

Crescent College Past Pupils Union
Annual General Meeting
Thursday, 18th January 2024, 7:30pm
College Central Area

Minutes

Attendance:

Jeannie O'Malley (Chair), Eva Clarke,

Committee Meeting Minutes

Action

1. Welcome –

Kevin opened the meeting by welcoming everyone, and highlighting that this is our first in person AGM meeting since 2020 and greatly appreciate the presence and support from all attendees in the challenging weather condition.

Before beginning the formalities of the meeting Kevin asked to observe a minutes silence to remember deceased members of our Union, their family members and their friends who have passed away over the last year.

He then introduced our main office holders: Vice President Jeannie O'Malley, Secretary Dermot Maher and Treasurer Rachel Hartnett.

2. Apologies – Fr. Liam O'Connell

3. Communications

Kevin provided an update on communications that we have handled during the year

We received invitations to attend the following Union annual dinners:

- Clongowes Union – in April – covid prevented our attendance

- Mungret Union – in September – committee member Gerry Mac Namara attended on our behalf
- Belvedere Union – in November – committee member Tony White attended
- Gonzaga Union – in November – committee member Tony White attended

We issued number of invitations to our annual dinner and the following accepted and attended:

- Clongowes Union – represented by the President Elect – Mr. Peter O’Meara
- Mungret Union – represented by their immediate Past President – Mr. Justice Tom O’Donnell
- Belvedere Union – represented by – Mr. Cian O’Carroll
- Jesuit Alumni Ireland – represented by their President Mr. John Tracey
- Old Crescent Rugby Football Club – represented by their President – Mr. Joe McNamara
- Crescent College Comprehensive SJ – represented by the Principal – Mr. Diarmuid Mullins
- Roll of Honour inductee – Mr. Dermot Whelan
- Previous Roll of Honour inductees – Mr. Bill Whelan and Mr. Justice Kevin O’Higgins
- Mr. Leo Colgan of the parent’s council

Our Union activities were acknowledged in 3 articles in the Limerick Leader which covered our donation to the Jesuit Refugee Service, the induction of Dermot Whelan onto our Roll of Honour and our donation to the North Star Project.

4. Minutes of 2022 AGM

Shane Costelloe proposed
Tony White seconded

Brien Morris raised concern that the minutes should have been issued to all members prior to the AGM. This has not been done before so will be reviewed as agenda item for next committee meeting.

5. Matters Arising

No matters arising

6. Treasurers Report 2023

Kevin invited Rachel to present the treasurers report, key items summarised below and account statement is attached as an appendix to the minutes:

Opening balance of €11,175.82

- Golf event generated a profit of €1713.95 and €1700 was donated to the following:
 - €1200 to school
 - €250 to Pyjama Appeal
 - €250 to North Star Project
- Lodgement of €2900 was transferred from the wind down of the scholarship fund
- 156 people attended the dinner event including invited guests. A profit of €868 was made from the event primarily down to fantastic support to the raffle.

Closing balance of €11,288.11

On behalf of the Union, Kevin thanked Rachel for her comprehensive report, he also acknowledged Rachel's diligent and thorough work through what has been a very busy year for the Union and its finances.

Fergal O' Dwyer asked about why scholarship fund was ended. Jeannie explained that one student was awarded funding for three years but through a combination of lack of fundraising and the onerous overhead costs for running the fund, the scholarship committee decided it was best to wind it down and transfer account balance to the Union.

7. Presidents Report 2023

2022 saw a return to in person activities both from a committee perspective but also for our initiatives. We built on the excellent work of the committees of 2020 and 2021 led by Presidents Geraldine Heslin Deery and Tommy Kelly respectively where our activity was constrained to zoom meetings due to Covid precautions. This year our committee moved from holding 4 online zoom meetings to 4 in person meetings held in the college - safe to say that we were able to harness the enthusiasm and energy of our committee to capitalise on the hard work of 2021 and 2020.

Kevin shared an overview of two areas where most of our focus was during the year:

The first area was in our outreach activities to past pupils, parent council and to deserving causes:

- With restrictions lifted we planned a very comprehensive and inclusive tag rugby event for past pupils to be held in

the college in the May time frame. unfortunately, due to circumstances beyond our control we have had to defer this event until this year, where we will capitalise on the extensive planning and ideas to bring this initiative to fruition.

- We were able to hold our annual Ignatian Challenge Cup golf competition in Limerick Golf Club on 2nd September, which together with our 17 sponsors and playing past pupils, we raised €1700 for good causes. An excellent and record turnout saw 67 players compete for the cup.

- We held our annual dinner for the first time since 2019 on the 8th October in the Strand hotel which saw 151 past pupils and invitees attend a wonderful evening renewing old acquaintances and making new ones. We inducted renowned author, journalist, and comedian Dermot Whelan onto our roll of honour. We are grateful to our 11 spot prize sponsors and to all who participated in our raffle.

- We sought to strengthen our outreach and raise awareness by briefing the parents council in May to advise them of our activities and to seek areas where we could compliment and support each other's initiatives. We received a reciprocal brief on their activities in September.

- Closing off our outreach programme we made a number of charitable donations during the year:
 - We donated to the Jesuit Refugee service in support of their work in Ireland and in the Ukraine
 - We donated to the North Star project in support of their activities in alleviating family suffering due to addiction
 - We donated to the transition year student pyjama appeal in support of the refugees centre in Knocklalisheen

The second area of focus of our activities was in supporting the college, its students and staff:

- We continue to provide very current and focused advice and support to the students on careers, professions and trades through our extensive database of past pupils who

provide insights, guidance and placements in close cooperation with the guidance councillors of the college

- Our support to the library reimagining project saw us identify past pupils in the journalism and literary fields to advise students on specific focused careers. We also made a substantial donation to this project.
- Encouraging literary creativity amongst the students saw us sponsor a creative writing competition amongst third year students, with a trophy award and on-site class pizza day for the winner and their class. We have additionally added to this initiative by establishing a link with the writer in residence in University Limerick.
- We also provided a substantial donation to the college for use in discretionary good causes

Other activities saw us participating in the:

- Unveiling of the Saint Ignatius wood sculpture, which we supported during President Tommy Kelly's year in 2021
- The initial scoping of a Shane Geoghegan charity rugby match between past pupils and Garryowen RFC veterans for 2023
- Speaking to 6th year pupils at their final assembly in May before they undertook their state exams to advise them of our Union and how it can benefit them once they embark on post college life.

One final area of activity that was complimentary to our Union was the cessation of the Scholarship programme. While not directly run by the Past Pupils Union we were supportive and encouraging of this initiative. Unfortunately, it became no longer viable and closed after completing its obligations to the last recipient.

Separately we are currently looking at other possible initiatives to alleviate hardship and support deserving past pupils.

I will close my report by thanking the committee for their attendance and mutual support to each other and to me to enable us to carry out the activities that I have highlighted. It is only possible to bring these initiatives to success through your dedicated commitment and contribution and for that I am extremely grateful.

I wish to acknowledge the support of my Vice President Jeannie, Secretary Dermot and Treasurer Rachel for their guidance and advice. To Aedin Prendergast and her hard-working dinner committee for delivering a wonderful and successful annual dinner, To Chris Macnamara and his golf committee for running a very enjoyable and exciting Ignatian Challenge Cup golf competition. To Eva Clarke and her tag rugby committee for their wonderful initiative. To Eoin O'Sullivan, Stephen O'Dowd, Eva Clarke and Chris Mac Namara for their work in maintaining our social media platforms of our website, Facebook, LinkedIn, newsletter and e-mails distribution. I would also wish to extend my appreciation to principal Diarmuid and his staff for their cooperation and support to our Union throughout the year. Thank you for your support, work and especially for your friendship. it was an honour to work with you and to learn from you. Kevin opened the floor for questions.

Brien Morris raised concern at the amount of money going in the direction of the school, he indicated that he has raised the issue before and it should be past pupils that we are assisting. Any money we have should be kept for past pupils that get into trouble, he believes we are losing focus as a Past Pupils' Union and we are too closely linked and supportive of the school. We should not lose sight of the fact that we should look after past pupils.

Jeannie responded to Brien highlighting that keeping the Union alive in recent years has been challenging and many of the initiatives we support are charitable.

Peter believes that we have a dual mandate where we can do both. Several initiatives were done which are intertwined.

Kevin accepted the point from Brien and advised that there is work going on in the background to look into this but it is work in progress and may take time to develop.

Brien gave the example of the golf outing where the Ignatian Cup was presented by school Principal but it should have been presented by President of the Union.

Tony advised that he has volunteered to do some research on benevolent funds based on what other Unions are doing and hopes to present interim report at next committee meeting, it is not an easy thing to develop and will likely take time to set up.

Eoin explained on the scholarship experience and how it is very easy to underestimate the cost of anything that is charitable and the level of effort to maintain that status. If we step back into benevolence, then we face similar cost and administration of what the scholarship fund experienced.

Shane highlighted the need for transparency for these initiatives, and this can create significant administrative overhead. The scholarship fund was a learning experience. Don Reddan was the driving force and was a key contributor to raising the funds.

Orla highlighted that benevolence is never far from our mind, we are a much smaller and poorer Union compared to the other Jesuit schools. We have developed a really strong bond with the school and they are very supportive of any initiatives that we run.

8. Election of officers 2023

PRESIDENT - Kevin proposed Jeannie O'Malley for President for 2023, this was seconded by Orla Prendergast

There were no counter proposals and Jeannie was deemed elected through a show of hands.

Jeannie said it was an honour and hopes to represent Union well.

VICE PRESIDENT – Kevin invited proposals for the position of Vice President. Jeannie proposed Dermot Maher and this was seconded by Rachel Hartnett

There were no counter proposals and Dermot was deemed elected through a show of hands

SECRETARY – Kevin invited proposal for the position of Secretary and Jeannie proposed Eva Clarke and this was seconded by Dermot Maher

There were no counter proposals and Eva was deemed elected through a show of hands

TREASURER – Kevin invited proposal for the position of Treasurer and Jeannie proposed Rachel Hartnett and this was seconded by Aedin Prendergast

There were no counter proposals and Rachel was deemed elected through a show of hands

Kevin wished the incoming officers of the Union the very best of luck for 2023.

9. Election of committee 2023

As President, according to our constitution Kevin is deemed automatically elected to the committee.

He invited nominations to the committee for 2023.

Shane Costelloe advised that he is stepping down and thanked everyone for their time, effort and collaboration during his time on the committee.

Kevin thanked Shane for all his contributions and his excellent and clear advice specifically for the scholarship fund.

Kevin advised that Tommy Kelly also notified that he is also stepping down. Kevin thanked Tommy for all his contributions and specifically during his term as President during difficult times.

The remaining 2022 committee members were proposed and elected for 2023 committee.

Peter nominated Fergal O'Dwyer, Kevin seconded.
Chris proposed Ian Wallace, Dermot seconded
Eva proposed Paul O'Connell, Geraldine seconded
Bevan proposed Keely Cantrell, Eva seconded
Eva proposed Garret Walsh, Aedin seconded

Kevin wished the committee the very best of luck for 2023.

10 Notices of Motion

- No Notices of Motion

11 Dates for meetings/ events for rest of year

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Committee Meetings:

23rd February
23rd March
20th April
18th May
24th August (provisional)
21st Sept
19th Oct
23rd Nov

- Shane Geoghegan Memorial Charity match – February with exact date to be confirmed.
- Table Quiz – likely to be end of Feb/ start of March
- Tag rugby event – tbd
- Ignatian Challenge Cup golf competition – 01st September 2023 Limerick Golf club
- Annual dinner – 11th November 2023 Strand Hotel Limerick

12 Update on school refurbishment programme:

1. – I INVITE STEPHEN AS THE COLLEGE REPRESENTATIVE ON OUR COMMITTEE TO PROVIDE HIS UPDATE.

Kevin invited Stephen as the college representative on the committee to provide an update on the refurbishment project.

Stephen opened by firstly thanking Kevin for his leadership on a fantastic year and for steering the ship for the year.

Stephen did a slide show presentation showing aerial view of the construction progress:

Key highlights

Senior block closed off, entire roof will be replaced. Library at advanced stage and may open by end of this academic year.

Science block

Temp accommodation is out on the old dry play

Total cost €13M

Kevin thanked Stephen for this informative brief on a very ambitious and progressive programme. He wished Stephen, Principal Diarmuid and all of his staff every success in the realisation of this programme.