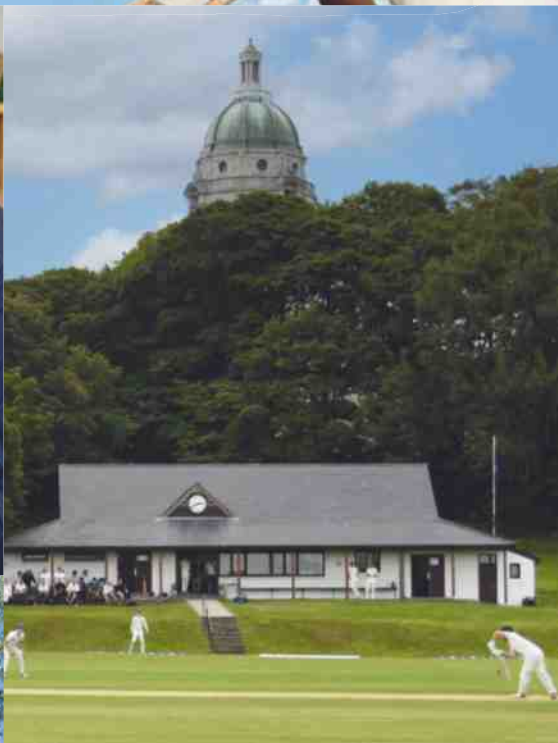




Lancaster Royal
Grammar School

2026

Old Lancastrians



www.lrgs.org.uk

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PRAESIS UT PROSIS

Introduction



Dr. Pyle Headmaster



When you leave school, your relationship with LRGs changes but it does not end! The main way that your membership of the school continues is through all the formal and informal, social and professional activities of the OL Club.

The Old Lancastrian Club is the thriving association for everyone who has been a pupil at Lancaster Royal Grammar School.

Adam de Preston was our first named pupil in around the year 1288, and OLs ever since have gone on to a whole range of fascinating, exciting, and unexpected adventures. I'm sure that you will do the same!

The OL Club also supports the school in multiple ways. You have almost certainly benefitted from their activities. They made a major donation towards the Upper Courts and provide the Sixth Form Awards; they fund equipment from microscopes to the Sixth Form TV screens, and support clubs, sports tours, the Cricket festival, the Boat Club and much else besides!

The Club also supports our Careers programme. For many OLs it is an excellent starting point for careers links and professional networking.

The OL Club depends on the energy and ideas that its newest members bring. I look forward to seeing you at many OL events in the coming years!



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Dr Pyle

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President's Report

OL President Barry Wild

Present and Past

Head of School, Tom,
with the OL President
at
Founder's Day Dinner
2025



It has been a huge pleasure and privilege to be President of the Old Lancastrians this year. It has also been an eye-opener to see how important the club is in supporting the school in its academic and extra-curricular activities.

I left the school in 1969 and have always been hugely grateful for my time at Lancaster RGS. I owe the school a great deal for many reasons but particularly because it formed the whole foundation of my career as a teacher. As a pupil, I would never have thought I would become a teacher but my career in two leading schools has confirmed my view that we OLs are very lucky to have attended such an outstanding school.

Like all good schools, LRGS focuses on a mixture of the academic, pastoral and extra-curricular spheres and I do not believe that there is a school within 50 miles of Lancaster that can match it.

Last July I came to Founder's Day and was able to watch the Cricket Festival, play in the OL Golf Day, enjoy a very good OL Founder's Dinner and attend the Founder's Day service in the Priory. The highlight of my visit, however, was to go out on the River Lune with the Boat Club and see how the rowing club still thrives with 90 boys and girls regularly rowing on that lovely stretch of river. It is very unusual for a state school to be able to support rowing but the mixture of enthusiasm, dedication and enjoyment was very evident in what I saw from the staff and pupils. I am delighted that the OL Club has recently financed the purchase of a new rowing ergometer for

use back at school. It is these extra-curricular activities - be they sporting, drama, music, chess, debating etc that make such a difference to a school.

In my year as President I have been to OL Dinners in Lancaster, the Cotswolds, Manchester and Cambridge so far, with Oxford and East Lancs still to come. At every dinner I have met OLs with a wide range of ages and backgrounds but the unifying aspect has been good cheer and interesting conversations. Do take the opportunity to come to one of these dinners if you can.

For over 100 years the Old Lancastrian Club has been an immense source of strength to the school. By joining the Club you maintain your link to the school and your subscription plays a vital part in helping the school to retain its very special character.

Barry Wild



First tee at Lancaster GC with Sofia McGhie who won a golf scholarship to the US in 2025 with Barry Wild and other OL Nick Rafferty.



Introduction

Chairman Richard Brigg



Hello leavers.

Your years of set runs, avoiding misdemeanours, hauling heavy bags up the hill and time at LRGS are nearly at an end. We wish you the best of success in your exams and hope that you can look back fondly at your time at school.

In my time at LRGS I spent many Thursday evenings in the shooting range with the Shooting Club. The Old Lancastrians ran the club and when I came back to Lancaster after University I was welcomed back to help at the club and later invited onto the OL Committee and I have been attending meetings now for over twenty five years. In that time I have seen many OL investments into clubs, societies, teams and extracurricular activities so your and other students' time at School is as rewarding and exciting as it can be. I took on the Chair's role last year and want to use my time in office to broaden the scope of the OL Club and the support it gives to the School, so all students feel the benefit of OL cash

One of the improvements we need to make is in the way we communicate and keep in touch. This booklet is one such idea and we hope you appreciate this first edition of the OL

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Welcome Handbook. We are also looking to strengthen our Instagram, Facebook and LinkedIn output, so if any of you feel you can help then please get in touch. And finally, I'd like to encourage you all to join the OL Club, keep in touch with us and support the next and future pupils on their LRGS journey.

Old Lancastrian Careers Events and Advice



By the time you read this article, I am guessing that you will have left LRGS, said your goodbyes and set off on a well-deserved holiday before embarking on the next stage of your career, whether that be University, an apprenticeship or job. But you may also not be quite at that stage and wondering what is 'out there' for you.

Whatever you are going to be doing in the future the Old Lancastrian Club is here to support you with opportunities to offer advice and support from members who are experts in their chosen fields.

Whilst at school, you may quite possibly have taken time to listen to one of the OL lunchtime talks. Recently there have been presentations by a Barrister, a GP, a BAE pilot, and someone from military intelligence, all with plenty of opportunities for questions and answers. Old Lancastrians of all ages have been very supportive of the MedSoc.

The Government is keen for local organisations to offer work experience to students during your time at school, and I want to share with you some details about NHS Work Experience in our local hospitals.

This scheme will give you the opportunity to see what it is really like to work in healthcare. Students have spent time observing in pharmacy, radiography, nursing and midwifery, occupational therapy, biomedical science, catering and estate services, as well as dental and medical departments. There are many other different placements available open to ad-hoc requests from individuals, usually school/college students, although it is open to all ages over 16 years. These are observational placements only and usually last between 1-5 days.

The hospitals do hold taster days and so look out for a date and come and find out about healthcare. All enquiries must be made to:

Local Hospitals Careers Team
work.experience@mbht.nhs.uk

Useful contacts for careers advice:

Careers Lead at LRGS shaigh@lrgs.org.uk

LinkedIn

Constitution



Rules of the Old Lancastrian Club.

Have a quick peruse of the Club's rules. Unlike the UK Government, we do have a written constitution!

Objectives of the Club

We are here for the advancement of the education and careers of pupils and former pupils of Lancaster Royal Grammar School through activities including communications, fundraising, careers advice, networking and social events. The Club supports the School's goals and strengthens ties between alumni and the School. In addition the Club nominates three trustees to the Lancaster Royal Grammar School Charity who also serve as Trustees (Governors) of the School. Currently these three are Robin Jackson, Peter Dyer and Steve Aughton.

President and Vice President

They will be elected annually.

In 2025/6 our
President is Barry Wild and
Vice President is Ian Whitehouse.

Officers and contact details

Chairman:

Richard Brigg - 07736217159 - rjsbrigg@googlemail.com

Treasurer:

Simon Corless - simoncorless@gmail.com

Secretary:

Michael Barton - 07801680657 - mandmbarton@btinternet.com

Committee

1. The Committee meets at least four times a year, in the Miller Room in Old School House. Usually the second Monday of term at 7pm.
2. Its members are the Chair, Treasurer and Secretary as above who are elected annually. The Headmaster, Dr Chris Pyle; The Schools Development Director, Catherine Lodge; Development (Alumni) Officer, Lorna Lightfoot; the President and Vice President, twelve members who are elected every two years at the Annual General Meeting and other members can be co-opted onto the committee. Other current committee members (not already listed) : Robin Jackson, Rod Burgess, Ian Gibbs, Jerry Duerden, Peter Dyer, Stephen Knight, Matthew Harvey, Steve Aughton, Donald Wilkinson, Ruarri Scott, Olly Jacques, Damon Hall and Paul Bradburn.

Annual General Meeting

Is the start and end of the Club's year. The AGM is held on Founder's Day or the day before at the OL Founder's Day Dinner. It's an important meeting because any OL in attendance can vote and if you want to be considered as a member of the committee or officer of the Club then let the Secretary know in writing by 1st April before the AGM. The Treasurer's annual accounts are presented and approved. The meeting also decides on subscription rates - currently £25 per annum. Everyone is welcome and in 2026 the AGM is before the Dinner on Friday, 3rd July at Ashton Hall, Lancaster Golf Club.

Register of Members

The Development Office and Secretary keep the register of names and addresses of all members of the Club on its database in accordance with the requirements of the Data Protection Act 1998. Members details are shared in furtherance of the Club's objectives i.e. networking and the advancement of education and careers.

Members need to inform the Development Office of changes in their contact details.

OL's re-united

Martin Alexander

OLs re-unite to follow J.L. Spencer's WWII from Gold Beach to Arnhem.

The Longest Day, A Bridge Too Far and Band of Brothers dramatise the cruel reality of warfare. Five OLs, students from the 1960s and 70s over the last 7 years have visited the actual battlefields of D Day, The Somme, Arnhem, Waterloo and The Battle of the Bulge.

Chris Critchlow (62-69), Michael Barton (OL Sec.), Jeremy Duerden, (68-75) Paul Fitton (61-67) and Prof Martin Alexander (OL Chair 2017-25). Sharing costs, driving, navigating and researching, all the while mis-remembering sporting achievements, music and drama, CCF camps and, of course, our teachers and their foibles.

In Normandy in 2018 and Arnhem in 2019 we tracked John Loraine Spencer, our LRGS Head (1961-72), following his Essex Regiment's route and admiring what he achieved -- "just doing his bit". A 21 year old lieutenant wrenched from his Cambridge study of Classics to Gold Beach on D-Day, ending his odyssey at Wolf's Heath, Arnhem, on 8 May 1945.

Our visits to immaculate war cemeteries invoking deep gratitude and awe at the innumerable names of young men barely older than we'd been in the Sixth Form.



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Trips such as these are the epitome of the the OL Club.



12 Pubs for Christmas

The Lancaster based pub-crawl is still going strong, and each year OLs from mainly the last 5 years (and occasionally last 15 years) come out for a festive pint or 12! The route is usually determined a couple of weeks in advance, before crowds descend on the starting location. There is usually a couple of brief intermissions at different locations to sing a Christmas carol or two that you will be familiar with from your days in the Priory attending lower school carol services.

This event is a fantastic way to catch up with recent leavers, classmates, people you knew, socialised or studied with throughout your time at LRGS. It is a very relaxed, social and long standing OL tradition that will hopefully be continued by recent leavers for many years to come. But don't worry, you don't have to stay for the full 12 locations if that's not your thing, just pop in for a few stops on the way. There is an Instagram account dedicated to the event that will be updated closer the time annually, follow for more updates!

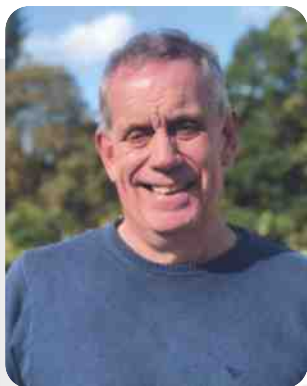
This year's event will held on either Friday 19th or Saturday 20th December. Damon Hall will organise this based on availability.

Watch this space on Instagram!



Next Year's President

Ian Whitehouse



After teaching at LRGS for 37 years I was delighted to be asked to be the next President of the Old Lancastrians' Club.

It is a great honour and a privilege.

I was appointed as a Geography, sport and boarding teacher in 1982, with specific responsibility for running the cricket having come across the Pennines from my home in North Yorkshire. I don't supposed there have been too many Yorkshire presidents.

I thoroughly enjoyed my time at the school becoming Housemaster of Ashton House, Head of Middle School and Deputy Head as well as taking many trips and excursions across the world.

This enabled me to see at first hand the great friendships developing amongst the pupils that continued for many years after they had left and in many cases for ever. It is an amazing strength of the school and something I don't have from my old school. I have been fortunate enough to carry on my contact with the school since retiring in 2019, helping out on the sports field and more recently as a trustee and a member of the Old Lancastrian Club Committee.

I hope in my year as President to meet as many of you as possible. There are a number of regional dinners across the country which allow you to meet up with other ex pupils and staff to reminisce about your time at school and be kept up to date with how the school is developing. The Club also assists the school financially by offering grants for things that the school would otherwise not be able to afford as well as helping all ex pupils to keep in contact with their old school and each other.

To finish, I want to wish you the best of luck in your forthcoming examinations and in your future careers.



Sixth Form Awards

Medical placement in Malawi: William Duffy (LRGS student from 2012 – 2020)



During my medical student elective this year, I spent several weeks at Ekwendeni Hospital in northern Malawi, which proved to be a fantastic place to undertake an elective and an unforgettable experience.

During my time there, I conducted a research project investigating HIV appointment adherence and drug stockouts at the hospital. I identified areas within the hospital catchment area where appointment adherence was significantly lower and made

recommendations on how this might be improved. I also identified which HIV-related medications had been most affected by stockouts over the past twelve months.

Alongside this research, I gained extensive clinical experience at Ekwendeni Hospital. I spent time on the general adult ward, paediatric ward, post-natal ward, in the HIV clinic, and in outreach clinics in remote villages where I assisted with post-natal checks and childhood vaccinations. This allowed me to learn about common conditions in Malawi, including malaria, HIV and tuberculosis, as well as the wider healthcare system and the stark disparity in resources compared with countries like the UK.

Some aspects of the placement were shocking and eye-opening, such as daily power outages that resulted in no oxygen supply for patients who needed it. Despite these challenges, the skill, dedication and expertise of the staff were remarkable, and it was inspiring to see the care they delivered with limited resources.

I lived with a local nurse during my time at Ekwendeni and made lifelong

friends there. During my last two weeks, I explored the country, travelling down Lake Malawi by ferry and staying at a game reserve where I encountered lions, elephants and other incredible animals.

I would like to express my sincere thanks to the Old Lancastrians for their generous grant, which made this experience possible.



Boxing Day Rugby



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OL's XV

Each year, the OLs are invited by the Vale to select a team to play against a mixed ability (and fitness) Vale team on Boxing Day.

Over the last few years it has been one of the most well attended low-key OL functions, with close to a 100 OLs either playing or attending to spectate. It's often at a great time of year to catch up with former pupils, staff and classmates - both young and old as they are all home for Christmas and in a merry mood!

If you're keen to play in the 2026 fixture, make sure you bring your boots back from Uni or message Henry Higginson/Freddie Deeks about potential opportunities for some game-time!



OL Cricket fixture



LRGS 1st XI v OL Select XI

The annual 1st XI vs OL Cricket fixture is an excellent way to stay involved with the school after you leave, in addition to being a great reason to come back and reunite with classmates in years to come.

Each year we have a variety of OLs come back to represent the OL team, who bring a number of friends to watch during the day and catch up with current pupils or those from years older than them too. The OL team is usually selected from leavers in the last 10 years, so keep your eye open for a call up in the Summer of 2027! Remember, you don't need to play cricket to enjoy watching it.



OL Badge on cricket kit (photo from RGS Festival 2025)
The OL club have also sponsored cricket kits, including the badge on the arm of the T20/warm up kits used by the 1st XI over recent years.

Nobel Prize Winner Sir Peter Ratcliffe at Speech Day



Sir Peter Ratcliffe (1965-1971) is the School's first Nobel Laureate, having won the 2019 Nobel Prize in Physiology or Medicine, along with two other scientists. He has been described as "a remarkable physician and medical researcher" by Jim Al-Khalili on BBC Radio 4's Life Scientific (still available on BBC Sounds).

His Nobel Prize is for work describing how our bodies at a cellular level adapt to a lack of oxygen, for example at altitude or during physical exercise. He is currently Director of Clinical Research at the Francis Crick Institute in London and Director of the Target Discovery Institute, Oxford University.

Peter Ratcliffe was brought up in Carnforth, attending the local primary school and enjoying the rural life exploring woods and quarries and experimenting with fire and explosives.

Peter's career at LRGS was distinguished by consistently winning prizes and by his exuberant approach to extra-curricular activities, including skiing trips to Glenshee and Austria ("I thought that black run must be easy because so many people were standing around on it. Then I realised why they were all standing around..."). His schoolmates remember him as being extremely bright and able to grasp things immediately.

He left school at the end of 1971, with an open scholarship to Cambridge to read Medicine. After completing his training he moved to Oxford, becoming Nuffield Professor and Head of the Nuffield Department of Clinical Medicine in 2003. He is a Fellow of the Royal Society and was knighted for services to medicine in the New Year's Honours in 2014.

Understandably a vocal fan of education, he attributes his success to his time at LRGS and at university. He believes that achievements are built on a foundation of education, and one of the key lessons from his time at LRGS is simplicity of thought, whereby one identifies the core principles to focus on.

The School Re-building Programme



There are few schools in the UK and even beyond that are over 550 years old. Even fewer schools would still call a building nearing its Centenary the New Building. There is a real irony that the setting of the School and its historic buildings create a wonderfully evocative and inspiring setting to learn, but the damp and decaying nooks and crannies of those same buildings equally diminish the learning environment.

The setting of the school on the hill is unique and remains long in the memory but the roads and the traffic and multiple sites also provide many a headache and challenge to the Head and those running the School. Archive photographs show us just how much 21st century traffic levels have changed

The School is at present working with the Department for Education to redevelop the School for the 21st Century. The School Re-Building Programme will see many of the School's historic buildings re-purposed and improved, but it is likely some of the less robust buildings erected in the last 50 years will be replaced. Richard Gittins OL is leading on the complex multi million pounds project.

The Old Lancastrian Club will be working with Richard, the School and the trustees to ensure that we re-create the fabric that allows a world class education in a setting that inspires and leaves indelible memories for present and future students.



Old Lancastrians Supporting the Next Generation 2019–2024 Community Grants and Travel Awards

A legacy of giving—Old Lancastrians continue to invest in the spaces where today’s pupils learn and grow.

For generations, Old Lancastrians have taken pride in maintaining a strong connection with the School and in supporting the opportunities that shaped their own lives. Over the past seven years, that commitment has been clearly demonstrated through a wide range of grants and donations that have enriched school life, strengthened facilities, and enabled pupils to broaden their horizons through travel and service. These contributions reflect not only generosity, but also a shared belief in the enduring value of education, community and tradition.

Investment in the school environment has remained a consistent priority. Significant early funding included £6,000 for the refurbishment of the Memorial Library and £4,000 to develop the Lower Courts with activity equipment and seating—improvements that continue to benefit pupils every day. Further enhancements followed, including memorial benches and outdoor study areas, alongside the installation of two defibrillators costing £2,040, ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the whole school community. More recently, Old Lancastrian support has provided specialist equipment across departments, from photography resources and science apparatus to accessibility tools for pupils with additional learning needs. These practical contributions often go unseen, yet they play a vital role in sustaining the quality of education for which the School is known.



Alongside facilities, the arts, drama, and sport have benefited greatly from Old Lancastrian generosity. Funding has supported theatre activities, school tournaments, team kit, and large-screen projection equipment for the Sixth Form. Alumni contributions have also enabled pupils to take part in major tours, including grants of £1500 for international cricket and rugby tours—experiences that build confidence, teamwork, and school spirit. In addition, the Club has supported longer-term ambitions through fundraising initiatives, including a successful bid of £12,500 towards the redevelopment of the Upper Courts, ensuring that future generations will enjoy facilities that match the School's proud sporting heritage.

Travel awards—made possible by Old Lancastrians—open doors to the wider world.



Perhaps the most distinctive aspect of Old Lancastrian support has been the encouragement of pupil travel and service. Each year, travel awards—typically totalling around £3,000 annually—have enabled young people to undertake meaningful projects and personal challenges beyond the classroom. Individual grants, often ranging from £300 to £500, have supported activities such as conservation work in Madagascar and Costa Rica, medical volunteering in Ghana and Malawi, engineering programmes in Japan, and cultural expeditions across Europe. These journeys foster independence, resilience, and a sense of responsibility—qualities that remain with pupils long after they leave the School and, in time, become Old Lancastrians themselves.

A Tradition of Giving Back

Behind every grant lies the quiet dedication of Old Lancastrians who wish to give something back to the institution that shaped them. Whether funding a bench, a book, a piece of equipment, or a life-changing expedition, these contributions demonstrate the strength of the Old Lancastrian community and its commitment to the School's future. Together, they show how the enduring bond between past and present pupils continues to create opportunities, sustain traditions, and inspire the next generation.

OL Prize Winners

Lent Term 2026



Mishel Rafiq: Year 12 OL Prize

Mishel has made an excellent contribution to the wider community since her arrival at LRGS, balancing her A Level subjects, out of school commitments with an impressive record of service for the school.

Mishel is involved in numerous societies and set up a new Amnesty Society, leading meetings and preparing resources for the group and delivering in assembly. Mishel is also a valued member of debating in school and is a vocal advocate for collaboration and service in her form and in the wider school community. She has made an impression and a difference and this award recognises her service and contributions to LRGS.

Amal Aftab: Y13 OL prize

Amal is an outstanding ambassador for the Sixth Form and has given back to the school in a number of significant ways; both in service and leadership. She has co-led the Female Forum this year, preparing and leading sessions on a weekly basis and creating a community of both female and male students with a joint interest in gender equality and the issues surrounding this.

Amal coordinated and co-delivered an assembly to mark International Women's Day with two of her peers which was delivered to both Year 12 and 13 pupils. The assembly was informative, memorable and thought-provoking.

Amal has been an active and reliable member of the Medical Society leadership team throughout Year 13 and collaborated in the delivery of an assembly to Sixth Form students on female health. As a member of the leadership team, she has helped to arrange talks from visiting speakers on medical topics and has been instrumental in the smooth running of the society.

Amal oversees the coordination of the female prayer room in school and helped to arrange a prayer room space for Muslim families at the recent Year 7 parents' evening. This allowed visiting families to have access to a space where they could break their fast during

Ramadan. Her work on this, alongside a group of equally dedicated peers, was recognised by the LRGs families who expressed their heartfelt gratitude at having a space they could use which felt special and welcoming.

We feel that this prize recognises Amal's selfless attitude and her passion for helping others. She leads by example, and is both reflective and proactive in everything she does.



OL Dinners

Old Lancastrian Dinners are held throughout the year to allow the diaspora of OLs to meet in convivial company, learn news from the School, hear from the Head and catch up with friends old and new.

Lorna Lightfoot keeps us all abreast of the dinners on the website and usually a couple of months before the event OLs can book their places.

Historically these were often black tie affairs, but they are now much more down to earth with partners invited.

The schedule of OL Regional Dinners planned for this year are as follow

**OL Golf Day and Founders' Dinner on Friday 3 July at
Lancaster Golf Club**

**Cotswolds OL Dinner on Friday 11 September at
The Colesbourne Inn**

**Leeds OL Dinner on Friday 2 October at
Masonic Hall, Castle Grove**

**London OL Dinner on Thursday 5 November at the
RAF Club, Piccadilly**

Graham Davies OL, who organises the Cotswold Dinner is especially keen to see some new faces at the Colesbourne Inn, midway between Cheltenham and Cirencester. He runs an informal, interesting and often humorous affair. As a guitarist, and ageing rockstar he says in the words of the Beatles: 'A splendid time is guaranteed for all.'



Contact Details and how to pay for your Membership

OL Club Membership and Payment

Membership of the Old Lancastrian Club is open to any former pupil of the School and staff. New members are given an OLC tie or scarf and a copy of the latest OLC Newsletter.

Enclosed is the Application for Membership form. If you would like to join, please complete it and return it to the Development Office at:

Development Office, LRGS, East Road, Lancaster, LA1 3EF.

The OL Club relies on the subscriptions paid annually by its members and this is via a standing order.

Should you wish to become an OL then please instruct your bank to pay

**Virgin Money, Lancaster Branch,
Sort Code 05-05-55,
Account Number 19377355
for the credit of the Old Lancastrian Club**

**£25.00 to be paid immediately
and thereafter on 1st April annually.**

Please make sure you identify who is paying with your name and school reference number

Data Protection

The Development Office and Club Secretary keep the register of names, addresses and contact details of all members of the Club on a database. All information held complies with the GDPR requirements. Personal details of OLs will only be used in furtherance of the aims of the OL Club. It will not be shared with third parties.



www.lrgs.org.uk