

FITZWILLIAM SOCIETY
SECRETARY'S REPORT FOR THE AGM
ON SATURDAY 24 SEPTEMBER 2022

College life has been returning to normality over the last academic year, with plenty of the usual the social gatherings, meetings and other events for alumni and others which had been halted in March 2020. Two highlights for donors were a performance of Mozart's *Così fan Tutte* in April and a reception at the House of Lords in May, kindly arranged by the Master. There were no Reunions at the College in 2020 and 2021, but this month there were going to be four Reunion dinners, instead of the usual two. This would have enabled the decennial "invited year" invitations to be extended to all those matriculation years (1980, 1981, 1990, 1991, etc) who would have otherwise missed out. However, the first two dinners, for matriculation years 2000/1/2 and 2011/1/2, were postponed because of the national period of mourning following the death of the Queen, and will be re-arranged later. 1970 and 1971 matriculants, as well as those from 1972, were invited to the separate Golden Matriculation celebration in June. While many events have been held in person, the benefits of videoconferencing, which many had discovered for the first time since March 2020 are still being used, and will continue to be used, where appropriate.

The traditional London Drinks event in March, which had to be cancelled at short notice last year, returned to the Inn of Court pub in Holborn, a venue which many alumni had particularly enjoyed for 5 years from 2013 to 2017. However, the drinks event in Manchester planned for earlier this month, did not take place as the scheduled date also fell in the period of mourning. Sadly, it was not possible to arrange a London dinner this year. It was difficult to find a venue which would take a booking, perhaps due to staffing difficulties caused at least in part by the pandemic, and when a quote was eventually obtained it was excessive.

Your committee has as usual met twice in the last year. The May meeting was held in College, and was followed by an informal dinner for the committee. For the first time it was possible to arrange this as a hybrid meeting, and 2 committee members attended via *Zoom*. As two of the Reunion Dinners had been scheduled for early September rather than over the Reunion weekend (before being postponed), it was decided some weeks ago that the September meeting should be held remotely, and this took place on 12 September.

There has been less sub-committee activity than last year. The Strategy group, has not met since June 2021, but it is planned to arrange a meeting later this autumn. The Grants sub-committee, chaired by Rachael Webb, received 10 applications for grants to support student activities and projects under the programme which started in the academic year 2014-15. This sub-committee liaises with the MCR and JCR Presidents in the Michaelmas term each year to discuss the process and timetable for applications for grants, and the criteria to apply to them. This year the maximum sum available was again £3,000. Some of this year's applications were very imaginative, and nearly £2,200 was awarded to the 7 successful applicants. A wide range of projects were supported: a BBQ to celebrate the College's LGBTQ+ community, drug tests to detect spiking, Fitz branded cups to replace disposable plastic cups, planting and adopting 10 trees, a tennis table for the MCR, Junior Common Room improvements (plus an art competition), and a new freezer and refuse area for the MCR. Particular thanks are again due to Rachael for her hard work in driving this programme and providing feedback to the applicants.

There was no Careers Fair this year, and discussions with the JCR and MCR will be held in the Michaelmas Term about the preferred format for the future, including whether to have a single event in College, as took place up to 2019-20, one or more online events, as in 2020-

21, or a combination. As I reported last year, feedback from the last event using videoconferencing was very positive.

The Trust Sub-Committee has not met in the last year. It was formed to liaise with the College about the annual programme of awards from the Fitzwilliam Society Trust Fund. The College administers this programme in accordance with details agreed with the Society in December 2007, when the charitable company which had previously made the awards handed over to the College the custody and management of the trust fund and the administration of the awards. The trust fund was built up over many years from donations, and its income is used to make the awards, which this year totalled just under £12,000. They include academic scholarships and prizes, a grant to the library, prizes for debating and grants for music and arts projects. The role of the sub-committee is to consider, and if thought fit to approve, any changes to the awards programme proposed by the College. A detailed report on the Trust Fund awards for 2021-22 has been provided separately.

Thanks are due to many people for their support of the Society during the year, including Dr Nicola Jones, the Director of Communications and Engagement, Peter O'Connor, the Development Director, Dr Paul Chirico, the Senior Tutor, Rod Cantrill, the Bursar, and their respective teams. And finally, we must thank our President, the Master, Baroness Sally Morgan, for her encouragement, suggestions, and wise counsel.

Peter Howard
Secretary
16 September 2022