



Old Chigwellians' Association Executive Committee Meeting
7.00pm, Tuesday 17th March 2026
Virtual Meeting on MS Teams

Attendees:

Exec Team	Year Reps & OCs	Clubs	School Staff
Anusha Balasingam (President)	Andrew Pearson (OC Rep 1960-1979)	Paul Garfield (OC Football)	Damian King (Head)
Ageean Simpson (Ex Officio President)		Pat Ward (OC Wednesday Lunch Club and OC Rep 1940-1959)	Scott Franssen (Director of Philanthropy)
			Lisa Mina (Philanthropy Officer)
			James Rea (Bursar)

Apologies: Miles Taylor (Vice President and OC Rep 1960-1979) and Ross Berndes (OC Tennis)

1. Welcome from the Head

Meeting called to order by D King at 7:05pm.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

- Meeting on 20th January 2026 – Approved by P Ward
- P Ward raised that there should be more encouragement for OCs to attend the OCA meetings.

3. President's update by A Balasingam

Shrove Tuesday 2026

- Paul Garfield represented the OCA and offered a warm, friendly welcome.
- Attendance increased: 100 in 2026 vs 91 in 2025 with a strong OC turnout: 60 OCs. 1980s cohort the strongest represented group (30%)
- There was a clear increase in younger OC participation with under 50s being 42% in 2025 → 53.4% in 2026 (increase of 11%). This is notable because the OC Footballers did not attend in 2026. Last year that added at least 8 younger OCs. Had they attended, both total numbers and under 50 representation would have risen further. This is a strong indication that younger OCs are engaging independently, not just through specific groups.
- In the football match OCs won 4–3. There was very low spectator attendance. Most OC players did not stay for dinner. I suggest exploring a separate OC/School Sports Day on a weekend.
- A Pearson commented that the only time he remembers the school beating the OCs is in 1973/74 when the school first XI won against the OCs 3-2. John Dutchman was school team's coach.
- The survey feedback was that overall satisfaction extremely high (4–5 out of 5). Highlights were the food, atmosphere, archives slideshow, reconnecting with OCs.



- Suggestions for improvement were the dessert quality, more space between tables, shorter speeches / earlier finish, return to traditional pancakes, interest in reinstating the School Song.
- Preferred timing for other OC events: midweek evenings (Wed/Thu)

Comments on Shrove Tuesday

- P Garfield – We need to spend more time encouraging Football OCs to the meal and have a women's sport team.
- A Pearson – I had an OC friend who had not been back for 50 years and really enjoyed the event and noticed improvements.
- P Ward – Have the level of earlybird prices straight through. S Franssen to confirm how many tickets were earlybirds and how many paid full-price. P Ward - This event is pricy. S Franssen confirmed we do not make a profit.
- D King – Is the price an issue for those that don't come? Why didn't they come?
- A Pearson – The cost has nothing to do with why some of his friends didn't come.
- P Garfield – Could we do a discounted price for under 30s, rather than under 29s.
- A Simpson – For her year group, it will be 40 years since they left school. She is hoping to pull a table together. What is the date for next year? 9th Feb is Shrove Tuesday next year so we can aim for that.
- S Franssen was asked to share 5 or more anecdotal points from the survey.

Engagement with Younger OCs (18–25)

- Renewed focus on building early career alumni relationships
- 25 March – London Young OC Gathering (leavers 2021–2025; ages 18–23)
- 28 April – MVI Leavers Assembly - Anusha is speaking at this
- 24 September – 2016 Reunion

4. Head's update by D King

- Mock exams have happened.
- There have been lots of admissions events and we are in a very strong position.
- The Easter holidays coming up.
- We are awaiting an inspection.
- Upcoming school events are Codagan Hall, Battlefields trip, Barbados trip, Silver DoE, Paris trip.

Questions

- A Balasingam asked - Are any prospective parents OCs?
D King responded - We do have a question on the admissions form that asks that. We do have some, but it is hard for people to pay for an Independent school all the way from Reception to Sixth Form. 11+ entry is very strong. We also have cousins join.
- P Ward asked – Any news on Christies boarding house?
D King replied - It is being renovated at the moment. We hope to have about 10 boarders in there. The aim is to have 36-40 boarders across all houses at its peak. It has a lovely garden.
- P Ward asked – Can OCs use the outdoor pool?
D King replied - Yes, it can be used by members of the Sport & Wellness Centre.



5. Women's Sport by A Balasingam

- Hockey is going to be on Saturday 12th September. There has been a good uptake.
- P Ward asked if there is a netball court in the S&WC and are we having an OC match against the school?
A Balasingam explained that they are hoping to have a netball match on 25th April TBC.

6. Men's Sport

Football by P Garfield

- The 1st XI team is looking like they will go down and then they may go back up next year.
- The 2nd XI team are doing well.
- The Vets are also doing well. They have a cup competition and are in the final next week. Playing Brentwood at Merchant Taylors' School on 12th April.

7. Wednesday Lunch Club by P Ward

- It's growing. We need an additional table and chairs as we have about 32 people attending.
- Green Man at Toot Hill, Ongar for the Spring Away Day with 50 or 60 people. £25 for 2 courses on 1st April.

8. OC Clubhouse

- P Ward – There has been a delay in getting re-engaged with Leyton Orient. We want to get our views over to them so they can consider our ideas. It's been 6 months since we gave our ideas and it costed us a lot of money.
- D King – Leyton Orient are not replying to our requests for conversations around the future of the clubhouse. They are fighting relegation. We keep pushing but have not heard anything.
- J Rea – We are pressing them for a response. Their focus is not on doing up the training ground. Reading between the lines it feels like they would like to go somewhere else.
- P Garfield – There are no issues with day-to-day running. Catherine Willson is doing well with managing the relationship. Its tidier and we are getting the pitches when needed.
- Pa Ward – The interior is still cluttered with their gear and white lining equipment. Externally there is a pile of plastic crates which the caterers leave there. The kit washing and wheelie bin areas are left messy.

9. Future meeting dates

- 5th May (was previously 19th May)
- 6th October 2026 (AGM)

10. AOB

- A Pearson – I regularly sponsor Gill Punt in her runs for charity. He heard that Michael Punt (the previous Head) was unwell. The School has sent a card wishing him well with his recovery.

Meeting concluded at 7:56pm.