



The Oxford and Cambridge Club of Nigeria President's Report AGM 2018

The Metropolitan Club, Victoria Island
Thursday 8 March 2018 at 6:30pm

The Grand Patron, Trustees, Past Presidents, Past Officers and Ordinary Members of our great Club, distinguished Ladies and Gentlemen, a warm welcome to each of you here present at the Club's 2018 Annual General Meeting holding today, 8 March, at the prestigious Metropolitan Club, Victoria Island, Lagos.

With profound humility, it is once again my honour to present to you the President's Report and on this occasion, I present the report for the year 2017.

2017, overall, turned out to be a remarkable year for our Club and I sincerely hope that the year will be remembered as the year when we established lasting legacies for our great Club!



1. *Our new Constitution*

One of the key actions from the 2016 AGM, was to prepare a new constitution for the Club. To maintain complete transparency in the process, I constituted a sub-committee of the Executive Committee to oversee the successful adoption of a new Constitution. Members of the Constitution Review Committee were:

- Prof. Osato Giwa-Osagie, Cambridge (Chairman)
- Mrs Nneka Okeke, Oxford (Member)
- Mr Danlami Basharu, Cambridge (Member)
- Dr Nnamdi Dimgba, Oxford (Member)
- Ms Isabella Akinseye, Cambridge (Member)
- Mr Dapo Olagunju, Oxford (Member)
- Ms Adeola Egbeyemi, Cambridge (Secretary)

Following the excellent work by the Constitutional Review Committee constituted, ably led by Prof Osato Giwa-Osagie, a new Constitution was adopted by the Members at a General Meeting held on 23 March 2017. We are now operating under the new Constitution and the Elections to be held later this evening will be conducted pursuant to the new Constitution.



Once again, I would also like to take this opportunity to thank the Constitutional Review Committee for their sterling effort in delivering the draft Constitution in relatively record time too. Thank you.

2. *Our new Grand Patron*

At the AGM held on 23 March 2017, Chief Philip C. Asiodu CFR, a former President of the Club, was unanimously appointed as the Grand Patron of the Club.

3. *Our new Trustees*

At the AGM held on 23 March 2017, the following distinguished alumni were appointed as inaugural Trustees of the Club:

- Prof. Theo Ogunbiyi
- Prof. Anya O. Anya OFR
- Prof. Bolaji Akinyemi CFR
- Emeritus Prof. Osato Giwa-Osagie OON
- Prof. Bomi Ogedengbe



4. Scholarship Scheme - Partnership with Cambridge Commonwealth, European & International Trust (the ‘Cambridge Trust’)

Over the years, the Club has experienced increasing requests for financial assistance from students who have been offered a place to study at either Oxford or Cambridge Universities. Whilst the Club’s Education Sub-Committee has rallied support from members where possible (most recently, Mr Dammy Laoye who went up to Cambridge in 2017 to study Human, Social and Political Sciences). However, many deserving students have, sadly, been turned down, for want of a structured programme of support.

I am delighted therefore to inform you of a partnership that the Club has concluded with the Cambridge Commonwealth, European & International Trust (the ‘**Cambridge Trust**’) to enable students from Nigeria to study for a Masters degree at Cambridge University, with co-funding from the Club and the Cambridge Trust.

The annual scholarship, to be called the “**OCC Nigeria Cambridge Scholarships**”, will be available to postgraduate students on one-year taught Masters course at Cambridge University. It will be



means tested, covering the full course cost (i.e. tuition fee plus stipend), of up to £40,000 per academic year (the current figure). This cost will be divided equally between the Club and the Cambridge Trust.

Set out below are the salient features of the proposed scholarship programme and memorandum of understanding between the Club and the Cambridge Trust:

- (a) **Objective:** To assist outstanding Nigerian students requiring financial assistance to pursue Masters degrees at the University;
- (b) **Value and Number of scholarships:** Full tuition and the current stipend of £40,000 per annum (split 50:50 with the Trust); one scholarship awarded each year (subject to funding);
- (c) **Financial Implication:** The Club is to raise £20,000 per annum (i.e. 50% of £40,000) for 5 years, totaling £100,000. ***Scholarship awards shall be subject to availability of funds;***
- (d) **Start Date and Duration of Scholarship Programme:** Commencing in the 2018-19 academic year, and continuing for five years (subject to extension);
- (e) **Eligibility:** students of any discipline, normally resident in Nigeria, and who have obtained admission to the University by the normal procedure;
- (f) **Selection procedure:** the University/Trust identifies and scores Nigerians offered admission and thereafter the Club interviews and selects the candidates, based on academic merit and perceived level of financial need (following the information given in each application);
- (g) **Administration:** The Trust pays the scholarship costs within Cambridge and thereafter invoices the Club for its contribution; and
- (h) **Rights to Cancel Scholarship Programme:** The arrangement with the Trust can be cancelled for any reason on or before 1 September each year, subject to existing obligations to scholars being honored.



Spurred by this initiative and mindful that the Club represents both Oxford and Cambridge Universities, the Club's Exco will approach Oxford University in order to explore the establishment of a similar scholarship programme for Nigerian applicants to Oxford. We would welcome any contacts, information or other assistance you are able to provide in this regard.

There is need for us all to join hands to make this scholarship programme a reality and a success, hence the deferral of the programme's commencement to 2018/2019, to give adequate time for the preparation of sustainable funding plan. I trust that the ExCo will receive your unflinching support and commitment at the appropriate time.

5. Membership Update

The Membership continues to grow and remains strong.

We have seen a significant increase in our membership with almost 350 members on our current database as at the end of 2017 (not all paid-up though!) and we very much look forward to more active participation from all alumni across all ages.

Ordinary membership of the Club is open to persons who have matriculated and graduated from either the University of Oxford or the University of Cambridge and are Nigerians or resident in Nigeria. Our new Constitution sets out in detail the eligibility



criteria and I encourage all to visit the Club's website at www.oxbridgenigeria.com for more information.

6. Subscriptions

First, I would like to seize this opportunity to thank all members who are up to date with payment of their annual subscriptions.

2017 was a relatively quiet year with only approximately 56 paid up members in 2017 (there seems to be a pattern where we see a spike in Election year so 2018 should be a fantastic year!).

Consequently, N1,450,000 was recorded under subscriptions in 2017 against the record N2,465,000 paid in 2016. We should also note that following the adoption of the new Constitution, members who have attained the age of 70 years and above are exempt from paying annual dues. This has also had an effect on the total amount paid as subscriptions in 2017. Notwithstanding, I still would like to put on record that it is necessary for Members to pay up promptly to help meet our funding demands – the new Constitution provides that Members are required to pay their dues by the end of 31 March at the latest. The Hon. Treasurer must be proactive in the collection of subscription payments.



7. 2017 Activities Update

With the strong commitment of members of the ExCo, we started the year with the Viewing of the Boat Race in April, our May Ball was held in June with His Excellency, Mr Paul Arkwright (British High Commissioner to Nigeria and an alumnus of Trinity College, Cambridge) and Her Excellency, Ms Laure Beaufils (British Deputy High Commissioner to Nigeria, Lagos) as the Special Guest of Honour and Guest of Honour respectively and we ended the term with two great events – the Freshers Event held at the British Council in Lagos and the Garden Party hosted by my wife and I at our residence in Ikoyi, Lagos.

a. The May Ball

The 2017 May Ball, which turned out to be a well-attended and very successful event, was held at The Metropolitan Club, Victoria Island, Lagos and it did not disappoint.

The Special Guest of Honour was His Excellency, Mr Paul Arkwright (British High Commissioner to Nigeria and also Alumnus of Trinity College, Cambridge) and the Guest of Honour was Her Excellency, Ms Laure Beaufils (British Deputy High Commissioner to Nigeria, Lagos).

Our Guest list is worth a mention or two as well. Our Grand Patron, Chief Philip Asiodu CFR and his amiable wife graced the occasion together with Oloye Obafemi Olopade OFR (President,



The Metropolitan Club), a guest of Chief Asiodu. In total, we hosted five former Presidents of the Club (there are six in number). Former Presidents present were Chief Asiodu, Prof A. Anya, Prof T. Ogunbiyi, Ambassador Oladapo Fafowora and Dr Eyimofe Atake SAN). We were also rather fortunate to have in our midst, leaders of industries and a record number of members and their guests.

We were entertained by The Prudence Band, the renowned saxophonist, Yemisax (Guest appearance) and one of the rising stars of Nigerian comedy, Damola, anchored the evening.

The Metropolitan Club team particularly the Chef, together with the waiters, once again, did an excellent job with the menu and service.

Martini Barcardi did their best to ensure that any guest whose desire was to be well inebriated during the course of the evening achieved their goal with little or no effort!

With the calibre of Guests we were expecting, I felt I needed to be an active member of an already formidable May Ball Committee comprising Ms Obianuju Idigo, Mr Lanre Fatimilehin, Mrs Folake Adebawale, Mr Kehinde Onitiri, Mr Jonathan Millard, Mr Obiora Agbim, Mr Adeola Adenubi and Ms Nkiru Asika. If I may say so, the May Ball Committee did an excellent job and I take this opportunity to thank each of them for their tireless work.



b. Boat Race Viewing

Members of The Oxford and Cambridge Club of Nigeria got together on Sunday, 2nd April at The Lagos Motor Boat Club (LMBC), Ikoyi, Lagos to watch the 2017 Cancer Research UK Boat Race.

With beautiful weather and the fitting setting of the LMBC, there was an expectant air as alumni across different generations along with friends and family either connected or reconnected.

Members of the Executive Committee were on hand to welcome guests, including past presidents of the Club – Professor Theo Ogunbiyi and Dr Eyimofe Atake SAN. Other attendees included Dr Isaac Akinrele (who was also present the previous year) and Dr Michael Omolayole, who remarked that he had been looking forward to the occasion. Also present were Professor Bomi Ogedengbe, Dr Greg Ero, Ms Stella Amachree, Mr Dele Martins, Ms Funke Adeyemi, Mr Jonathan Millard to name but a few.

The Alumni Offices of the Universities had generously provided flags and memorabilia for the event so alumni were befittingly marked as Light or Dark Blue. With food and drinks flowing, attention turned towards the races. The victory of the Cambridge women's boat was met with celebration by the Light Blue ranks and jubilant waving of their flags. This set the tone for the men's race as the President reminded members that in 2016, Dr Akinrele had generously sponsored a champagne toast to



celebrate Cambridge's victory and asked if senior members would be willing to do the same this year. This was graciously accepted on all sides; gauntlet thrown, attention once again turned to the race.

The Men's Dark Blue crew performed remarkably, leading from start to finish to complete their fourth victory in five years despite a dogged attack from the Cambridge boat. It was the turn of the Oxford brigade to celebrate and after the expected banter and waving of flags, champagne was used to toast the victory. Everyone had a cracking time and there are huge expectations for this year's race.

At the end, the spoils were shared! Congratulations to both Oxford and Cambridge!

c. Garden Party

Continuing the tradition of holding a Garden Party during the year, the 2017 edition was actually held on 28 January 2018 and it was hosted by my wife and I at our residence in Ikoyi. It is quite difficult to report on this event (for obvious reasons). However, I would just say that it would appear that a good time was had by all present with the last guest arriving at 11pm!



I would also like to thank all members who supported financially and morally in ensuring that the Garden Party was a success – thank you.

Following a suggestion by Mrs Akoni, the Oxbridge Club Cake given to us as Hosts by the Club (a tradition in recent years), was donated to Hope Primary School, Ikoyi – a very kind gesture which was well received by the School and pupils alike.

8. Relationship with Oxbridge Alumni Groups

During the last few years, we have been able to establish strong ties with the Alumni offices of Oxford University and Cambridge University.

This work with the Alumni Offices was intensified during the year culminating in the accreditation of The Oxford and Cambridge Club of Nigeria as the official and recognized Alumni Group in Nigeria by both Oxford University and Cambridge University. As part of the Accreditation, the Club can proudly display and use the official University logos designed specifically for Nigeria.



9. Freshers' Event

The Oxford and Cambridge Club of Nigeria hosted the second consecutive Freshers' Event for students going up to Oxford University or Cambridge University on 17 August 2017.

The event was held at the British Council in Lagos and I take this opportunity to thank them for their hospitality. We wish all the students well in their studies.

10. Social Media

As we have all accepted now, we live in the age of social media and I am pleased to report that we have almost 150 Followers on Twitter, you can look us up on LinkedIn and 117 likes on Facebook!

11. Sponsors/Partners

Over the years, we were very fortunate to establish strong partnerships with leading organizations in Nigeria and through which, we could stage the various events. I thank all our sponsors for their generous support of the Club.



12. Looking Ahead

At each AGM where I was presiding, I always recommended a number of major milestones to the Membership for consideration and, perhaps, also a challenge for the future! I am pleased to report that we managed to achieve a significant number of the goals set including:

- (a) Adopting a new Constitution;
- (b) Organising a funding structure for the Club – StanbicBIC partnered with the Club for 2017 and 2016; FirstBank in 2015 and 2014, Airtel in 2013 and ExxonMobil in 2012.
- (c) Deepening our Community based Projects – partnered with Internally Displaced Persons NGOs;
- (d) Deepening our relationships with the two Great Universities and other Alumni Groups in Africa and beyond culminating in the Accreditation is the recognized Alumni Group for Nigeria by the two institutions;
- (e) Ensuring that the Club continues to be the platform for Thought Leadership within Nigeria with Spring Lectures, Oxbridge Debates and the Business Forum series.

Notwithstanding the above, I strongly urge and encourage members that we need to continue to set ourselves



objectives/goals to ensure the Club continues to grow. Despite the successes, I am again putting on the table the one last key initiative which I believe the Club needs to focus on over the coming years (I hastily add that the below does not need to be completed by myself as President of our great Club!) – a **PERMANENT CLUBHOUSE**.

Thank you

Finally, before I close, I really must thank the entire 2016/17 Executive Committee particularly Ms Nkiru Asika, Ms Adeola Egbeyemi, Mrs Uju Uchenna (nee Idigo), Ms Doyin Adelabu and the indefatigable Mr Lanre Fatimilehin. Of course, I must mention our ex-officio members Prof Bomi Ogedengbe, Mr Ike Chioke and Mr Uche Okoli for their various contributions during the year – without the ExCo, we would not have been able to achieve anything.

I also thank the entire membership for their relentless support during the year, kindness and trust reposed in me. It is not possible to list all individuals by name (particularly over a Presidency spanning six years!).

However, it is important that I say a special thank you to a few people nevertheless who have shown great support and wise



counsel during my time as President of this great Club (I emphasize in no particular order) – Chief Philip Asiodu CFR, Prof Theo Ogunbiyi, Prof Anya O. Anya, Amb. O. Fafowora, Dr Eyimofe Atake SAN, Prof Bolaji Akinyemi CFR, Dr Greg Ero, Prof O.O. Giwa-Osagie, Mr Geoffrey Onyeama, Dr (Prince) Bolu Akin-Olugbade, Mr Demola Akinrele SAN, Mr Dele Martins, Mr Bayo Osolake, Mr Hakeem Belo-Osagie, Mr Chris Anyaegbunam, Mr Lanre Fatimilehin, Dr Timi Austen-Peters, Mr Sola Abudu, Mrs Folake Elias-Adebowale, Mrs Yemi Anyanechi, Dr Gbolahan Elias SAN, Dr Ayo Teriba, Mrs Yewande Zaccheaus, Dr Isaac Akinrele, Mr Toks Abudu, Ms Funke Adeyemi, Mr Bo Hollist, Dr Bola Kalejaiye, Mr Uche Okoli, Mrs Sola Fagbure (and for proposing me for President back in 2012), Prof Fidelis Oditah QC, SAN and Prof Bomi Ogedengbe.

I also would like to thank each of our Sponsors who have supported the Club during my tenure, Mr Adebayo Dawodu (our PR guru), Mr Temisan Ayotebi (resident photographer) and a special thank you to our Auditors, Messrs Babatunde Shosanya & Co.

My final thank you is to my wife, Aderonke, and our daughters. Thank you for putting up with Oxbridge and I hope you will be able to have some rest now!



When I first considered running for office of the President of this great Club, I recall my conversation with Dr Isaac Akinrele. He concluded our conversation with the old adage, Nothing Ventured, Nothing Gained. Six years later, I can say that I did Venture and I hope, we've All Gained!

And really finally... after 6 years at the helm, it is time to move on. I wish the incoming President, and the new Executive Committee, all the very best and, of course, I am always available to assist as and when called upon.

I thank you all from the bottom of my heart.

Akinfela Akoni

President

8 March 2018