

Parents' Association

Annual General Meeting 3rd October 2025

This is a short synopsis of the year as Chair of the Parents' Association. I will not cover financial aspects as this will be covered by the Treasurer.

This year the PA has gone from strength to strength, from the solid foundation established by last year's Chair, Chris Ovenden, to which much of the plaudits should go. We remain founded upon the 2024 PA Constitution, which articulates our roles and responsibilities. In delivering for parents & pupils in support of the Warden and staff, we should remain aware of the need of being required and requested.

Some parents may not be aware of what we have done, others may only have heard of us once or twice, and for some, we may have been a constant presence throughout the year. In whatever category you may fall, I would like to quickly remind parents of how we believe we have helped pupils, parents & staff;

- We linked parents & staff to ensure delivery of support for Leaving Certificate Oral exams in the Easter holidays, an ongoing annual requirement we initiated last year.
- We attended and supported the food assessment as part of the wider work around the Catering contract process
- We provided extensive financial support to the Pupils' Council;
- We equipped the Sensory Room;
- We funded the purchase of new Art room equipment;
- We are buying & will continue to buy equipment for House Common Rooms;
- We fund & deliver the PA drinks party for all parents, especially useful for new and overseas parents.

- We support the Warden providing direct advice and comment to the ongoing work around the Personal Electronic Device or Phone Policy/Guidelines.
- Our Year WhatsApp groups, and the Overseas WhatsApp group provides a crucial and swift messaging and coherence function, not provided elsewhere
- We organise & run the 2nd hand shop, with all proceeds going back to pupils.
- We planned & delivered the Gala 24, raising over €35,000 to build a new sports pavilion. Gala 26 (Fun or Funds) remains TBC.
- We worked with Humphrey Jones to deliver the first (and now an annual event) Leaving Certificate brief to parents, explaining what the exam is and how it links to tertiary level institutions across Ireland, UK, Europe & USA.
- The PA delivered Career Evening to talk to and discuss a wide variety of careers and jobs.
- We fund the Leaver's Gift (though this year the PA will cease complete funding to a part finding model, in order to release funds for elsewhere).
- The PA & Fellows laid the OCS a wreath at the Irish National War Memorial Gardens, Islandbridge commemorating Old Columban's who die in conflict.
- And finally, we support the Warden and his team in updating all the school policies, especially some of the more important and contentious ones, and we try and hold the College to account in daily aspects such as updating the College website, passage of information & boarder-day boarder socialising.

Throughout this, the PA must retain a supportive, collaborative & friendly working relationship with the Warden and College staff. Whilst this is key, we should never lose sight that we represent the Parents. The PA is voluntary. Without supporters and do-ers we could not function. Yet we must turn over, keeping ourselves fresh & hungry. This year we say goodbye to Chris Ovenden, Astrid Cazenave, Alex Dobbs and Niamh Breatnach. They are all huge supporters, enablers & delivers of action for the PA. They will be hard to replace. In doing so, we continue to seek fresh support from those able and willing to give time, brains and support, wherever they may be.

But we cannot stand still, we need to move forward. In the next year, we propose, with your support, to focus on the continued work on electronic devices. We are trying to source an external organisation to provide advice and awareness for parents on how we identify electronic behaviours & risks in our children; we will also seek an external organisation to present to parents, advice and awareness of substance and drug use. There is a growing awareness and support for Neurodivergence, and this is something we would like to focus upon. This will be alongside the routine support we hope we provide to Parents and pupils. We will cover a proportion of the cost of the Leavers' Gift; parents will pay the remainder. We will also continue to buy House Common Room equipment, and we will continue to help & support parents and pupils if required & requested.

R Morphew

Chair