

Society of Old Framlinghamians – Briefing Paper

Initial Overview:

The existing operating structure of the Society has not been refreshed in recent years and the current roles can be burdensome in areas that offer little value to our members. Nick Whitehead (NW), President 2023-2025, undertook the role whilst in full time employment and with a young family. His ability to undertake the role fully, in line with expectations set by presidents before him, was hugely hindered by time constraints.

Furthermore, the existing catalogue of social events, suppers, sports events and arts/music events is, considering the number of SOF members, somewhat limited. It is felt that streamlining the operating structure, along with the improved collaboration with the College, may make Society events more attractive to members.

This paper is designed to review the operating structure of the Society and the President's role being undertaken to ensure the time of our volunteers is as efficient, enjoyable and successful as possible with a view to widening the age range on which we can pull from when seeking future volunteers for roles. A restructure is also proposed to galvanise the organisation of SOF events and increase participation in our membership, particularly amongst younger members.

Current Structure:

Council

We currently have a council made up of over 50 people. The Council meets 4 times per year in January, March (AGM), July and October. Meetings consist of a long agenda focusing on many of the same areas at each meeting, including but not limited to, communications, memberships, suppers and gatherings, OF deaths, updates from the College, Trustee activity, sports activities, future meetings. Many items discussed are not of particular interest to younger members. Reporting to council is also the finance committee and the trustees.

Meetings in recent years have been virtual to provide some flexibility but attendance by council members has remained consistent between in-person and online meetings with number ranging from 15 on the low end and 25 on the high end. Moreau Scholars attend occasionally but participation is limited in this arena.

The current agenda for SOF events has been challenging with a number of suppers being cancelled due to poor attendance, a lack of sports fixtures against the College and a large portion of the younger generations still not actively participating. Volunteers to drive initiatives are not forthcoming and our reach on social media is somewhat limited.

President's Role

The key roles and responsibilities are as set out below:

The President:

- Chair of Council and Committee Meetings – 4 x meetings of each (approx. 3 hours each plus travel when in person)
- Attendance at Trustee Meetings – 4 x meetings of each (approx. 2 hours each)
- Appointment as Ex-Officio Governor of the College – 4 x meetings (approx. 3 hours each plus travel)
- Review and agreement of finance budget plus meeting with College Bursar annually.
- Attendance at regional suppers
- Attendance at Speech Day
- Appointment to Moreau Scholarship selection panel – 4 x meetings (approx. 2 hours each plus travel)
- Write annual President's Report for The Framlinghamian.
- Act as lead liaison with The College and the SOF membership for ad-hoc events, planning and attendance where appropriate.
- Represent the SOF at key events (funerals, Remembrance Service, College initiatives etc.) and lead on ad-hoc projects (College agreements, requests for assistance of collaboration from the College).

In NW's view, having served as President since 2023, the responsibility for running the Society rests too much on the shoulders of the President for the time being. This means:

- a. That if the President does not drive matters and events forward, then they may not happen;
- b. It puts off younger (and some other older) members of the Society as the responsibility and time commitment is too great;
- c. When a new President steps into the chair, it takes some time for them to get to grips with the duties expected of him/her, and an Executive Committee (see below) would help alleviate this problem;
- d. That the role is too much of a working role, rather than a leadership and oversight role.

The hours commitments in relation to council meetings, trustee meetings, governors' meeting and the Moreau Scholarship process total 40 hours before allowing for travel, as well as significant preparation time for meetings.

If you factor in a desire to also attend all other events and be a responsive and proactive President by way of leadership and planning, this number is likely to double.

NW believes that it's not currently feasible for anyone currently in employment/working to discharge all the duties above to a high standard or at all, without undue stress or compromise.

Proposed Restructure:

With a view to increasing participation, making individual roles more manageable, working more closely with the College and making participation more marketable to future volunteers, NW is proposing the following restructuring.

Council meetings to be reduced to twice a year. One in October (virtual) and one as part of the AGM in March (in person). Hopefully, fewer meetings will drive increased attendance at meetings. Council Members should be expected to attend as a condition of election onto Council (at least for those elected members).

I propose that we should introduce a new Executive Committee that will run the operating activities of the SOF, reporting into Council. Council will be required to approve a general strategic plan for each year, at the AGM, and will need to approve any significant events or expenditure as currently set out in the Society rules. The Executive Committee (including the President, who will chair Council meetings) will meet twice a year and be expected to attend Council to report on their responsibilities.

It is important that Council does not feel that the proposal disenfranchises it. All major decisions (list to be agreed) will need to be made by Council, who should also appoint the Executive Committee (and have power of removal).

The Executive Committee (of not more than 12 members) will comprise the following positions and summary responsibilities:

- **President**- See below.
- **Chair of Trustees** – Unchanged
- **Honorary Treasurer** – Unchanged
- **Executive Vice President Social** – Finding and coordinating with organisers of social events and suppers. To also co-ordinate with Society of the Arts.
- **Executive Vice President Sports** – Liaising with College to ensure full programme of OF vs College fixtures are played. Finding relevant captains and Moreau Scholars to organize teams. Represent Golf Society and Shooting Society.
- **Executive Vice President Careers** – Liaising with College on supporting Careers and Industry focused events and networking. Oversea and liaise with Moreau Scholarship program.

- **Executive Vice President Communications** – Website lead and oversee social media activity.
- **Active Moreau Scholars** – Most should be encouraged to fill one of the above roles but remaining scholars should attend meetings to assist other leaders.
- **OF Co-Ordinator**
- **Director of Development at the College** (who should be ex-officio)

Each role has a two-year tenure but can be re-elected indefinitely (but with encouragement for new blood to be introduced regularly), with the exception of the President which would continue under the existing election rules.

A smaller group, with their own responsibilities should result in a more productive and efficient approach to planning and executing SOF events, participation and leadership. It should also be more efficient and effective in relation to the increased co-ordination with the College under the [Collaboration] Agreement, particularly with the College Development Director on the Executive Committee.

Council meetings would then have a more refined agenda, aiming to be limited to an hour maximum. Agenda would focus on Hon OF Appointments (AGM), major decisions to be implemented by the Executive Committee, appointment of and report from the Executive Committee, Trustee Updates and SOF Activity Highlights.

The President's primary function above all others is to lead the Executive Committee in implementing and driving the various initiatives they feel are most important. The proposed changes to the President role will be as follows:

- Oversee the Executive Committee – 2 x (online) meetings (approx. 1.5 hours each)
- Chair the Finance and Council Meetings – 2 x meetings, one in person one online (1.5 hours each)
- Delegate Moreau Scholarship responsibilities, if desired, to Selection Panel.
- Mark key events, suppers and speech day as optional and request VP attendance in place where necessary.

The end result should be that there are 5 meetings set in stone each year, totaling 7.5 to 10 hours, plus travel and preparation time. Other responsibilities and events can be built on top should each President feel they want to and have capacity to do so.

Conclusion:

The introduction of the Executive Committee provides us with the opportunity to galvanise the existing offering, align our plans better with the College calendar and allow for a lighter touch President role and share responsibilities between more volunteers.