Room. Thank you to all turned out for the College and in particular our former students of as far back as our Icknield/Segsbury days, who took time out from their jobs to make the match possible. Despite much banter from both sides, Des also did sterling work keeping the peace as referee (and manager of the Old Boys, hence why we played a 57-minute 2nd half...)"* A date has been fixed for a similar midweek event next year which will hopefully see the revival of the Cricket match and, steered by Hannah Warne, a contest between former and current netball players (who have met with recent success on the national stage). [Proposed dates as follows: Wednesday 28th March 2012 Football: 3.30pm KO, Centre Site; Netball: 3.45pm start, Leisure Centre. Post-match teas from 5.30pm in the Sixth Form Common Room. Wednesday 30th May 2012 Cricket - 3.30pm start, Challow & Childrey CC Teas during interval.]

The Headteacher also mentioned John Paul, who had participated as a cyclist in the Commonwealth Games and a Year 11 swimmer who holds three British records.

Mr Spiers reflected on a difficult financial year for the school, which is now thankfully back in to a surplus budget and quietly confident about the next couple of years, acknowledging that there will be difficult times ahead. Year 7 (formerly Form III, the first year) will have 336 students in September 2011, the first time the school has been oversubscribed since the amalgamation of the three Wantage Secondary Schools. The school enjoys an improving reputation which reflects well not only on all those associated with it but also the wider community. In February seven OfSTED inspectors visited the school for two days, having given 48 hours notice. They determined the school to be in the top category of four overall judgements – outstanding – which places King Alfred's in the top 10% of schools in the country. Some aspects of provision were described by the inspectors as exceptional and the Headteacher emphasised the importance of celebrating the positive achievements of King Alfred's School students.

Current proposals to convert to Academy Status with effect from August 1 will give the school more autonomy. As a Foundation school already, King Alfred's is well placed to build its independent status and manage its own budget.

Concluding that the school is in excellent health with an exciting year in prospect, the Headteacher proposed the toast to the Old Alfredian's Club.

Marcus Haddrell, President Elect, proposed the Toast to the School, first taking the opportunity to reminisce fondly about his school career from 1994 to 2001. He has continued to feel the benefits of the subject knowledge, counsel and advice from his teachers, in particular Tony Jarman, David Hughes, John Gale, Ian Taylor and Isobel Mabey. Great friendships were made and have been sustained despite the many different

Old Alfredians



paths taken since leaving King Alfred's. In particular a group of nine are in constant contact, and in recent memorable memory visited Turkey together on a sightseeing holiday. Marcus alluded to 'funny stories from school' and selected from a long list those which might reasonably be recounted in front of teachers and both his parents. These included a cultural exchange visit to Euro Disney during which the 13 year old participants engaged closely with real life cartoon characters, a hazy morning steeplechase to recover passports in time for a four in the morning school trip departure - once more for France, and a story involving stink pipes, wounded buffalo, snogging and a song by Robbie Williams. (You had to be there). Marcus concluded with some reflections on the importance of enjoying the moments that we all have together as well as trying to share our Club more widely. He has attended dinners for two years as a student and ten years as an Alfredian and acknowledged the absolute honour and privilege of assuming the Presidency. In concluding he made reference to his dad's involvement with the Club, his pleasure in regular reunions as opportunities to reminisce, to see how the school is doing and developing, and to mark the high value he places on his years at King Alfred's, before proposing the toast to the School.

Richard Taylor proposed the vote of thanks to Sally Cox and the school caterers for another excellent spread, congratulated the Headteacher on a successful first year at the helm and thanked Marcus for his reminiscences.

The Minutes of the last meeting, circulated with the letter and tabled, were commended by Mike Haddrell and proposed and accepted by A.I Mathewson and N. Doody respectively.

Steve Smith gave the Treasurer's report, observing that we have made a small profit this year. In response to a question he noticed that free banking is the alternative to a return on investments in these dark times of low interest rates. The Treasurer's report was accepted on the proposal of M. Haddrell, seconded by R.Taylor.

Marcus Haddrell was formally accepted as the new President for a term of two years. Nominations for President Elect should be made in writing to the Secretary.

The Committee was re-elected as follows: Sec. & Archivist M. Haddrell, Treas. S. Smith, Auditor G. Holliday, Cricket Marcus Haddrell, Soccer D Williams, Membership Secretary R. Taylor. Committee: D. Gibbons, G Mabbett, D Ross, N Doody, A Mathewson.

Des Williams asked whether the Headteacher could provide contacts for cohorts of leavers so that we might extend invitations in November to those who left five years previously and in the summer to leavers of a ten year vintage. This was agreed.

The Secretary reported consultations and Committee discussion about the name of the Club. Proposals to change it from The Old Alfredians to The Alfredians or The Wantage Alfredians had met with a balance of responses from members; the Committee had initially been inclined to give the club a more modern feel by losing the "Old". On reflection a change of name would represent a break in a long tradition but more significantly would leave two names in circulation for the same organisation and, critically, the determination to engage younger members with the life of the club probably rests on more active strategies than a change of name.

The Secretary acknowledged the concerns of some members about the proposed demolition of the old armoury on Portway which bears the inscription King Alfred's School OTC (Officer Training Corps.) (...or Wantage School OTC...?? I must go and look . Sec.) At this point Des Williams urged the President no longer to 'hand over the chain' which he duly did. Simon Spiers explained that the proposed demolition of the armoury was a Highways Department stipulation as improved access to the Sports Centre is a condition of the creation of new all weather sports pitches for the use of the school, community and Wantage Town football club on the former St Mary's School fields behind the Sports Centre. The armoury is currently a derelict building requiring thousands of pounds of investment to make it usable. There has been one accident and a near miss near the Portway entrance to the Sports Centre. The Headteacher agreed to preserve the memory and record the history of the building including preserving the stones, which record its former use, in the reconstructed entrance to the Sports Centre.