

FC FPA 2020 AGM CHAIRMAN'S REPORT

INTRODUCTION

Sadly, but totally understandably, the restrictions imposed to combat the COVID 19 pandemic have driven a coach and horses through our programme of events for this year.

Normally I would make my Chairman's Report at the AGM which was due to take place on Friday 08th May, but this was cancelled.

To ensure we have a record of this year's events I have produced this short report. Also attached is a set of FC FPA Accounts for this year – many thanks to Neil for producing these.

MISSION STATEMENT

The Association has three aims;

Connecting with the Past – keeping you connected to your “alma mater” principally through our web page on the School Web Site, our Face Book page, and the Former Pupils Magazine.

Supporting the Present – providing support to the current school community through fund raising, provision of financial support (where appropriate) from the President's Fund and advice and assistance on an ad hoc basis.

Building for the Future – providing advice and support in the long-term development of the School and the wider school community; there are currently four members of the FC FPA Committee who are on the Board of Governors for the School.

VOTE OF THANKS

To all those that have done well, well done; to those that have not done well, and you know who you are, well done anyway! Apologies if I have missed anyone out!

Joint Presidents for an extremely busy year supporting and representing the Association at a myriad of events throughout Ireland and beyond and for being regular attendees at Committee meetings, thus keeping me on the straight and narrow and allowing me to shoot down the good idea fairy when necessary.

William and Mildred for editing another excellent “bumper” Former Pupils Magazine. However, given the curtailment of our social calendar, articles and photographs will be very thin on the ground for the next edition. The proposal would be to produce some form of news sheet for this year and a bumper publication for the following year.

To all the team in the Archives for making it what it is today – the envy of Schools throughout Ireland and indeed the UK – special mention to Robert Montgomery, William Lynn, and Jim Goodman.

To all on the Committee for their hard work. Special mention to:

- Neil for keeping us on the straight and narrow when it comes to money.
- Gail for correcting my feeble attempts at Record of Decisions.
- Louis for his help in bringing the Association’s social media presence at least up until the end of the 20th Century if not screaming and kicking into the 21st Century.
- Finally, to William, frankly without his advice, help, support, and workload this Association would not exist.

COMPLETED EVENTS 2019 - 2020

The following events were completed prior to the COVID 19 restrictions:

- Friday 20th September, Londonderry dinner held in the City Hotel. A most enjoyable evening, but only attended by 47 members, our thanks to William for once again pulling this event together. In an effort to increase numbers the 2020

Londonderry dinner will be held in the Bishop's Gate Hotel, dress will be lounge suit and equivalent for the ladies and the date will be slipped to the fourth Friday in September to avoid clashing with the City Culture Night – see Future Events below.

- Monday 11th November, Remembrance Service in School.
- Thursday 19th December, Mulled Wine and Christmas Music in the Governors' Suite. 28 members of the Association attended this event and were entertained to some excellent singing by our very own "Mood Swings." Our thanks to all the committee members who pulled this event together.
- Saturday 22nd February, Belfast lunch in the Royal Belfast Golf Club. 17 members of the Association attended this event and our thanks to Jonathan Hegan for master minding the event. Given that numbers were again low and the fact that many members travel down to the Londonderry lunch the following month it was decided that we should run this event once every two years (so next in 2022) and potentially look to move the date to the autumn to deconflict with the busy spring programme.

CANCELLED EVENTS 2019 - 2020

The following events were cancelled due to the COVID 19 pandemic restrictions:

- Saturday 21st March, Londonderry Spring Luncheon.
- Saturday 04th April, Leitrim Percy French Appreciation Society costumed concert.
- Friday 24th April, London Dinner.
- Friday 08th May, "Ringing the Bell Ceremony" to commemorate VE Day.
- Friday 08th May, Foyle College Former Pupils Association AGM.
- Friday 08th May, Royal Marines Band Concert to commemorate VE Day.

- Thursday 21st May, Derrie Danders City Tour.
- FC FPA brief to U6 before the end of May.
- Old Boys Cricket Match.
- Golf Society outings.

FUTURE EVENTS – AUTUMN 2020

At present we should consider planning the following events - all subject to change of course:

- Flying of the “Stars and Stripes” on Saturday 04th July at 1100 hrs.
- The FC FPA Londonderry Dinner is planned for Friday 25th September in the Bishop’s Gate Hotel. I suspect that date is a bit sharp and we may have to consider moving this to the end of October, start of November. It will also be an opportunity for a change of office for the Joint Presidents. Decision will be taken by end of July at the latest, and information promulgated immediately afterwards.
- Wednesday 11th November, Remembrance Service at School. An important year as it commemorates 75 years since the end of WW II, and we really did not get the opportunity to commemorate VE Day, VJ Day remains to be seen? The Chairman will speak with the Principal about something similar to 2018 with the reading of the names on the Memorial to the Fallen and the placing of poppy crosses, more to follow. As an aside if you get the chance, look at the two memorials and you will note the much greater number of RAF and Navy personnel in WW II.
- Flying of the “Stars and Stripes” on Sunday 22nd November to commemorate the assassination of JFK.
- We might want to consider something around Christmas. Normally, this would be the year for drinks at the interval of a School production, but it is unlikely that this will happen this year. One idea is to run Christmas drinks in the Archives, take the opportunity to officially open the Archives

extension in memory of Mr J E Bigger and also invite in the U6 leavers from this year, present them each with a copy of “A View the Foyle Commanding” and present the Lawrence Sword, Lawrence Medal and the McKillip Medal. Having spoken with the Principal it is almost certain that the Prize Distribution will have to fall by the wayside this year so this way the FC FPA would be actively involved in saying farewell to the class of 2019 - 2020.

2021 EVENTS

For 2021 it is proposed that we get back onto our normal calendar as soon as possible:

- Belfast lunch, February 2021 – should it run this year?
- Londonderry lunch, March 2021.
- AGM, May 2021
- Derrie Danders Outing, June 2021.

THE ARCHIVES

Despite the COVID 19 restrictions, and when circumstances have allowed, much work has gone into furthering developing the School Archives. Special thanks to Clive and Graham for all their technical help and expertise. These developments include:

- The building of a display and research room extension in memory of Mr J E Bigger, master / teacher at Foyle College from September 1954 to June 1991.
- Updating the displays with a greater emphasis on the Londonderry High School.
- A permanent Drama and Music display in the coffee area.
- Cabinet lighting and updated displays in the entrance hallway.
- Cataloguing of all school photographs and further digitisation of the team photographs.
- Continuing digitisation of the School Records and Archives.

- The Foyle College Former Pupils Association memorabilia is now sold through the Archives. A price list is enclosed with this Report.
- Establishing a web address so that archivists can deal with enquiries directly. Contact details are as follows, and these are monitored and checked on a regular basis:
 - E-mail: foylecollegearchive@gmail.com
 - Twitter: Foyle College Archive@ArchiveFoyle
 - Instagram: foyle.college.archive
- Dealing with a myriad of requests for information.

CHALLENGES

- Attracting younger members (30 and 40-year olds) to become active members in the FC FPA, remember all school leavers are automatically members.
- Relevance to the current and future school community – this will mainly be through funding.
- Cost – running the Archives costs money, our social events run either at cost or a minimal profit. We have no major income stream. However, I am pleased to note that this year we again remained in the black and will have some additional funds for next year because of no expenditure on cancelled events.
- Recruiting an archivist with a specific interest in the Londonderry High School and its antecedents.

NEW INITIATIVES

- Briefing to the U6 and 6th Year in September by Chairman and Louis.
- Voluntary £25 subscription – standing order forms are available. Could we ask all to consider this. You will note that funding is one of the challenges listed above.
- The continued development of the School Archives – see above. If you have not yet, you should visit – we will almost

certainly be able to find pictures and just maybe your school report (mine made for interesting reading!). Challenges will be with funding and finding younger archivists, particularly someone with an interest in the history of the LHS and all its antecedents.

- Better social media presence on Facebook and the School Web Site, but we must continue to develop this.
- Established a “Battle Rhythm” so that we can plan events and publish and advertise dates in a timely manner.