



PRINCE OF WALES ALUMNI ASSOCIATION (POWAA) UK & IRELAND

Trustees' Report of the Year 2019/20

The trustees report is a review of the past year: and I am sure for most of you, that feels like a different world. I am very much aware of the impact of Covid-19 on our operations as a charity and individual communities and want to commend our Pastoral Officers for the support provided to members during the year as follows:

- A message of solidarity and courage to adopt guidelines that could lead to positive outcomes.
- A wellbeing discussion session titled "Pandemic BUG - could POWAA still do something?" which was presented at the General Meeting held on 26th July where members shared their experiences with Coronavirus.
- Three virtual pastoral visits; two for Christian families and one for a Muslim family. Welfare telephone calls to various members, especially the senior members.

What will we remember the past year for?

We could not celebrate the 95th year anniversary of our school due to the impact of the pandemic. It was a remarkable year for our membership. The first Away Day held in February demonstrated that improved relationship with our key stakeholders was required i.e. with our members, Old Princewaleans Association (OPWA) Freetown, other alumni chapter, the Board of Governors at the school and the Government of Sierra Leone (GOSL).

Membership

POWAA UK had 108 Members in September 2020. This means membership has grown by 35%; up from 80 members in 2019! A big thank you to all who helped to pull in new members. This is a big step in the right direction in line with my pledge a year ago. With a strong and much bigger membership, I sincerely hope and look forward to us celebrating the 100th year anniversary in 2025.

A Members WhatsApp Forum has been set-up for communicating with members in addition to email. I want to say thank you to Trustees and members who suggested we set it up and ensure that it is running effectively. In addition, a "Welcome Pack" has been developed and is distributed to new and returning members

At the request of Trustees, a proposal for "Affiliate (Associate) Membership was drafted, discussed and is being put to the membership for a vote.

Pastoral Team

Though out the year the Pastoral Team was guided by the agreed team role in the discharge of its duties.

On Saturday 1st February, the Pastoral Team organised the first Away Day event at Tate Modern to carry out an organisational review. Twenty-two participants attended comprising current Trustees, past Presidents, and other members. The keynote address was delivered by Mr Francis Galba Ojumirie Bright one of the founding members of POWAA UK and the 1st President.

Three strategic priorities were agreed to guide our operations over the next five years, namely:

1. Fundraising/diversify income generation
2. Relationship with (GOSL), OPWA Freetown and other stakeholders
3. Mentorship and careers advice/support

Further deliberations after the meeting culminated into a POWAA UK Strategic Objective 2020-2023 as follows:

- Improving pupils' outcomes and life chances through learning strategies, mentoring and careers advice.
- Building strategic partnerships by improving relationships with GOSL agencies such as the Ministry of Basic and Secondary Education and strengthening our ties with OPWA Freetown, the diaspora chapters, other partners, and stakeholders to achieve our aims.

- Diversifying our fundraising efforts to boost our resources and capacity to develop and implement planned projects.
- Measuring and demonstrating our outcomes.
- Strengthening our strategic communications.

To date, I am pleased to report that the trustees have begun the work towards meeting these strategic objectives and there is still a lot to do. A snapshot of the work to-date is summarised below:

1. Fundraising

Under the direction of our Director of Fundraising, Khadiru Mahdi, a funding application was lodged with the Small Charities Challenge Fund (SCCF) in September which, if successful, will help us achieve some of the strategic objectives listed above.

2. OPWA Freetown and the Board of Governors/Ministry of Education

The Global Leadership Committee (GLC) held a joint meeting with the Chairman of the Board of Governors, Dr Walton Gilpin to understand his vision for the school. This will facilitate better planning and allocation of resources to projects in line with the Board's priority.

Dr Alex Blanshard, a member and past President of POWAA UK was appointed to the Board which has helped immensely with communication flows and the inclusion of pertinent matters on the Board's meeting agendas. Through this indirect link to the Board, the Minister of Education is also gradually becoming aware of POWAA UK and its operations.

People

I want to say thank you and goodbye to our retiring Trustees: Pastoral Officers, Sylvia Wachuku-King (Christian) and Khadiru Mahdi (Muslim) and also Director of Fundraising for their unwavering commitment and dedication to the association and its members. Thank you also to our E-Comms Officers Edmund Pratt and Ola Asgill for upholding all IT-related matters and maintaining the website. Thank you also to one of our Organising Secretaries, Dennis Babin who will be missed for his exemplary organisational skills. We are grateful for their outstanding service.

Thank you also to my predecessor, Rev. Ian Luke-Macauley for his contribution and support during my first year of the presidency.

Thank you to our Freetown Representatives, Dr Lucien Turay and Dr Alex Blanshard for giving up their time to ensure that our community in Sierra Leone is kept updated with the association's work. And – last but not least – thank you to our talented and hard-working team of Trustees for keeping the cogs of the association turning during this past year and delivering on the ambitions that our members expect.

However, one area on which we are not yet fully delivering is diversity. I am delighted that we have three female trustees set to continue to serve for the ensuing year but, for a school which attracted only the brightest of girls, we should be seeing female Presidents in the not too distant future. As a multi-faith school, I also encourage Princewaleans of the Muslim faith to step forward and swell our Trustee ranks, and that is an area I wish to ask the incoming Pastoral Officer (Muslim) to improve on.

2020/21 may not be a "normal" year for POWAA UK. It is likely there will not be physical meetings or events to mingle with fellow Princewaleans so that could be some of the minor impacts of the pandemic on the association. Whatever the challenges ahead, I am confident that the association is in good hands, in good shape and fit to continue to serve its members, support the school and to grow and prosper.

Eugene Benjamin

President

POWAA UK