

CLARE COLLEGE
CAMBRIDGE

ALUMNI COUNCIL EVENTS COMMITTEE

16 September 2009 At a meeting held at 6.00pm in the Master's Lodge Dining 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)

1. Minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2009

These were received and approved with one minor spelling correction.

The Development Director suggested that Year Group Representatives might like to receive email updates whenever new material was added to the alumni website. It was noted that alumni could opt in to updates through the existing group function.

2. Programme of events for 2009–10

(i) The Chairman reported that several new events had been incorporated into the programme for the coming year as a direct result of recommendations made at the last meeting: three drinks events in London aimed at younger alumni, a Family Day, and an event at Twickenham for the Varsity Rugby Match.

(ii) The Development Director noted that the last event was being organised in conjunction with a number of other colleges and would particularly appeal to younger alumni and sports fans, groups that had been identified at the previous meeting as meriting greater provision. It was agreed that other sporting events might be considered if the Rugby Event were successful.

(iii) David Livesley reported that he was planning a second Oxford Alumni Dinner to be held in November 2010, probably at Pembroke College, as last time.

(iv) The Development Director confirmed that details of all events were put on the alumni website as soon as the dates were confirmed. From November 2009, there would be a facility to pay for events online; places at the Parents' Dinner in February 2010 would be bookable solely online, and the same approach might well be followed for other events, to be decided on an event-by-event basis. It was agreed that solely online booking would not be appropriate for events to which older year groups had been invited.

3. Engaging young alumni

A paper from the Development Associate was received and discussed. It was noted that the events being proposed should not be explicitly targeted at particular age-groups, but rather at alumni who shared particular circumstances – i.e. in London without family commitments (in the case of the first proposal), or with young families (in the case of the second). It was agreed that both proposals should be 'market-tested' on alumni and other contacts, to make sure there was demand.

Action: Development Associate/Committee Members

Drinks events in London: It was agreed that these should be open to alumni and their spouses/partners, and that the venue would be crucial in creating the right atmosphere,

which should be informal. Anna Dempster offered to suggest some suitable venues in central London (Covent Garden).

Action: Anna Dempster

Alumni would not be required to book, but those considering attending would be encouraged to let the Development Office know, to help gauge numbers. It was agreed that offering a complimentary drink to each attendee at the first event would be a good idea. Alumni would be encouraged to advertise the event on Facebook. The Development Director noted that Ed Young (Clare 2001) had previously offered to help organise London gatherings, and should be involved in the planning process. It was noted that most people in London did not finish work at 6pm, and that consequently it might be better to start events at 7pm (with the expectation that some people would not arrive until 8pm). A Tuesday or Wednesday evening was thought more likely to work than an evening later in the week.

Action: Development Associate

Family Day: It was agreed that guests should be invited to bring their own picnics, but that the College could provide glasses and plates. It was further agreed that children should attend free of charge, to emphasise that they were particularly welcome, and that the price per adult would need to be raised slightly to compensate. Holding the event in Lerner and Ashby Courts would ensure that there was no access to the road or river. It was agreed that it would be a good idea to involve current students if possible, dependent on the need for CRB checks. The event would be open to grandparents and grandchildren as well as parents and children.

In response to a question about events for alumni in the Cambridge area, the Development Director reported on the plans to involve Clare in the closing ceremony for the University's 800th anniversary celebrations, and noted that this might provide an ideal opportunity to invite local alumni back to the College.

Action: Development Associate

4. Self-organised events

(i) It was agreed that alumni might be encouraged to open up outings that they already organised to other interested alumni. Weekend walks might be particular good events and could be arranged with minimal effort. Various possibilities were discussed, including London walks, an Oxford Literary Walk, a Cambridge walk and a Clare-to-Clare walk.

(ii) A recent email from an alumna wishing to organise an event in Bedford had emphasised the desirability of having an online 'how to guide' for alumni wishing to organise their own event(s). David Livesley agreed to draft an initial document, covering dinners and less formal events, to be circulated to other Committee members for feedback.

Action: David Livesley

5. Closing remarks and date of next meeting

The Chairman noted that a report on the Committee's activities would be drafted for presentation to the Alumni Council in December.

Action: Chairman/Development Director

It was agreed that this should be presented by David Livesley. It was further agreed that the Committee would decide at its next meeting if it wished to meet annually or bi-annually in future. The next meeting would be fixed, by circulation, for late March or late April 2010.

Action: Development Director

The following points were discussed and agreed after the end of the formal meeting:

1. The next Alumni Day should make some provision for children/teenagers, for example with a talk on an aspect of popular culture.
2. An 'index of involvement', discussed at the April meeting, was being formulated as a matter of priority and the Committee would be asked for their comments in due course.
3. Each Year Group Representative should be free to decide the appropriate level of consultation with their contemporaries.
4. The voting procedure for the Alumnus of the Year Award would be a substantive agenda item at the next Alumni Council meeting; one option would be for the nominations to be made by alumni, as at present, but for current Clare students to vote.
5. The Committee's report to the Alumni Council will emphasise the need to identify individuals who would like to arrange self-organised events, and to publicise these events as widely as possible.
6. Photographs of the Oxford Dinner will be added to the alumni website.
7. Photographs and brief biographies of the Development Office team members will be added to the alumni website.