

OLD PALACE ALUMNAE

Annual General Meeting

1st July 2025 3-4pm

Chair's welcome.

Following on from the today's very successful Open House event, Katherine welcomed over 45 members to the final Annual General meeting to be held at Old Palace of John Whitgift School. On 2nd July the Old Palace Alumnae will leave the umbrella of The John Whitgift Foundation & will stand on its own. The entrance gates of the school will close for the last time on 4th July.

Apologies for absence.

Nicola Hawes, Liz Forrest, Janet Jones, Maxine Adams, Francesca Mellor.

Minutes of the last AGM

They were contained in the pack & circulated to members beforehand. They were approved by the members & signed by Katherine.

Chair's Report - See attached report

Treasurer's Report.

A copy of the accounts were contained in the AGM pack & made available to members beforehand.

As of 30th April 2025 the accumulated funds were listed as £23,319.

Tracy reminded members that over the last 2 years the associate membership income had dwindled owing to the small number of pupils in the school.

Extra funds were spent to ensure that the final summer lunch, Founders day & Carol service were extra special for members. A laptop had been purchased to hold the members' database & future committee needs.

Tracy thanked Janis Sinden our accountant for preparing the accounts along with for her many years of devoted service to the Alumnae. Janis has advised us that she has stepped down. As no questions were forthcoming from the members prior to or at the meeting, the accounts were approved & signed by Tracy & Katherine.

Members Questionnaire

Katherine said a questionnaire was sent to members last year requesting their views on the future of the OP Alumnae after the school closure. It was the majority wish of the members that the Alumnae Association continue for 5 (five) years when the decision to continue would be reviewed.

Database, Membership & Social Media.

In line with GDPR guidelines, members consent has been obtained in the past year to agree for their contact details to be transferred to the "new" database.

(Around 3,500 contact details held by The Whitgift Foundation database were painstakingly cross checked by Helen Richards to avoid duplication.) Currently, there are over 900 members registered on the database & around 1000 that are signed up to the social media accounts. Further new members names were being collected at today's Open House to be added to the database, LinkedIn & Facebook by using a QR code on Jean's (Loh) tablet & printed slips.

As of 2nd July 2025 the database will be transferred by The Whitgift Foundation into Alumnae ownership.

Access codes to the social media accounts will also be transferred by the Whitgift Foundation on 2nd July.

Website

Jean (Loh) reported the chosen domain name had been leased. The name is similar to name on the new Google mail account. Vicky Burley of Smarter Reach has been appointed to build the website. Currently, the landing page has the last newsletter & social media links. Jean said it is hoped that "the new website will be the heart of Old Palace in future years."

Archives. See attached PDF

Election of Officers.

Katherine reported the she would be stepping down after this meeting, so would Tracy Lee our Treasurer.

Other members who indicated they were stepping down were:

Alison Botham, Janet Jones, Cindy Hedmann, Zoe Sexton (RIP), Maxine Adams, Janet Jones & Hilary Gadd.

Jacqui Derbyshire (Deputy Chair) indicated she was content to be nominated as new Chair. She was seconded by Maureen Bunn & Gill Bailey.

Jean Loh was content to be nominated as Deputy Chair. She was seconded by Maureen Bunn & Gill Bailey.

Sophie Filon was nominated by Tracy & agreed to be Treasurer. She was seconded by Emma Brook & Gill Bailey.

Any other business.

Katherine reported that a new constitution had been compiled to meet the future needs of the OPA. It was circulated to members prior to the meeting & was in the AGM pack. No questions had been received from members prior to, or at the meeting.

A privacy policy had also been circulated to members prior to the meeting & was in the members pack. No questions were received prior to, or at the meeting.

A recent letter (attached) from Roisha Hughes, CEO of The Whitgift foundation was read out by Katherine. "The sale of part of the OP site, by The Curwen Group was taking longer to get to the exchange of contracts but they were working on the fact it would complete in a couple of weeks. A small charity had expressed interest on the (smaller) remainder of the site & we would be kept updated on this".

Roisha confirmed that some of the archives would be stored at Whitgift School & the remainder in one of the Foundation buildings in George Street. She confirmed that "they have found a solution that will enable access if/when necessary."

Requests to access archives can be made to:

enquiries@johnwhitgiftfoundation.org

Roisha thanked Katherine for her hard work & commitment as Chair & looked forward to working with her successor.

Gill Bailey & Maureen Bunn expressed their vote of thanks to Katherine for all her hard work & dedication to the OPA over her years as Chair, saying that she'd (Gill Bailey) enjoyed her own school days at OP.

Helen Richards thanked Katherine & the committee on behalf of the students & teachers. She stressed the importance of the OPA & its precious archives. From the visitor comments at the Open house event today they also sent best wishes for the future.

Katherine thanked Janis Sinden on behalf of the committee & wished her well.

Members were assured that their wishes for a more permanent solution where the archives could be displayed, rather than left in boxes, would carry on after the school closure.

Jacqui Derbyshire reminded members that "leaving The Whitgift Foundation wasn't the end, it was the beginning."

Forthcoming Events

Founder's day Service, Croydon Minster 27th September 2025, 2pm.

Tea to be served after the service.

Members were invited to sign up for the scratch choir.

The meeting closed at 15.45pm with a final vote of thanks to all past, present & new members of the committee.

Helen Richards, Deputy Head of the School was presented with a gift from the OPA in recognition of all the extra work she'd undertaken on our behalf over the years.

H C GADD (minutes).