

Bluefriars AGM – Thu 7 Dec 23

Administration

1. The Bluefriars AGM was held at Monkton Combe Senior School on 7 December 2023.
2. Attendance:
 - In person: Julius Caesar, Becki Alderson, Alex Le Flaive Manley, Charlie Newbold, Simon Brown.
 - On Zoom: Fergus Murison, John Clark, Max Le Flaive Manley, Julian Bewick, Dave Rumble.
 - Apologies: Richard Miller, Chris Cook.

Opening remarks

3. Fergus opened the meeting by thanking trustees for giving up their time and acknowledged apologies received. He welcomed the rowing team from MCSBC and the marketing lead from MCSS. Bluefriars is keen to hear about the strategy and plans for rowing at Monkton, so the trust can understand where Bluefriars could contribute. He indicated that Bluefriars has been making efforts to engage Alumni to help support the Monkton vision.

Approval of minutes

4. Minutes for the 2022 AGM were accepted as a true record of the discussion held.

Election of Trustees

5. Attendees were invited to confirm their willingness to remain as Bluefriars Trustees for another year.
 - **Agreeing to remain** – Fergus, John, Julian, Max, Alex,
 - **Electing to step down** – Julius.
 - **Unconfirmed** – Chris.
 - **Nominated** – Nigel Gould-Smith, a former Monkton pupil who is also passionate about rowing, was proposed and duly elected as a new trustee.

Appointment of Officers

6. Attendees were invited to undertake appointments for Chair, Treasurer and Secretary.
 - **Chair** - Fergus confirmed his willingness to remain as Chairman, which was not contested, so he was duly reappointed.
 - **Treasurer** - Alex confirmed his willingness to remain as Treasurer, which was not contested, so he was duly reappointed.
 - **Secretary** – Fergus advised that he had approached Nigel Gould-Smith to take on the appointment of secretary, which was not contested, so he was duly appointed.

Review of finances

7. Alex explained that he was still not fully conversant with Bluefriars' financial processes, so apologised that formal paperwork was not available for trustees to review. He thought it possible that the system may be experiencing a technical fault, as such the accounts cannot be validated.

8. In the absence of formal records, Alex estimated that Bluefriars has approximately £210K invested with cash holdings of roughly £10K. That infers assets of £230K, which he considered comparable to the £239K held at the same point in 2022. The capital acquired from donations was thought to be about £6K with potential to obtain an additional £2K from gift aid.
9. Julian expressed concern that data for accounts is not getting merged with data about donors. As such gift aid has not been reclaimed for a long while. Alex explained that he needed to get the accounts for the FY finished first. Once this is done, he would require advice about how gift aid can be recovered.
10. John expressed concern that the approximated figures still suggested the investment portfolio was not matching inflation. It was therefore agreed that donations should be adjusted to match income generated in year, thereby enabling Bluefriars to preserve its capital investment.
11. Gifts made within the FY came to approximately £12K comprising; £10K to Monkton for a new quad, £500 to Sam ford to attend a rowing camp and £600 to Jamie Gale for gym equipment.
12. The agreed donation of £1,350 to Tiffin school, to enable them to acquire a new boat to race at Henley, had not been made.
13. It was pointed out that the Bluefriars mandate requires a proportion of donations to be given to non-Monkton causes. Accordingly, it was agreed that Tiffin school should be informed that the gift of £1,350 will be available whenever they identify the boat they wish to buy.

Rowing report from MCSBC

- See report from MCSBC

14. Fergus thanked Simon for his contribution as Head of Rowing. Noting that the senior girls crew had been recognised for its achievements by both pupils and staff, having been elected as Monkton's team of the year.

Future ambitions for MCSBC

15. Dave thanked Simon and Charlie for the work they have done to keep kids on task. Their effort is reflected by the achievements made by MCSBC. The outline plan for 2024 is to increase participation for more pupils, particularly younger rowers. Rowing is seen as a USP for Monkton, so why not use it.
16. Representation at JIRR will be a target for the junior squad. Learning skills in smaller boats will help as they progress to form competitive crews. Getting the young ones doing something that promotes a club identity will be a huge achievement and beneficial to school. The approach will be to make rowing seem fun to begin with and let interest in competition establish naturally.
17. Dave is keen to promote an identity for rowers that instils pride. No plans for Dundas as yet but he understands its historic significance to rowing, so will use it if a purpose can be identified. Noting that the buildings have been leased to a paddleboarder for private business. There has also been discussion with the canal and river trust plus Wessex water about water quality. The river condition isn't great but is improving as more conventional use returns post Covid.

MCSS strategic goals

18. Investment in rowing by Bluefriars and MCSS has clearly made a difference and there is an evident increase in staff numbers with a rowing interest. The visit to Henley with Dir of Sport was a particular highlight.
19. Becki added MCSS thanks to Simon for his contribution to school rowing. The education of children is always a challenge, but rowing is in the best place it has been in recent years and contributes to the wider experience. MCSS is excited to see what comes next but will give Dave time to settle into the role before making any significant changes.

AOB

Letters to Bluefriars Members

20. Julian explained that Bluefriars members had been divided into 6 groups for targeted communication, ideally by Trustees representing different age groups. Prior to GDPR there were 500 members but numbers wishing to remain members has reduced. An up-to-date list of members will be essential to obtaining Gift Aid, noting that any contact lists pre-dating GDPR should have been destroyed.
21. Julian considered the link between Bluefriars and Monkton leavers is not as it used to be, so MCSS was asked if it could assist. Becki advised that all pupils leaving school can request to be contacted by Bluefriars. However, Monkton is a separate charity so school employees could not assist with fundraising as this presented a conflict of interest. It was also noted that MCSS policy prevents fundraising from leavers until they reach the age of 25.
22. Julian acknowledge that school has provided the names of several leavers in recent years but these have not been followed up. It was proposed that this item be carried forward to the first committee meeting of the new year.

MCSBC Equipment Needs

23. Simon expressed that seeing more juniors rowing is a great opportunity, but a few singles would be needed to help develop rowing skills. MCSBC has acquired 5 singles since 2015 but these are more suited to seniors. Fergus explained that Bluefriars typically focusses its support on the rowing camp and gifts will likely be reduced due to financial erosion. Unfortunately, it will not be possible to determine what support might be available until the financial accounts are ready. Alex was encouraged to have the accounts finished by the end of January, to enable financial budgeting to be developed. This item will also be carried over to the first committee meeting.

Closing remarks

24. In closing the meeting Fergus thanked Julius for his contribution as a trustee.
25. He felt that MCSBC appeared to be going in the right direction and results achieved by the girls' squad offered a positive signal of things to come.
26. He explained that letter sent to the Principal at the end of the summer term did not attract a response but he would still appreciate a proper conversation to determine what contribution Bluefriars can make to the future of rowing at Monkton.