



A message from David Stranack, Chairman of the OWA, to all the Association's Members

Having now been Chairman of the OWA for two and half years, I am convinced that our Association must embrace some fundamental changes if it is to continue to thrive and grow in the 21st century.

Since I left Whitgift in 1955 the whole concept of 'old boys' allegiance to their schools has changed. For many boys leaving the School today, being an 'Old Whitgiftan' is of less, or at least of different significance to those who left the School several decades ago. This is not just a Whitgift phenomenon, it applies across the whole world of independent education.

Nevertheless, the potential power of the Whitgift 'brand' today, and the desire to be associated with it, has actually increased. It's just that the spectrum of people who feel a strong identity with Whitgift is now broader than just the 'Old Boys'. The parents of boys at the School are passionately committed to Whitgift, as are the staff who teach and work there, and the boys themselves.

I feel very strongly that the future success of our Association lies in developing our traditional old boys' club into a more broadly based organisation which welcomes in to its membership all people who have an enthusiasm and fondness for Whitgift.

If we are to progress down this path we will have to make some changes to the Association's foundation stones.

Firstly, to recognise the reality of a more broadly based membership, it would be appropriate to drop the word 'Old' from our title. We would become the 'Whitgiftian Association'.

Secondly, the objects enshrined within the Association's existing constitution would need to be amended to reflect the greater diversity of its activities within the Whitgift community. I asked our current President, Dr Peter Warren, to try his hand at redrafting the constitution's objects clause, and he has come up with the following:

- 1. To facilitate social exchange between all those with an abiding attachment to Whitgift School, the Whitgift family and its sphere of influence***
- 2. To provide facilities and services for members and to run, and encourage others to run, functions reflecting the collective interest of all, or sections, of the membership***
- 3. To promote an on-going interest and contribution to the life of the School, the Whitgiftian Association and to the Whitgift image***
- 4. To work with other bodies where the joint pursuit of common interests would be mutually beneficial***
- 5. To maintain a membership database***
- 6. To contribute to a steady growth in the historical archive of the Whitgift brand***

The members of the OWA Main Committee have discussed the ideas outlined above, and are in broad agreement with them. But, we recognise that the degree of change we are contemplating is significant, and we feel that it is right to canvass the opinions of the Association's members before progressing any further.

Could I therefore ask you for your views? Please do let me know what you think by completing and returning the opinion survey which accompanies this message. This is a relatively simple and straightforward task. But if you would like to offer more detailed views and comments on these proposals, I will be delighted to receive them.

I look forward to hearing from you.

**David Stranack
Chairman**

March 2009