

Woodlands Meed

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Spring brings the spirit of optimism and at the start of this Summer Term we are at long last truly optimistic about the new College Building. The Cabinet Decision to release £500K to fund the design was duly made and at the council meeting in February, West Sussex County Council agreed to include a

sum not more than £20M for the design and construction of a new college building over the next three years.

In the Building Update section of this newsletter we have included a review of where we are and details of the next steps in "The Journey". The school website

<http://www.woodlandsmeed.co.uk> has a specific page for college new build updates, but if you have any queries at any time please contact the governors.

At the same time we have been looking closely at the vocational facilities and training currently available for our older students. The redesign of the workshop has paid dividends with the upcycling enterprise in full production and the horticultural students sweeping the board at the Jim Green awards at South of England showground.

Marion Wilcock

Chair

School Funding

School funding continues to be a grave cause for concern. Although claims are made that spending on education has increased, according to the Institute of Fiscal Studies, the actual total school spending per pupil has fallen by 8% in real terms between 2009-10 and 2017-18.

Governors continue to support Worth Less, the West Sussex schools campaign for fairer funding. This campaign featured on the BBC Sunday Politics programme in March and can be found on

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/m0003j3h>

Upcoming Events

April 28

Teacher Tom Brown running the London Marathon to raise funds for the school.

June 17-21

Pop Up Shop in Burgess Hill Town Centre for upcycling enterprise

June 22

Woodlands Meed Music Festival Afternoon

Who we are

A full list of the governors is set out on the school website.

We are delighted to welcome Rose Griffiths to the Governing Body. Rose has been a volunteer at the College for several years, but until her retirement she was Director of the Faculty of Service Industries at Crawley College. The faculty offered a broad range of vocational courses from Entry 3 to Level 4. This is particularly valuable expertise for the governing body at a time when we are focusing on vocational training at the college

STRATEGY

Ensuring clarity of vision and strategic direction is one of the three core functions of governing boards. At Woodlands Meed we have a specific strategy committee which recently reviewed and updated the school strategic plan for 2017-2022.

Full details of the strategic plan and the strategic approach and objectives to achieve our Mission, Vision and Core Values are set out in the school website under the Governor tab.

Woodlands Meed Mission:

To provide an excellent education, together with independence, life and employment skills for generic special needs learners from 2 – 19 years in the heart of the community.

Woodlands Meed Vision:

To become a nationally recognised best practice Generic Special Needs School with particular expertise in Autism and Communication

Core Values:

Students First - everything we do is in the interests of achieving the best possible outcome for our young people.

Aspiration – we are looking to provide the best possible opportunities for each individual.

Empowerment – we will provide the staff team with the training, support and facilities to enable us to achieve our vision

BUILDING UPDATE



The Journey update

In the December 2018 Newsletter following our extensive discussions and negotiations with WSCC we anticipated that

- WSCC would approve the budget for £500k design fees,
- The project would be included in WSCC's Forward Plan of Key Decisions
- The decision would be made by full council to include the building in WSCC's capital programme.

We are pleased to report that each of these actions were duly taken, giving the green light to move forward to the appointment of consultants and the preliminary design stage.

Governors have been meeting with Council officers to agree the procurement process and next steps.

Staff and Pupils have worked hard to prepare a brilliant design brief setting out their ideas and requirements for the new building, which has been provided to the proposed architects.



The Journey next steps

Governors and Council Officers will meet the proposed architects and building contractors on Monday 29th April. Following the meeting the appointments will be confirmed and we will be able to release the details to staff, parents & carers and the public.

Work will then start on the design and layout of the building and the detailed practical arrangements including those for ensuring that the college will continue with business as usual and with the minimum of disruption to both pupils and local residents during the construction phase.

Governors proposed that if it can be achieved, the new building should incorporate a larger sportshall which can be used more widely as a Centre for Inclusive Sports as there is no such facility in the South East. The enhancement of the facilities which would be required over and above the sports hall which will be provided in any event, will require a grant from the Sports Council. An initial approach has been made to the Sports Council to which there has been an encouraging response. Governors are therefore pursuing this possibility.

We are still on track following the design and planning stage, for the final costing to be available for the decision to fund the build cost by December 2019 so the new building can be ready for occupation in September 2021.

We will consult with statutory consultees, staff, parents & carers and local residents as soon as the initial designs are available.

Planned Activities

This term the governors plan to:

- review the School Development Plan and Governors Development Plan to accord with the Strategy
- review subject reports
- recruit parent governor
- attend the termly governor visit
- agree and monitor the budget for 2019/20 and three year overview
- review and develop plans for vocational courses and enterprises.

In the next edition of the Governor's Newsletter, we will outline the extensive data and information which Governors constantly review to ensure the progress of students, health and welfare of students and staff and the continual training and development programmes for staff and governors.

Parent Response and Contribution

If you have any queries or any matters which you wish to be reviewed by the governors (in confidence or otherwise) please contact by letter via the school office or email

governors@woodlandsmeed.co.uk