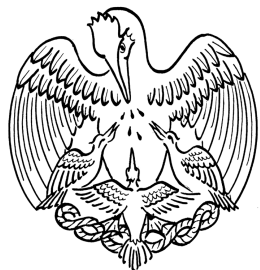


# SAWSTON VILLAGE COLLEGE



## NEWSLETTER

8 May 2009

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### **Dates for your diary**

Sawston Fun Run	10 May	Year 10 Work Experience	11 – 22 May
Year 7 Examinations commence	11 May	Specialist College Activities Week	18 – 22 May
GCSE Examinations	11 May – 24 June	Half Term	25 – 29 May

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Dear Parent

### **Sawston Fun Run**

I am sure that many of you will hardly pause to read this, so focused are you on completing your training for this Sunday's major community event. For those of you who are rather more athletically-challenged, do remember you can simply walk the course and benefit from the general jollity of the day. If you wish to take part, you can acquire an entry form from the school's reception or download it from the website at [www.sawstonfunrun.co.uk](http://www.sawstonfunrun.co.uk).

This year's chosen charities include:

- Papworth Hospital - for post major operative equipment;
- Addenbrookes Hospital - to help fund the first mobile CAT scanner;
- Arthur Rank Hospice - for essential running costs;
- Sawston Cinema Project - to equip the new media suite;
- MS Society - an exercise machine for those with lower body paralysis; and

- Opportunities Without Limits - a contribution towards the funding of a new holiday home.

### **Other groups that will benefit are:**

- St John's Ambulance - equipment for handling emergencies.
- Sawston Guides - new camping equipment.
- Whittlesford & Duxford Scouts - new camping equipment;
- Sawston Boys' and Girls' Brigades - new camping equipment;
- Cambridge Cruse - to fund the training and establishment of specialist child counsellors;
- Sawston Army Cadets - navigation and field work equipment;
- Sunnyside Pre-school - design and technology equipment to acquaint early years;
- Duxford Playgroup - outdoor equipment; and
- Bellbird Primary School – to

help buy outdoor equipment.

So, get those running shoes out of the attic and start jogging on the spot. Because of my official duties on the day it is sadly impossible for me to participate. Please be assured of my unequivocal support for your efforts as I wave you off at the start line.

### **Swine flu**

I am sure that you will have been following the news on the latest anticipated flu pandemic. We have been assured by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) that normal service should prevail at this stage, advice that fits entirely with our own thinking.

Obviously, we will take all reasonable precautions to keep our school community as safe from the virus as possible and ask that our pupils do the same. Hand-washing, consideration for others in terms of using tissues and handkerchiefs appropriately,

concepts occasionally challenging for some of our pupils, especially those who are not girls, can do a great deal to stem the transmission of germs. We will also be installing anti-bacterial hand-wash in the school toilets as an encouragement to observe the basic rules of personal hygiene.

As you know, we take school attendance very seriously; if our pupils are not in school they can't learn. We know that our parents are a sturdy bunch, the vast majority of the school of thought that believes that young people have to be at death's door to be allowed a day off school. There is no reason for that to change. Please do as you usually do: if your child is obviously unfit for school, please keep him or her at home; if it's a marginal decision – use your own judgement as to whether he or she is liable to be infectious and respond accordingly; if it's a French test, send the recalcitrant one into school as usual.

With sound common sense, we will be ready to meet the challenges of the pandemic when / if it arrives.

### **Pop Idol**

You may have been one of the capacity audience who packed out the Henry Morris Hall to support your pop idol of choice, in which case you will know that it was a splendid evening and showcased the significant talents of all competitors. Congratulations go to Hayley Allen who won this year's title and to Marianne Lampon and Megan Carlton who came 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> respectively.

I am very grateful to Mr Holloway who initiated the competition at SVC when it first hit our television screens seven years ago. The competition through its many heats brings great enjoyment to many of our pupils whether they compete or support. My thanks go, too, to Mark Long, or 'Mr SYD', as he is known to our pupils because of his excellent work with Sawston Youth Drama, and to Mr Reynolds for the part they play in judging and supporting and to Megan Warth, a former pupil, and Nikky Parker, our former Director of Inclusion, who completed the expert panel.

### **Congratulations to ...**

... Nathan Pilkington. Nathan currently plays Cricket for the Cambridgeshire County Under-12 team. The team played their first opening game this season on Sunday, 3 May 2009 against Lincolnshire.

Despite the desperate weather conditions, Nathan scored an absolutely fantastic hat-trick. Being a cricket novice, (I *am* Scottish ...) I had no real understanding of this phenomenon, but, as ever, Google questions came to the rescue. I can now reliably inform you that 'a cricket hat-trick is when one bowler dismisses three batsmen with consecutive deliveries'. By all accounts, this is extremely rare – almost as rare as Scotland beating England at any sport. Nathan's magnificent achievement on the day meant that his team won against Lincolnshire, who had beaten them by many runs on their previous encounter.

Very well done, Nathan.

### **Sawston Cinema**

Coming shortly to a place near you ...

If you have yet to experience the joys of our very own cinema, then here are some dates for your diary:

Tuesday, 19 May 2009, 6.30pm: Wall-E (Cert U)

Tuesday, 9 June 2009, 6.30pm: Man on Wire (Cert 12)

Thursday, 2 July (time to be confirmed): grand opening of the cinema. This will feature the film made by our pupils with a grant from the Heritage Lottery. They interviewed members of the local community who had connections with the cinema when it used to operate commercially. Their memories make compelling viewing.

Tuesday, 7 July 2009, 6.30pm: the audience's choice – let us know what film you would like to see and we'll do our best to screen the most popular choice.

I am delighted with the work of our cinema team who have finally brought into being the cinema we were sure our local community wanted. And so it has proved: the last showing, 'The Duchess' played to a full house. One of the audience described the cinema later on his blog as 'probably the friendliest little cinema in the country.' The team must take full credit for creating such a wonderful experience for the visitors.

What makes this such a special project is the fact that it is a young people led cinema, we

believe the only one in England. Our Arts Development Manager, Lesley Morgan, has worked tirelessly with our cinema group to finalise the project and has the highest regard for her now very professional team.

Lesley has my unreserved thanks for her own enthusiasm and dedication to this excellent project.

### **Peer Support**

As a result of pupil-led surveys and feedback from the Ethos Forum there has been interest in establishing a peer support scheme. This project encourages young people to be supportive of each other and reinforces the work already being done within the school that ensures pupils feel safe and can learn in a positive environment. Selected pupils are trained to provide help to other pupils in such areas as:

- helping new pupils to settle into school;
- being available at lunch and break times for any pupil to go and chat to about a worry they may have; and
- acting as mentors for individual pupils.

It is anticipated that a pilot scheme will be trialled inviting pupils in Years 9 and 10 to apply for a position. Through an interview process, a team of pupils will be selected and trained following the code of practice from the Child Line peer support scheme. The training includes communication and listening skills, team building, working together, problem solving and confidentiality. The training is

supported by the Child Line in Partnerships (CHIPS) programme and all 'Hear2Help' supporters will receive ongoing support from staff within the school. Training will take place just after half term followed by a whole-school launch in June. Pupils involved in the training will be expected to make up any work they miss.

We hope that, following successful implementation of the scheme, peer support will be fully integrated into the school's pastoral care systems by extending the peer support network, offering training to pupils interested in all year groups.

### **Request from the Blood Transfusion Service**

You have the opportunity to give Blood in Sawston on Tuesday 26 May at the Bellbird Primary School from 1.00 to 3.30pm and 4.30 to 7.00pm. Please call 08457 711711 or visit [www.blood.co.uk](http://www.blood.co.uk) for an appointment.

### **Teaching and learning**

As you may already know, we hold fortnightly teaching and learning briefings for our staff, under the excellent leadership of Mr Wallace, our Director of Learning, to feed our interest in the latest thinking pedagogically.

It is very much becoming a feature of the briefings that our pupils join us to give us an insight into the work that they are doing through the School Forum to contribute to the development of the school. At the last briefing, we were delighted to hear from Hannah Ritchie of the conference she, Emily Cowling, Hannah Long

and Lauren Hill attended at the University of Warwick, focusing on global education. The girls had made a film of their thinking and, following the conference, have submitted a bid for funding to the specialist Schools and Academies Trust to take their work forward. You can read the bid on our website at [www.sawstonvc.org](http://www.sawstonvc.org) I am very grateful to Miss Haworth and Miss Gelder for their excellent work with the Learning Forum and to Mrs Fletcher who joined Miss Haworth and the girls on their visit to Warwick.

We also heard from members of the Learning Forum who have designed 'learning mats' for use in lessons. They have created 'learning mats' that support learning across the curriculum in a wide range of ways from effective group work to thinking skills.

### **Year 11 departs**

It is with great sadness that we take our leave of our Year 11 pupils as they immerse themselves in study leave from Monday 18 May as a prelude to their GCSE examinations, which actually start next week.

The vast majority of them have been a terrific group of young people in every way: they have been excellent students: hard-working, good-humoured, immensely talented musicians, sportspeople and actors; they have formed excellent relationships with their teachers, who have in turn worked hard for them as a consequence. Special thanks must go to Miss Plant who has done a wonderful job of supporting her pupils through to the end of their compulsory

education. She has moulded them into a close-knit team and encouraged them at every stage to work hard and to contribute positively to the school and wider community. She deserves their – and my – unreserved thanks.

This is the year group we trusted to make our new model of school leadership work. They have proved that pupil voice can make a genuine, positive difference to school life. We had many visitors in school this week, a number of whom met with the Forum Executive and other Forum representatives. All of them were overwhelmed by our young people; one of them commented to me: 'This is one of the great advantages of having an 11 – 16 school without a sixth form; Year 11 pupils really step up and show leadership skills.' Ours certainly have. My unreserved thanks and admiration go to all Year 11 Forum members, most especially to our Head Boy and Girl, Tom Byers and Ritwika Sengupta, and to our Deputy Head Boy and Girl, Sam Love and Lucy Goodman. They have shone.

The year group has my very best wishes for the coming weeks and for their success in the GCSE examinations.

### **Pump Aid**

Many congratulations must go to Year 9 who through their fund-raising efforts raised a magnificent £2,000 for Pump Aid, a charity that works hard in Malawi and Zimbabwe to ensure that as many people as possible have access to clean water and safe sanitation. The money raised by our Year 9 pupils has been used to build 'elephant' pumps and toilets.

None of us is quite sure what they look like, but I think we can assume that they're big! In any event, our pupils' efforts have made life significantly better for a Malawian or Zimbabwean community.

### **National Education Trust (NET)**

NET is one of our partners in the Henry Morris Community Trust. It is a very dynamic organisation totally dedicated to ensuring the best possible schools for children and young people.

We ran a conference in conjunction with them this week and hosted prestigious visitors from all parts of the country. They had the opportunity to observe a large number of lessons, to attend workshops run by some of our colleagues and to hear about our very successful locality work. We also heard from colleagues at a primary school in Slough that centres its curriculum around a painting each half term – the conference was called: Dare to be Different ... It was inspiring to hear how they had reenergised their school, their teachers and their pupils by taking an entirely different approach to what they had been doing. Don't worry ... we'll still teach the National Curriculum and prepare our pupils for GCSE ...

Our visitors were overwhelmed by our pupils: they loved their Year 7 guides; in fact one of them wrote to me, 'My guide was a far better communicator than I will ever be, and she is only in Year 7!' But it wasn't only the guides who earned their admiration; they were bowled over by the welcome they received from all of our

pupils, by the standard of behaviour they saw in lessons and by the inspirational teaching they saw. Our office staff came in, too, for special mention: they had organised the day perfectly and provided their usual highly-professional welcome to the visitors, always being prepared to help in any way they could. In short, I was enormously proud of all of our school community and would like here to register my grateful thanks to pupils and staff.

### **Specialist Schools and Academies Trust (SCAW)**

Year 11 goes off on study leave, Year 10 embark next week on Work Experience and the rest of the school community participates in SCAW. For some, this means foreign travel, either on Languages' Trips to France, Spain and Germany, on a cultural trip to Italy or on an adventure trip to the Ardèche, while for others it means a wide range of exciting activity in school or further afield locally, either to London or to Ferry Meadows.

Wherever they go and whatever they do, we know we can depend on our young people to bring credit to the school. They have my best wishes for a very positive end to the half term.

As, indeed, do you.

June Cannie  
Principal

