

AMPLEFORTH SOCIETY

Report of the Ampleforth Society Trustees for the year ending 31 August 2021 presented at the AGM on 22 June 2022

This AGM was originally intended to be held during the Ampleforth Society Weekend on 16 October 2021. The event had to be postponed as Covid reappeared and protecting the children at Ampleforth became paramount. It was decided to run a reduced Society Weekend on 30 April. However, again we were thwarted by a number of factors and again postponed the AGM until today, and opted for a virtual AGM.

Given that we are already planning a return to the full AS weekend and AGM in October this year, we have decided to limit this AGM to the items listed on the agenda. We plan to have full reports from Fr Abbot, the Headmaster, the Chaplain to the Society and the Development Department in October, and we will remember and pray for all members of the Society who have died since 17 October 2020.

Objectives of the Ampleforth Society

The objectives of the Society remain unchanged, namely to to promote the Catholic faith and to advance education by:

1. Fostering relations between the Members and other persons associated with Ampleforth Abbey and Ampleforth College; and
2. Engaging in activities which support the Abbey and College and advance the education of the pupils attending the College.

Activities and Events

With Covid rampant we were unable to arrange any live events during the year, instead turning to a range of virtual events all designed to help, inspire and encourage our members in their lives and careers and to maintain the momentum which we had built up over the previous years to foster and develop relationships in the Ampleforth family.

A large number of Compass for Life sessions were held on line, usually based around geographical areas and occasionally focussing on specific professions.

Masterclasses were given by Olympic athlete Liz McColgan, sculptor Mark Coreth, PR and communications consultant Hitcham Fletcher and artist Lizzie Mary Cullen. A number of AS Insight Sessions were held covering a range of professions and careers including insurance, finance, entrepreneurship, women in business, media and communications.

We hosted a number of virtual St Laurence Ethics Fora, covering topics including modern slavery, travel and tourism, the armed forces and business ethics.

Sadly, we had to postpone the Ampleforth School Cantorum 50th Anniversary Concert and Weekend, and it is hoped that we can hold this at some pint in the future. The Society Weekend which should have been an occasion to welcome many members back to the Valley also had to be cancelled, to be replaced by a nonetheless successful and well attended virtual weekend in October 2020

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However, as Covid has retreated we have been able to reactivate our live events programme and it is a pleasure to be able to report strong attendances at events held in the current year. In particular, the 25-Year Leavers Reunion, the St Thomas's House 75th Anniversary, the 2020 Leavers Ball and the OA Armed Forces Dinner were all sold out and very successful. These occasions, as well as less formal events such as the Brompton Oratory Mass and Drinks, and the recent London Social also proved very popular.

If two things stood out at these events they were the continuing strong support for Ampleforth and a desire to remain part of and participate in the the Ampleforth family as represented by the Ampleforth Society.

We take a break from events over the rest of this summer, restarting in September with the OAs in Law drinks and Canapes, the OA property Lunch and the 21st Anniversary Dinner for the Ampleforth Pipe Band.

The Pilgrimage Programme

The origins of this project are found in the cancellation of the Middle Sixth Holy Land Pilgrimage in 2014 as a result of political tensions in the Middle East. We realised that many members had never had an opportunity to take part in this pilgrimage and, in conjunction with JC Journeys, a travel organisation run by an OA, we planned the first pilgrimage in April 2020 to be led by Fr Henry.

After many postponements, the pilgrimage eventually took place from 6 to 13 April 2022. Eighteen members of the Society came to the Holy Land and the highlight of the pilgrimage was to walk the Via Dolorosa in Jerusalem on Palm Sunday. Over the whole week we travelled from the source of the River Jordan in the North to Masada in the South. We celebrated Mass on the shore of the Sea of Galilee, visited biblical and historic sites, paddled and splashed in the Jordan at the site of Jesus's baptism and swam in the Dead Sea.

The pilgrimage was a huge success and succeeded in helping the Society in its aims of promoting the Catholic faith and fostering relations between members of the Society by bringing disparate members of the Society together and providing the opportunity for those who had never visited the Holy Land to do so. On the back of this success we are now developing a five year programme of pilgrimages, cultural trips and skiing trips which we will publish in September. We have organised a second Holy Land pilgrimage in October 2022 to cater for many who originally booked and were consequently unable to attend as planned pilgrimages were postponed time after time.

Alumni clubs

We continue to provide financial support to a number of OA sports clubs, including the OA Rugby and Cricket Clubs. The activities of these clubs was substantially curtailed during the year by Covid. However, it is pleasing to report some recovery in activities this year

Bursaries

It has long been our policy to provide between two and three full **bursaries** to Ampleforth students each year and we were able to maintain this policy in the year to 31 August 2021.

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Compliance and general governance

In arranging the events listed above, the Trustees of the Ampleforth Society have had full regard to the guidance issued by the Charity Commission with regard to the **public benefit**.

The Society has not made significant **social investments** during the year. Our investment policy is to invest our assets in accordance with the advice of our investment managers, although we do require the managers to avoid firms that operate in areas or produce products that do not conform to the values and ethics of the Catholic faith.

Significant unpaid contributions to the running of the Society and its events are made by **volunteers**, including the four Society Trustees. We take this opportunity to thank all those who have contributed to the Society during the year.

A full financial review of the Society's **financial** activities is provided in the Hon Treasurer's separate report.

To the best of our knowledge, the Trustees of the Society have complied with **Charity Commission regulations** as they apply to the Society.

The register of interests of the Trustees remained unchanged.

The **personal data** of our members is held by the St Laurence Education Trust, who act as the data processor and data controller of the data. The Society works closely with those involved with managing the data and to the best of our knowledge we have complied with the Information Commissioner's Office rules for the storage and use of personal data.

Structure, governance and management

The Ampleforth Society was founded on 14th July 1875 and is governed by its Constitution. This was amended in 2015 with the approval of the AGM to expand the membership of the Society beyond OAs. Further minor amendments were made with the approval of the AGM in 2018.

The Ampleforth Society is a charity registered with the Charity Commission, number 529626. It is governed by the four elected Trustees:

Jeremy Deedes (Managing Trustee)
David O'Kelly (Hon Treasurer)
Patrick Tolhurst
Nick Channer

The Abbot of Ampleforth Abbey is the Patron of the Society and the Headmaster of Ampleforth college is the Vice-Patron. The patrons have no executive role in the Society. However, they are generous in their help and advice, for which we thank them.

The Society has a close relationship with the Ampleforth Abbey Trust (AAT) and the St Laurence Education Trust (SLET). Administrative support for the Society is provided by the SLET, for which we are very grateful.

We currently do not have an Hon Secretary. This service was provided by the Ampleforth Society Administrator, a salaried position of the AAT and then the SLET. The holder of this position left Ampleforth in March 2021 and the Trustees are considering how to fill the position again, possibly as a salaried

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position paid from from Society funds with an extended role to help with events, pastoral care and networking in the Society.

Of the four current trustees, all will reach the end of their terms by October 2023. Of the four, three have already served two five-year terms so are not eligible to stand again. Nick Channer was appointed in 2018 and has the option of standing for a second term in 2023.

In addition, we have two unfilled places, so over the next two years we look to appoint or re-appoint six new trustees, three in October 2022 and three in October 2023.

We have spent much of this year revising our selection and appointment process, which ensures the Society complies with Charity Commission regulations. Although we are an independent charitable trust, we are very closely connected to AAT and SLET and have also worked with the two trusts to avoid any form of conflict or embarrassment. Indeed, we are grateful to both trusts for the help they have given us.

Through a combination of advertising in the Society newsletter and personal connection we have a list of over twenty possible candidates for new trustees. This is very encouraging and a sign of the importance of the Society to so many members.

We continue the selection process with the aim of seeking approval for the first three trustees at the AGM in October later this year.

The Society and its place and role in Ampleforth

The separation of the College and Monastery is now more or less complete, both legally and physically. At the Society we have been looking at how we position ourselves in order to carry out our functions of supporting the Monastery and the College. The separation has given rise to a number of challenges as we seek to work with both AAT and SLET whilst respecting the requirement to remain separate from each.

We are considering a number of options at the moment, in conjunction with our project to appoint new trustees to the Society.

The AGM and Society Weekend in October 2022

All being well, the next Ampleforth Society Weekend will take place at Ampleforth from 14 to 16 October 2022. The next AGM will be held on Saturday 15th October and full details will be published in due course.

All members of the Society are welcome.