

## **Closure of Southwark Notre Dame Association**

You will by now be aware of the forthcoming closure of SNDA. The decision to close the association was taken at a SNDA Committee Meeting after a full discussion of the various issues that the association had been presented with over the recent past, most particularly since 2020.

The issues were identified as follows:

Change of head of school, management structure and policies at the school in Southwark meant that we would no longer be able to have the access to the school that we had previously enjoyed for our AGM and St. Julie's Day event. This is because the school is to operate on a more commercial basis and the facilities would become unaffordable even if they were available on any given date. Furthermore, the catering facilities would not be available as the school contracts with caterers had significantly changed and we would not be able to negotiate for provision of an affordable hot midday meal. The committee agreed that the main driver of getting members to participate in events including St. Julie's Day was the fact that the meetings were held within the school building. The strong emotional bond between members and the school was vital in retaining support.

We had been supported by the school so well for very many years, but the various changes would mean that school site staff, reception staff and I.T support would no longer be available to SNDA.

The committee were in agreement that we should try to find an alternative venue. In undertaking that search for an alternative we were mindful of the constraints that an ageing membership presented, and we realised that we had a list of criteria that we would need to keep in mind to address the needs of our members, including accessibility, affordability, suitability of location and proximity of transport links.

We tried valiantly to address the issue and conducted a search for an alternative venue. However, finding a venue that was affordable, suitable, convenient and accessible proved to be impossible.

Added to the issues above we were becoming increasingly aware of the need to be assured that there was some likelihood that others within the association would be prepared to step up and take on some of the tasks of president, secretary, treasurer and so on. We were aware of the demographic of the association and felt that fulfilling those functions would not be possible given that we had not been able to attract any new paid up members for many years. Many of the existing committee had been in position for several years and whilst many would be willing to continue in the short term, we had to accept that they too may well have a need or desire to step away from the responsibilities at some time in the future. We had to accept the fact that I.T and easier means of communication have considerably shifted the need for organisations like SNDA to exist.

Thus, the conclusion we came to was that we ....

- a) allow the organisation to struggle along for another year or two and essentially wither away or
- b) that we be proactive and make a decision that would allow us to celebrate the past successes and close the association in a dignified and orderly fashion. We chose the latter.

Our membership was informed of the decision, and we indicated that we would be happy to have their thoughts and comments particularly with regard distribution of the funds in the SNDA bank account. Interestingly, apart from two people, the members that did respond have been completely understanding of the situation and indeed many of them suggested their surprise that we had been able to keep going in recent years despite the drop off in membership and support.

Our last committee meeting will take place on Wednesday 26<sup>th</sup> March when we will receive a treasurer's report and final agreement on distribution of funds so that the SNDA bank account can be closed as soon thereafter as practically possible.

After that meeting all members will be written to again with details of final decisions and confirmation that remaining funds have been distributed as set out in the previous correspondence. Members will be invited and encouraged to join the Direct Members group, and an application form will be distributed to allow them to do so.

Finally, I must stress that the decisions that we have made have not been taken lightly nor were they easy decisions to reach. We all feel some sadness and many of the committee will very much miss the work that they have undertaken but we truly believe that we have come to the correct conclusion.

On behalf of all the members of SNDA I would like to express our thanks for the support of the BFNDA through the years, it has been much appreciated. We hope that we will have some opportunities in the future to come together with you all to share memories and celebrate being part of Notre Dame. We send you our very best wishes that the work that you do will continue for as long as possible.

Thank you.

Patricia White  
24<sup>th</sup> March 2025