

**Dear Parent/Guardian**

As this term draws to a close, sadly, we need to say goodbye to a number of staff. Mrs Finch leaves her part-time role as Biology lab technician to take up a position as CEO of a small charity, which I know she will find rewarding and fulfilling. Mrs Clark has been Cover Supervisor and KS4 Admin Support for the past three years, and has provided both pupils and staff with highly professional, efficient support, not only in the classroom and with KS4, but also carrying out much of the administration for Speech Day. We wish her well in her new post. Since 2012, Mrs Reid has supported the caretaking team for a small number of hours each week; she is now relocating and exploring wider career opportunities; we are most grateful for her support and wish her well in her new life.

Mrs Matthews joined the Maths department fourteen years ago, since which time she has very effectively supported and encouraged a huge number of pupils in their Maths learning, not only in the classroom, but through wider extra-curricular opportunities. She has also been active in wider school life, especially in her regular Friday after school run with the cross country pupils, come rain or shine! We are extremely sad that personal circumstances have resulted in her decision to retire and send her our very warmest wishes for the future.

Mrs Vallely has worked at TWGGS for almost twenty years, in a number of roles, all of which she has fulfilled superbly! During the school's time as a Specialist School in Music, Mrs Vallely was a superb administrator, getting actively involved in Music outside the classroom. She is a stalwart of staff choir and has accompanied innumerable school trips, to Iceland, India and Venice, to name but a few, as well as being a 'regular' on the Year 9 Camp in Devon. As Sixth Form Admin Support and Careers Co-ordinator she completely transformed Careers provision at TWGGS, setting up a fabulous series of lunchtime talks, pre-COVID, and updating Careers education and provision. Most recently, her role in charge of Health and Safety in the school has been sorely tested by the current pandemic, and she has supported us magnificently through risk assessments and mitigation to ensure that school is as safe as we can make it on a day to day basis. We will miss Mrs Vallely enormously and wish her a very happy retirement.

Joining us in January are Mrs Coleman-Smith, Cover Supervisor and KS4 Admin Support; Miss Hutchinson, Sixth Form Support and Careers Co-ordinator; Mrs Truman, part-time Biology Lab Technician; and Miss Bower-Morris, TWGGS Old Girl, joins us until June providing academic support with catch-up following lockdown, as well as being a cover supervisor. We hope they all have a very happy association with the school.

At long last, I have the exciting news that the Sports Hall is completed and was officially handed over to the school last week. It is absolutely stunning and will transform the teaching of PE and sport at TWGGS. We are so grateful to all those who donated to our fund-raising in order to make this possible. Staff are currently moving in equipment, and pupils will begin to have lessons in the Sports Hall and Dance Studio from January. (We would be grateful if parents could please ensure they have read Mrs Haskett's letter regarding training shoes.) We very much look forward to being able to show this new facility to parents, once the COVID-19 situation finally lifts. In the interim, we have attached some photographs taken for the building company's website.

This is a very strange end of term, without the usual glorious Carol Service in St John's Church, however, the TWGGS Music Department have worked hard to put together a virtual carol service, bringing a little of the Christmas spirit into these dark days. You may access this on the school website under 'News' or through this link <https://www.twggs.kent.sch.uk/508/news/post/57/twggs-first-virtual-carol-service> We very much hope you enjoy it and find the service uplifting.

In addition, we have been unable to hold Speech Day this year, to celebrate the achievements of our outgoing U6 and Year 11, at A Level and GCSE. U6 leavers have been coming into school on a rota basis to collect certificates and prizes, as well as the School Record, which is traditionally given at Speech Day and which we hope will provide a small memento. It has been lovely to hear of their first few months away from TWGGS, at university, in employment or on gap years. L6 pupils are not in school at present, and they will receive their certificates and prizes in mid-January, after Year 11 mocks. Despite the lack of a formal celebration, we would like to offer all of them our warmest congratulations.

### **Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal - Miss Parkinson**

We would like to thank everyone who contributed to support the Poppy Appeal this year. The Royal British Legion has written to express gratitude for the £1069.84 raised.

### **The Hygiene Bank - Mrs K Smith**

Thank you to all those who have donated to The Hygiene Bank so far this term. Our donation total to date is over 93kg of products, which is a phenomenal amount!

We are now an official collection point for The Hygiene Bank and we shall continue collecting **new, unused and in-date** toiletries, sanitary products, hygiene basics, beauty and personal care and household cleaning essentials for those in our local community who need them. Please think about adding extra items to your weekly shop and ask your child to give them to their form tutor for inclusion in the big yellow collection box. Period products are easily the most sought after products, but any items such as deodorant, shower gel, shampoo, make up, nappies, toilet roll, laundry detergent and surface cleaner are needed and greatly appreciated.

### **Hockey Selection for Freya Holder - Miss Parkinson**

Congratulations to Freya Holder 9I on her selection to play county hockey for the Kent U14 squad. Very well done!

### **The Army Scholarship Scheme - Sgt McGee**

The Army Scholarship scheme is an opportunity for students who want to become army officers in the future to gain some financial support through Year 13. It is also an opportunity to go through the army officer selection process and, potentially, get a job as an army officer after university. The initial selection involved a written personal statement, teacher reference, and a medical examination. From here, applicants are whittled down to a smaller number of eligible candidates. The final part of the selection involved a 2 day - 1 night selection weekend, known as Main Board; this involved many different tests that are meant to challenge candidates mentally and physically. For me, the most challenging was the planning exercise, which involved making a plan of action for a given scenario. This plan must then be discussed as a group, before being presented individually to assessors who question you extensively. As well as this, there were many physical tests including the bleep test and an individual based assault course, which in the heat wave of July were all definitely challenging. Candidates also had to complete interviews with the assessors and answer both personal and academic questions.

The course was challenging but rewarding and an opportunity to make lots of new friends with similar goals. I was honoured to be awarded the Army Scholarship and a full bursary through university, after which I will be given the chance to go to Sandhurst and train as an Army Officer.

### **Master Cadet Competition - Sgt Naismith**

Having joined cadets in 2017, I signed up mainly for a laugh and to see if I enjoyed the weekend camps my elder sister had raved about. Three years later, I was selected to represent the contingent for the "Master Cadet", a week-long course run predominantly by the Army Cadet Force (similar to the CCF but not attached to a school), which represents the highest level an ACF cadet can achieve. Run at Frimley Park, the week consists of interviews, presentations and an intense army exercise on area. The main challenge of the course is the exercise, requiring cadets to be constantly tactical and alert, putting into practice all the knowledge they have accumulated over their cadet career.

My Master Cadet course, however, happened in the middle of a global pandemic. This meant that the only enemy I was up against was convincing my brother not to play the drums whilst I attended an interview. Despite the differences in the award this year, I was still honoured to be nominated, and anxious to prove I had the necessary attributes over the Zoom call with Major Sydenham. I was asked questions such as "Give me an example of a time you have shown leadership" and "What is the importance of the army's standards and values to a Master Cadet". Having loved my time in the CCF and attended as many events as I could, I found I had a diverse range of examples and experience I could draw on for my answers. The consistent emphasis in TWGGS CCF on the standards and values also meant that it was effortless to talk about how these were present in every aspect of my cadet experience. At the end of the interview, I was told I had passed the course and earned the title of Master Cadet, and I credit this wholeheartedly to how the CCF emphasises personal development and genuine leadership skills.

I was incredibly grateful for the opportunity to have a formal interview, and I have gained invaluable experience which will certainly come in useful with future university and job applications. CCF has also given me a breadth of experience in leadership, and this certainly gives me confidence to face new challenges, both in and out of cadets. One of the most precious skills CCF has taught me is the ability to improvise, which is especially relevant when coping during a pandemic!

### **CCF Update - RSM Anna Smith**

CCF has recently started back up again after the October half-term and is being run weekly after school on Mondays. Due to Covid-19 we are only able to run CCF in year group bubbles, so we have organised a new curriculum of events for each year group based on their abilities and previous knowledge from last year. On Monday nights, we form up for parade with the Officer in charge of the year group and from there are dismissed to take part in training activities depending on the year group. Each week a different year group attends CCF so that we can ensure the bubbles are not broken by year groups mixing whilst training.

The Year 10s, who had only joined for two months before lockdown occurred, have been focusing on basic skills in First-Aid, Navigation, Signals and Drill. The Year 11s have been very busy: they are focusing on completing leadership courses in teaching, as well as completing the Weapons Handling Tests and they have also attended a day-time weekend camp in order to accelerate this. They have more weekend day-time training events booked for after the Christmas holidays. Year 12s have been focusing on completing their BTEC qualifications, which allows all the training they have completed previously in CCF to be used towards a Level 2 qualification. They are also in charge of building morale and togetherness in the Year 10 group and have been running activities throughout the month to augment Year 10 training. They will also take on charitable events and work on their ceremonial drill. Year 13s have been making 6 minute revision videos on basic skills, covering Fieldcraft, Navigation, First Aid and Navy Skills, to be used by younger year groups as revision tools.

All the year groups have also had weekly Drill lunchtime training sessions which have been run by senior cadets who have remained socially distanced from the year group at all times. This has enabled the cadets in younger years to be able to form friendships with senior cadets in a safe environment. In order for CCF to remain as inclusive as possible, involving all year groups, we have also run some whole contingent events which have allowed cadets to get involved from their homes. For example, on Remembrance Sunday we were inspired by the Commonwealth War Graves Commission and instead of marching outside the War Memorial in town, we looked up to the stars at 7pm on the 11th November to remember the fallen. We joined the #ShineOn movement by photographing ourselves on the 11th November looking up to the stars. We are going to produce a poster which could be used to represent our Remembrance of those events long ago and 2020, which has been a very eventful year for our CCF and the nation.

### **World Economics Cup - Lily Zelezetskii U6G, Team Captain**

During the weekend of the 28<sup>th</sup>/ 29th November, myself and a team of five Lower Sixth economists (Freya Ridge L6B, Hana Hashiguchi L6F, Carla Beeney L6C, Arabella Smalley L6D and Charlotte Hurst L6F) participated in the 2020 World Economics Cup. We were one of only two UK teams competing, the other UK team being from Harrow. Two teams were accepted from each developed nation around the world, and dozens of countries were represented, including Sweden, China, Singapore and Brazil.

Our first challenge was to individually complete an hour long multi-choice test of hundred questions, based on the fundamentals of Economics. With the competition aiming to encourage a wide range of levels to participate, these questions predominantly required an application of existing knowledge and logical thinking. Next, after a short break, was the two and a half hour deep comprehension exam, in which six extracts were provided to support another hundred multiple choice questions. As the exam went on, the texts undoubtedly got more difficult and it was definitely beyond A Level content. We began to get an insight into what sort of Economics is probably taught in other countries. The questions ranged from simple inference to complex, applied maths. Despite the difficulty of the paper, it was fascinating to deeply explore the application of much of the theoretical Economics we get taught in the classroom and we did our best to analyse what was in front of us, based on limited knowledge.

The last, and most important, task required the team to dedicate an entire 24 hours (although we chose to only use the day time hours) to solve a dilemma surrounding the global mobile phone market. The aim was to answer three short answer questions and then justify some longer solutions. After crafting our responses, we had to present our answer via a recorded video presentation. This was where I really saw the entire team step up to the challenge of

grasping some very complicated Upper Sixth topics, such as price discrimination, oligopolies, cartels and the associated graphs. For the short answer questions, we found some current and convincing research to improve worldwide smartphone usage and then we evaluated the impact on the global smartphone market.

It was the ceaseless determination everyone displayed as they concentrated on getting to the most reasonable and well-argued solutions that was so impressive. This was our first opportunity to participate in an international competition and we worked to the highest possible level. We ultimately spent 13 hours creating the presentation, with every single team member giving their best, right up until the end. Overall, the experience was an unbelievably rewarding exercise, not only furthering my own interest in Economics but also I had the bonus of working with a fantastic and energetic group of Lower Sixths who were wholly engaged in the competition and the problems it required us to solve. Thank you to the team for making the experience truly worthwhile and to Ms Reynolds for supporting us throughout the weekend and providing us with the opportunity in the first place.

### **Careers Department - Mrs Naomi Vallely**

I am delighted to report that, with enthusiastic encouragement from the Senior Careers Prefects, the link governor, and members of staff, I have set up a careers page on Google Classroom, bringing a lot of information into one easily accessible place both for pupils and teachers. It was gratifying to receive messages from some pupils almost immediately, asking about some of the material, which rather suggested that it was proving useful! Do please encourage your children to use the page, and to let me know ([careers@twggs.kent.sch.uk](mailto:careers@twggs.kent.sch.uk)) if they have suggestions for other topics/material to include.

In addition, we have secured dates in January for the training, which will enable our LinkedIn Champions to begin taking over the running of the school page, set up their own pages, and encourage their peers to set up and use their own pages. I am excited to report that the LinkedIn page can now be accessed from the home page of the school website, as well as from the careers pages.

This term there have been several virtual events which we have encouraged pupils to attend: most recently, 'My Future Kent & Medway Live Stream' which ran on Friday afternoon and evening to be available to more pupils and their parents, outlining career and work experience opportunities locally; earlier in November there was a webinar organised by Pathway CTM flagging up the many and varied career strands afforded by working for the National Grid. This also ran in the evening and gave some interesting insights into working in a large company; we also advertised a virtual event put on by the Trading Relationship Manager at Bloomberg, looking to encourage women to think about a career in finance and financial technology, which is still very much a male dominated industry. Aimed particularly at Year 12 and 13 students, the event brought together a panel of women discussing their careers, which made for very interesting watching; in addition, we managed to secure a lunchtime talk, using Zoom, aimed mainly at those studying Economics, but open to anyone to join on their own devices, given by our kind contacts at Morgan Stanley, two of whom are recent Old Girls! I was very pleased with the attendance from L6th Economists, enthusiastically supported by Ms Reynolds, while I ran a meeting for Y11 pupils in a classroom. We have more virtual talks and events planned for next term.

Also in November, some members of staff attended a virtual session put on by the School of Medicine at the University of Nottingham giving hints and tips to pass on to students undergoing medicine interviews. Mr Jones organises practice interviews for the TWGGS pupils who are applying to study medicine, which, this year at least, are all online. We have also been organising practice interviews for those pupils who are interviewed by their universities – most, but not all, for Oxford or Cambridge courses. Miss Parkinson has been instrumental in organising these, which the pupils always find invaluable. In addition, we have hosted a few pupils undergoing their actual online interviews in school.

Members of staff also took part in a Zoom meeting organised by the Careers and Enterprise Company to help schools think creatively on different ways of delivering workplace encounters, and achieving Gatsby Benchmark 6 in Covid times! Miss Parkinson and I have completed a further Compass evaluation which has flagged up some areas where we could add to our programme, and we will be working on these next term. Although I am stopping working at TWGGS at Christmas, I am pleased to have been invited to come in a few times in January in order to hand over to my successor, so I will bow out more gradually! I have very much enjoyed my 20 years at TWGGS and look forward to seeing the careers department flourish under new management.

## Support for young people's mental health - Kent Community Health Foundation Trust (KCHFT)

We have been asked to share this with parents:

*Have you noticed a change in your child's behaviour and worried they may be experiencing anxiety?*

*They may be*

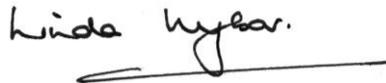
- *finding it hard to concentrate*
- *having trouble sleeping and/ or a change in appetite*
- *seeking constant reassurance*
- *feeling nervous or on edge.*

*If you feel your child is struggling and needs extra support, call the emotional health consultation line on 0800 011 3474 to speak to our team (option 1 then option 2). A school nurse will listen to you, provide basic coping strategies and if needed, support with a referral to the children and young people's (CYP) counselling service. Young people are also welcome to call the consultation line themselves, or if they prefer, they can text in confidence by text, through our ChatHealth service on 07520 618850 (monitored 9am-5pm Monday to Friday)*

*Kent Community Health Foundation Trust (KCHFT) provides support for children and young people's physical and emotional health needs, including the CYP's counselling service. More information on all our support can be found at [www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/school-health](http://www.kentcht.nhs.uk/service/school-health) or [www.kentyouthhealth.nhs.uk](http://www.kentyouthhealth.nhs.uk).*

At the end of this extraordinary year, the like of which I suspect none of us has ever experienced, it only remains to wish you a very Happy Christmas and a peaceful, healthy and hopefully more normal 2021.

With my very best wishes to you all,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Linda Wybar." The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a horizontal line.

Mrs L Wybar, Headteacher