

Mr Chairman, Headmaster, fellow Old Scholars, it has been a privilege and honour for me to have served as President of the Association for the last year. That being said I will very happily hand over the mantle of responsibility to my successor Luke Sproule- who I am sure will make an excellent president.

At this juncture could I commend the work of the Old Scholars to you all. In recent times we have benefited greatly from having an influx of newer, younger members join us. However, you can't help but feel that there is a great pool of talent of there that we haven't managed to reach as yet.

I also want to pay tribute to my fellow committee members. It is never easy in this day and age to get people to volunteer- we all seem to lead such busy lives; so I want to commend them for their dedication and selflessness. In particular I want to acknowledge the work of Aiden and Maxine – both of whom have served faithfully and diligently over a considerable period of time.

While I am at it I want to thank Stephen for all that he does for the Association. The demands upon a school principal are enormous and at times all consuming- yet Stephen makes time to play a full role in the life of the Association, for which we are extremely grateful. And on the theme of school principals it is a delight to see Arthur here this morning. In many ways Arthur is Mr Friends' School Lisburn, as he is a walking encyclopaedia of all things school related. He is an inspiration to us all.

At this point I should possibly also acknowledge the passing of a former principal Trevor Green. Trevor had the distinction of being both a former pupil as well as principal. To his widow Jean , daughters and grandchildren we pass our condolences.

As an association I think we are still trying to get up to speed post Covid. And certainly as we look to the future and in particular as we celebrate the 250<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the school we want to some degree to ramp up our profile and our activities. More on these things in due course.

Reflecting on the previous 12 months I want to thank Ashleigh and Liz for their work in maintaining our facebook page which is very popular but also time consuming. And for John for continuing to edit the Old Scholars section of the school magazine Past and Present- no easy task.

We had a successful golf outing in June when the sun shone and 30 golfers enjoyed a great day at Lisburn. Congratulations to David Bingham who won the Merrill Morrow perpetual trophy, first presented in 1976 with an excellent total of 39 points. To be honest I was very relieved he won as for a long time my youngest fella Peter was leading with 38 points, my wife Pauline won the visitors prize and I won the nearest to the pin. Had Peter won questions would surely have been raised!

The longest drive was won by a scratch golfer called Alex Etches who drove his ball a humungous 375 yards. What he was doing playing with us remains a mystery.

We also had a very enjoyable Old Scholars Dinner in June in Dunmurry Golf Club. The highlight of the evening was undoubtedly the musical contributions of Robert Harrison and Susan Rutter who played for us both before and during our meal and of Orla McCormack and her husband Connor, who did a couple of sets for us after our meal. All gave of their services free of charge. Indeed apart from some old boy rambling on about 60's pop music it was an excellent evening.

And so ladies and gentlemen to bring this report to a conclusion, could I commend the work of the Association to you as we seek to support both Stephen and the school in whatever ways we can and to wish Luke every success for the year ahead. Thank you.