

CLARE COLLEGE  
CAMBRIDGE

**ALUMNI COUNCIL EVENTS COMMITTEE**

13 May 2009

At a meeting held at 6.30 pm in the Thirkill Room

Present

David Hartley (Secretary of the Alumni Association, Chair),  
Norman Dawson, Anna Dempster, David Livesley,  
Toby Wilkinson (Development Director) and  
Nancy Childerhouse (Development Associate)

Apologies

Alice Worth (Head of Alumni Relations)

1. Welcome and re-confirmation of the Committee's remit

Dr Hartley welcomed members of the Committee to the meeting and thanked them for giving their time to assist the College in developing its alumni events programme. The remit and advisory role of the Committee were re-confirmed.

The members of the Committee asked for their best wishes to be sent to Alice Worth.

2. Report on the events strategy

The Development Director presented the overall Alumni Relations Strategy and explained the role and purpose of the individual events.

(i) It was noted that the 6pm start time and Cambridge venue for the Fellows' Lecture Series precluded greater alumni attendance; the College should consider moving some of the lectures to London (educational or professional institutions might provide suitable venues), and beginning them later in the evening.

(ii) An 'index of involvement' for every alumna/us would allow the College to monitor how successfully events were achieving their objectives of engaging alumni in careers advice, advocacy for Clare, and support for the College's fundraising programmes. It was agreed that the aims of events – and the alumni at which they were primarily directed – could be made more explicit, as they were not well understood.

(iii) The Development Director confirmed that the Alumni Relations Strategy, together with an executive summary or index, would be sent to all members of the Alumni Council and placed on the alumni website for general reference. Year Group Representatives could play a key role in disseminating the document to the wider alumni body.

**Action: Development Director**

(iv) It was agreed that alumni would find it useful to receive email notification when new material was added to the alumni website.

**Action: Development Assistant**

(v) It was agreed that an event to introduce alumni to freshers at the start of their time at Clare could be of benefit in preparing students for their future role as alumni and increasing their awareness of the alumni events programme.

3. Events programme for the current academic year

The Development Associate noted that Clare organised more alumni events than any other Cambridge college, but that it was important that the programme remained fresh and appealing to different constituencies. It was felt that the programme was quite serious, and

that there was scope for more fun events of a purely social nature which could serve to build the sense of community among alumni.

4. Engaging young alumni

It was agreed that the events programme did not cater particularly well for younger alumni. Two different constituencies were identified with differing needs: alumni in their 20s, and those in their 30s who were more likely to have young families.

(i) For alumni in their 20s, an informal drinks gathering in London, perhaps once a month, could prove popular, but it was important that such an event should be self-generated rather than being 'dictated' by the College.

(ii) For alumni in their 30s with young families, a Family Day in College or in a London park was agreed to be an excellent idea. Now that Clare's new court was open, it would be possible to hold a Family Day in College away from the River Cam.

In general, events that charged a nominal fee were likely to be more valued than free events. The College would seek to include events for young alumni in the programme for 2009–10.

**Action: Head of Alumni Relations/Development Associate**

5. Compiling a reference document for self-organised events

The Development Director noted the desirability of having an online resource for alumni wishing to organise their own event(s). The aim was to amalgamate the timeline compiled by David Livesley in connection with the Oxford Dinner with the Development Associate's 'events checklist' to produce a single 'how to' guide. It was also hoped that members of the Events Committee would be willing to be contacted by alumni for further, specific advice.

(i) Norman Dawson noted the importance of having a second person to assist the principal event organiser and share the administrative burden. The College could play a very useful role by managing the financial arrangements and underwriting the risk of a loss.

(ii) David Livesley stressed the importance of individual contact to maximise attendance; the choice of venue was also critical. Involving good networkers was key to an event's success. There were advantages and disadvantages to publishing a list of attendees in advance.

(iii) Year Group Representatives could play a key role in polling their contemporaries, identifying possible event organisers (former Ents Officers and members of May Ball Committees were likely to be good candidates) and garnering popular ideas for events. It was noted that there were already many informal Clare networks in existence, and that it would be useful to bring these together. A request in *Clare News* could help to achieve this.

**Action: Development Officer**

(iv) It was agreed that events could be targeted towards club affiliations (Choir, Boat Club), special interest groups (arts, sport, theatre) and professional networks (lawyers, doctors), as well as by age-group and geographical location. London events should seek to involve the many alumni who worked in London, as well as those who lived in the capital.

(v) It was agreed that partners should be made welcome at events as members of the extended 'Clare family'.

6. Closing remarks and date of next meeting

Dr Hartley repeated his thanks to the members of the Committee for their advice and support. The date of the next meeting would be arranged, by circulation, for the second half of September. At that meeting, the events programme for 2009–10 would be presented for discussion and feedback. After September 2009, the Committee would decide if it needed to meet bi-annually or annually.

**Action: Development Officer/Development Assistant**