



December 2017

South Wilts Grammar School for Girls

Governors' Newsletter

Welcome to our Autumn Term Newsletter

South Wilts Grammar School for Girls
Stratford Rd
Salisbury
SP1 3JJ

Phone: 01722 323326

Fax: 0172 320703

E-mail: governors@swgs.wilts.sch.uk
www.swgs.wilts.sch.uk

Dates to note for January 2018:

8 Jan	Year 9 Parents' Option Evening
10 Jan	Year 9 Parents' Evening
15 Jan	Parent Voice 6.30pm
17-19 Jan	Year 13 mock exams
25 Jan	Year 12 HE & Post 18 Options Briefing 7pm
27 Jan	A Cappella Concert
5 Feb	Year 13 Parents' Evening



Dear Parents / Carers

As we come to end of a very busy term, you will have received last Friday, information regarding our position with Salisbury Athletics Club and the running track. I thought it may also be helpful for you to see a copy of the school's press release, issued at the same time to give more clarity and hope this is of further use to you.

We are disappointed to report that the mediation between SWGS and Cosarc was unsuccessful, and SWGS wants to take this opportunity to set the record straight. SWGS is committed to growing and supporting community sport by sharing our facilities with the Salisbury community.

Since 31 October SWGS has offered Cosarc an agreement giving it greater access to the SWGS running track and clubhouse than it has ever had before - five nights a week and at weekends at a monthly cost of £200 or 97p per hour.

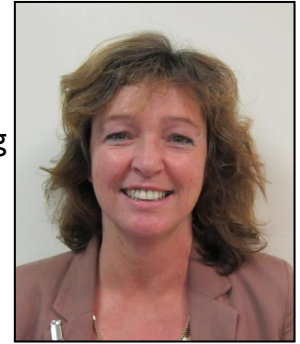
Cosarc has refused those terms, insisting that it should also have the exclusive use of the clubhouse, a small extension to a SWGS storage building that SWGS allowed Cosarc to build in 1997, and which Cosarc wrongly claims it owns. SWGS is not prepared to agree to this. When the clubhouse was built, Cosarc agreed that it could also be used by SWGS and other schools. Now it is trying to renege on that agreement and claim exclusive use and ownership of the clubhouse for itself, at the expense of the wider Salisbury community.

Against this background, Cosarc's claim that it has been locked out of the track simply isn't true. Of course the school grounds are kept locked - SWGS has almost 1,100 girls between the ages of 11 and 18 at the school and is responsible for safeguarding them and the school's property. The track can only be used with SWGS's agreement, but we continue to offer Cosarc an agreement which would give it immediate access to the track and clubhouse at a very low price, at no profit to SWGS.

We believe that Cosarc is doing a disservice to its members by rejecting the very fair terms offered by SWGS and preventing its members from resuming training immediately.

A separate disagreement between SWGS and Cosarc relates to the long-term future of the running track which is in urgent need of refurbishment. SWGS has applied for funding from Sport England, Wiltshire Council and Salisbury City Council and has been discussing the refurbishment with Cosarc for some years. The funding is conditional on Cosarc, as the other main user of the track, putting in place a credible business plan showing that it can contribute to maintenance of the track and future resurfacing. Cosarc withdrew its initial business plan nine months ago, but we hope they will provide a final business plan soon so that the refurbishment can go ahead next summer. If funding and contracts are not in place by March 2018, the refurbishment cannot take place next summer and the future of the track will be in jeopardy.

On behalf of the South Wilts Board of Governors I would like to take this opportunity to wish parents, staff and of course our students a very peaceful and happy Christmas and we look forward to seeing you all in 2018!



Helen Stewart
Chair of Governors

Committee Updates

CURRICULUM COMMITTEE

Safeguarding and Attendance

Staff and Governors at South Wilts continue to place a very high priority on safeguarding. This term Dr Smith has taken over as Designated Safeguarding Officer and has completed her training for this role. All staff have received safeguarding training through their normal updates at the beginning of the year, a special session on a Teacher Training Day and online access to specialist safeguarding modules. The school has also stepped up the measures taken to safeguard students on Duke of Edinburgh expeditions and training as Wiltshire Council has handed over responsibility for this scheme to schools. There is now a new School Counsellor who can be accessed for support on four days a week; this is proving to be very helpful for students. In regards to last year's queries about the inconsistency in registering students and sharing student information between the two grammar schools, a new system is now in place which means both schools are in a better position to safeguard students. A Stay Safe practice has taken place this term during which pupils were told about the 'Run, hide, tell' advice.

Attendance rates have remained high this term, including in the sixth form. The increased liaison between the two grammar schools has enabled attendance to be tracked more reliably.

Achievement

August saw the publication of examination results and Y11 and Sixth Form students achieved highly as expected. 99% of students achieved at least a Grade 5 for both English and mathematics where Grade 5 represents a high C. Many students achieved very highly, gaining A*s and As (Grades 9 and 8 in English and mathematics). Nearly three quarters of all students achieved the EBACC set of qualifications. Whilst we would expect our students to achieve highly, it is the Progress 8 score which highlights the significant **progress** of South Wilts' students. The P8 score was 0.55 which roughly equates to every student on average achieving half a grade higher than predicted from their KS2 outcomes. GCSE results for English were particularly impressive with a subject P8 score of 0.91.

Y13 students also achieved very well with 74% of grades at A* - B. Over a third of students gained at least ABB scores in facilitating subjects allowing them to attend the Russell Group of Universities. In art, design and technology, food technology, politics, history, music and Spanish, students achieved exceptionally well. Unusually, students did not achieve quite as highly in mathematics and this has been explored. 153 students received places at University including 6 studying medicine, 1 studying veterinary science and 6 to Oxford / Cambridge. One student is studying at a Further Education College, 3 are undertaking Apprenticeships and 28 are taking a gap year. All in all, students have gone on to around 50 different higher education institutions so are certainly spreading their wings.

South Wilts Grammar School has been ranked as 55th in the English State Schools league table in the Sunday Times.

Congratulations to all students and thanks go to staff for their dedication and hard work in preparing girls for these key examinations. Parents too should be thanked for their support and patience during examination periods!

Curriculum

The requirement for continued breadth at all key stages remains a high priority and Leaders and Governors continue to plan for A Level provision in September 2018. Governors have enjoyed visiting the school to look at the Sixth Form in action and also valued meeting a group of students to hear their views and requests. They were pleased to hear that students are enjoying their sixth form experience and feel very well supported. As expected, there were areas for improvement and Governors noted these to raise with Leaders. The school is undertaking a review of Personal, Social and Health Education this year to update modules and ensure that all students are prepared for life as much as possible. Y12 students attended the Safe Drive, Stay Alive presentation which is extremely valuable and thought provoking. The new system for embedding Community Values has now started which is encouraging students to be responsible and considerate members of their school community.



Jacqui Goodall
Chair of Curriculum

Policies

Governors reviewed and agreed the Careers, Food, Assessment and Reporting, Feedback, Collective Worship and School Uniform Policies.

Committee Updates

Personnel Committee

My first task as the new Chair of the Personnel Committee is to thank my predecessor, Elaine Cole, for her valuable work over the last year. As a senior HR manager in her 'day job', her experience will be missed. However, the committee still has the benefit of a wide range of management expertise and I am confident that we'll continue to support and challenge the school's Senior Leadership Team effectively in this crucial area.

The Personnel Committee oversees all matters relating to the school staff, both teaching and support, and maintains a number of relevant policies. The autumn term has been a particularly busy time, with compressed DfE timescales meaning that both pay and performance needed to be reviewed within a few days of each other. This is one of our most important tasks, and we assured ourselves that appraisal recommendations at all levels were soundly based and consistent across the board. Another focus area was staff development plans and we sampled a number of these. As always, observations for continuous improvement were made and will be considered at future meetings.

The committee also acts as the admissions authority for the school. With the increase in I1+ intake to 160 this year, committee members were keen to look at the process as a whole to be satisfied that there were no problems as a result - and I'm pleased to report that there were remarkably few issues this year. We are also continuing to monitor social mobility and the school's efforts to attract applications from across our community. At Sixth Form level, it was pleasing to see an increased cohort this year and we expect this to continue in future years as the larger I1+ intakes move through the school.

As we look forward to 2018, our focus will be on ensuring that we can attract and retain the best staff team possible at SWGS to continue to deliver outstanding results for our pupils. Now that's what I call a



Nick Lay
Chair of Personnel

Goodbye and Thank You



On Monday evening at the Full Board Meeting, we said goodbye to Parent Governor, Elaine Cole, who steps down from the Board and Personnel Committee. Elaine has served as a governor since October 2015 and also been Chair of the Personnel Committee. Her professional knowledge and expertise have been invaluable throughout her term in office.

As a result, we will be writing to you in the New Year asking for nominations for a Parent Governor vacancy. If you have an interest in the very rewarding role of being a Governor and would like to find out more, please contact me on governors@swgs.wilts.sch.uk and look out for election information in the new year.

Jane Walsham, Clerk to Governors

