

## HEADMASTER'S LETTER 20 September 2021



Dear Parent

### ALL IS SAFELY GATHERED IN

We are now two weeks in and the longed-for sense of normality seems to have been achieved. I'd remind us all to stay on top of the Lateral Flow Testing and to respond swiftly in the case of a positive outcome. We continue to work closely with the Public Health Officer who offers rapid, pragmatic advice when needed.

The Senior Team and I have visited (albeit for a few minutes) a number of lessons already. A pleasure indeed to see students settling into routines and staff inspiring boys with their deep knowledge of the rich curricula on offer in every department. I am delighted, too, to be back in assembly - Mr Wilson, the new Deputy Headmaster, introduced himself to the boys last week and he shared some of his passions and interests.

### CROWDFUND UPDATE

You will recall your very generous and swift response to our Parents' Association led 'Crowdfund' in the Summer, which raised £36k including Gift Aid. We have been able to stretch this money a long way; over the Summer, 34 new computers and screens were installed in one of the IT rooms, of sufficient spec to run specialist Art, Engineering and Music software. The room is on the list for repainting at Half Term. Some money was also put towards areas of infrastructure which needed updating. Outdoor areas are at a premium currently and we have also been able to invest in canopies for the outdoor eating area near the 'Brew House' - the groundwork is nearly complete and the canopies will be arriving towards the end of October. A huge thank you for making such a difference to the experience of your sons.

### IN THE HEIGHTS

The Head of Music at the school I attended as a student, and first worked at as a teacher, was one of my greatest influences and sources of inspiration. He was renowned for his Music Theatre shows and said to me very early on in my career "if people go away saying 'it was good for a school', then we've failed. If they say 'that was a great evening' then we've done what we set out to do." Something I have never forgotten.

If you were not one of the (almost) 900 who came to our show last weekend, you certainly missed a great evening. In every respect from cast to band, tech to direction, it was an exceptional experience and a privilege to watch. Both casts were strong, with slightly different interpretations. Having been a Head of Music (back in the mid-90s), I am very aware of the massive amount of work required from staff and students to pull off a show of this standard. My thanks to the Music Department, volunteers and the direction team for coaching both our boys and the girls from neighbouring schools and giving them the opportunity to flourish. Shows are expensive to put on - Resources Department became the 'box office' and did a sterling job in promoting the show. Thanks too, to the Friends of Music - they support the Department throughout the year both financially and in so many other ways. As a number of the Committee have boys who have finished the Upper Sixth or will do so at the end of this year, they would welcome some parents of younger boys to continue the great work. Please contact the Chairman, Paul Hill [paulstuarthill@btinternet.com](mailto:paulstuarthill@btinternet.com) if you can assist.

### **SPORTSMAN'S DINNER**

In my letter of 16 March 2020, I informed parents that this dinner had to be cancelled as the reality of the pandemic became apparent. How fantastic it was, 18 months later, to hold the event last Thursday. It was a super evening with David Flatman and Wayne Barnes on great form, good food, wine flowing and lots of chat. We rely very much on fundraising (of which this is a major part) to support our sector beating Rugby programme. It would not happen without the organisation and support of Fran Kucera and the FRORGS and our Sports and External Relations teams from within the School. As with the show, this event goes far beyond being good for a school - professionally run and a great night's entertainment. The generosity of those attending both in buying tickets and donating during the evening is very much appreciated.

### **OPEN EVENING**

Although we are always oversubscribed, I never take for granted the fact that parents and children have choices regarding their schooling. We are so pleased, therefore, to be able to offer an open event which takes place next Tuesday. It is a ticketed event, for Year 6 boys plus one parent – we take our responsibility to act with caution under the present circumstances. The tickets are sold out - we will offer our usual Open Mornings in October and will arrange a special event for Year 5 in the Spring. I know that I can count on you all to fly the RGS flag with pride!

### **VACCINATIONS**

You will have seen in the media that the Government are rolling out plans to vaccinate 12-16 year olds. Our now, rather well seasoned, Covid team have their plans ready to go and there will be communications about the programme very soon.

### **FLEET OF FOOT**

I was very pleased to meet Alden Collier who has had incredible success on the athletics track. Alden is currently ranked the UK's No 1 in the UK in 1500m and 800m event. Not content with this distance, Alden came 2<sup>nd</sup> in the 3000m race with a time of 8:51:04 giving him the second fastest U15 time posted this year for that event. All augurs very well for his future aspirations and I feel certain you will join me in wishing Alden well.

### **CONGRATULATIONS**

The Institute of Economic Affairs, 2021 Dorian Fisher Memorial Prize, includes amongst its prize winners Max Foden-Ellis from our Sixth Form. This is a very prestigious award and I offer my congratulations to Max on his success.

With best wishes

**Philip Wayne**