



AYLESBURY  
GRAMMAR SCHOOL  
*Founded 1598*

# AGSNEWSLETTER

SUMMER TERM 2021



COUNTY CHAMPIONS!....The U14 Cricket Team reigned supreme in their County Cup this season...

Welcome to the Summer Term edition of the AGS Newsletter. 'Making the best of the situation' has been the mantra this term. Thankfully no further periods of lockdown but the continued on-site restrictions have severely limited our students' opportunities to impress outside of the classroom. But, drawing inspiration from our AGS Learner characteristics of resilience and innovation, where there have been activities on offer we have certainly not been short of willing participants!

The cricket and tennis seasons not only sprang into life these past few months but for once the weather played ball too allowing our U14 cricket team to pick up their County Cup trophy and the U12s and U13s reached their finals but sadly proved to be a step too far this time. In tennis the Year 7/8 and Year 9/10 teams both enjoyed County Cup victories and now look forward to representing AGS in the National Finals in the Autumn, a truly fantastic achievement!

Despite one-way systems and year group bubbles various important works have been taking place across the school site. The tower block facelift was completed just after the Easter break and the significant improvement works at the front of school and in Art & DT have certainly gathered pace – read on for more information and photos on those projects. And most recently we won our school improvement fund bid to replace the very ageing and quite leaky Foundation Hall roof, which will now be completely refitted over the upcoming Summer break.

And so here we are at the end of another somewhat strange, very busy but ultimately fulfilling term. Well done and thank you to everyone connected with the school for your efforts and we hope to see you all well-rested and recharged for the Autumn term in September.

Mr G Dallas - Editor

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## IBSC Europe/UK Hosted Online Global Conference

***Swan Song: According to ancient belief, the beautiful song sung by swans just before their death after a lifetime of silence***

On Thursday 17 June, the Headmaster introduced the 2021 International Boys' Schools Coalition Conference UK-Europe region. Year 13 student, Michael Adebisi, delivered a powerful opening student performance to a global audience with his original composition entitled Swan Song. Through the symbol of the swan, the performance poem explores the hidden toll of racial inequity on people of colour, calling for society to open their eyes to existing prejudice and the accumulation of its effects over time. Make time to listen to Michael's urgent entreaty here

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=a148rzSPAFI>

Michael's performance was shown to every tutor group during the two weeks that followed.





## BRAND & COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

There has been a significant focus this year on the development of a Marketing and Brand Strategy, the results of which you are seeing come to life this term, with the aim of creating a consolidated School Brand Identity and creating a three-year implementation plan including a social media strategy. This has been a major project working alongside the Headmaster and one of our Governors Jo Moore, who has played an instrumental role in our thinking.

Key to this work has been understanding how the current School communications do not reflect the true experience of the School at it is today, understanding and tackling perception issues, alongside our recruitment and fundraising challenges.

The groundwork for the new School Brand Strategy kicked off by delving into the perceptions of our School which directed the insight. Staff, students, parents, former students and staff, Governors and our Leadership team were involved in the research and focus groups.

From this research we identified myths surrounding the School, many of which were based on historical perception, incorrect information or word of mouth. Mindful of the many stakeholders we have to satisfy, we reviewed our competitive landscape, the current social and cultural issues facing our students and our School, and our School marketing mix – the result was the ability to develop a clear and distinctive brand platform summarised here:



We have an extraordinary School with a wonderful history and an amazing offering to all who come here. Our pioneering teachers, dedicated students, passionate staff, hardworking PTA and highly skilled Governing body all ensure the future of AGS remains a strong, secure and thriving environment for the next generations.

It's critical that everything is done to protect the future success of the School and ensuring that the incredible work that takes place each and every day within the School is represented at its best at all times and so a detailed Aylesbury Grammar School Brand Book was produced to share the insight from this work and to clearly outline the new visual and verbal identity which we are now all adhering to when we represent the School in any way.

We are all custodians of this amazing School and our aim is to pass the baton on at some point in the future knowing we have done all we can to protect the heritage of our School and to shape the future.

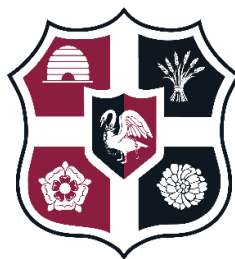
Earlier this week we launched our new School Film which was created to bring to life the way in which we do everything we can to nurture the character of our students so they have the courage to be who they really want to be, define for themselves who they want to be in the world, and flourish through their lives. As a film in the education sector it is quite different and uses a combination of animation and footage to really highlight our key messages.

The film aims to clearly define who we are as a School and to show you as current parents what we truly believe in. We believe in the inherent goodness of young men and this film shows that an AGS student is one who will excel culturally, emotionally, socially and of course academically from attending AGS. They leave us as well-balanced, tolerant, compassionate, brave, and dynamic young people, who all form part of a wider alumni community of Old Aylesburians.

On that note, it was good to work with OA Will Littlewood (Hampden '11) and the team at Raw Pictures to produce this. Wonderful that we are able to collaborate our OA community for all sorts of expertise.

***Mrs A Cox – Development Director***

Watch the film here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bbKHXXGje7A>



## SCHOOL FUNDRAISING

### Art, DT & Engineering

Our focus this year has been on raising funds to complete refurbishment of Art, DT and Engineering. Our target was to add £15,000 to the £300,000 already received from the John Mason Raven Trust. The significant donation to the school of £300,000 was through building a strong relationship with the Trust over many years and we are extremely grateful to the Trustees for considering AGS as a major benefactor for their funds.

As we began this academic year, we had already secured additional gifts and pledges to the value of £15,000 - the aim was to raise £150,000 to bring the total to £450,000 to complete the entire refurbishment of the Art, DT and Engineering building in this summer. This important project remained very much a priority for our School to enable us to deliver a modern curriculum and to update the now very tired facilities.

The pandemic made fundraising a little more challenging but we have remained focused on the vision and fundraising goal. After all, our School will be here long after the pandemic and our students still need and indeed deserve nothing less than the best facilities we can possibly provide.

Vision for the refurbishment of Art, DT and Engineering Project:





It is wonderful to be able to report that by May half term we had achieved our goal. Our community's willingness to support our fundraising efforts really did have a significant impact and the images below show work is well underway.

Fundraising in the state education sector continues to be such an emotive subject but this type of philanthropy supports not just the present but the future too. It enables the team here to plan and implement much needed improvements to the School site. We have been here on our Walton Road site for well over a century and so we still have a number of buildings in dire need of refurbishment. Going forward, we have a very clear vision for the future but right now our focus is simply on making sure current facilities are appropriate for teaching and learning in the 21<sup>st</sup> century. It's the very least we need to do.

Below are some initial shots of the build. Thanks again to our community - our vision for Art, DT and Engineering will be a reality in September.

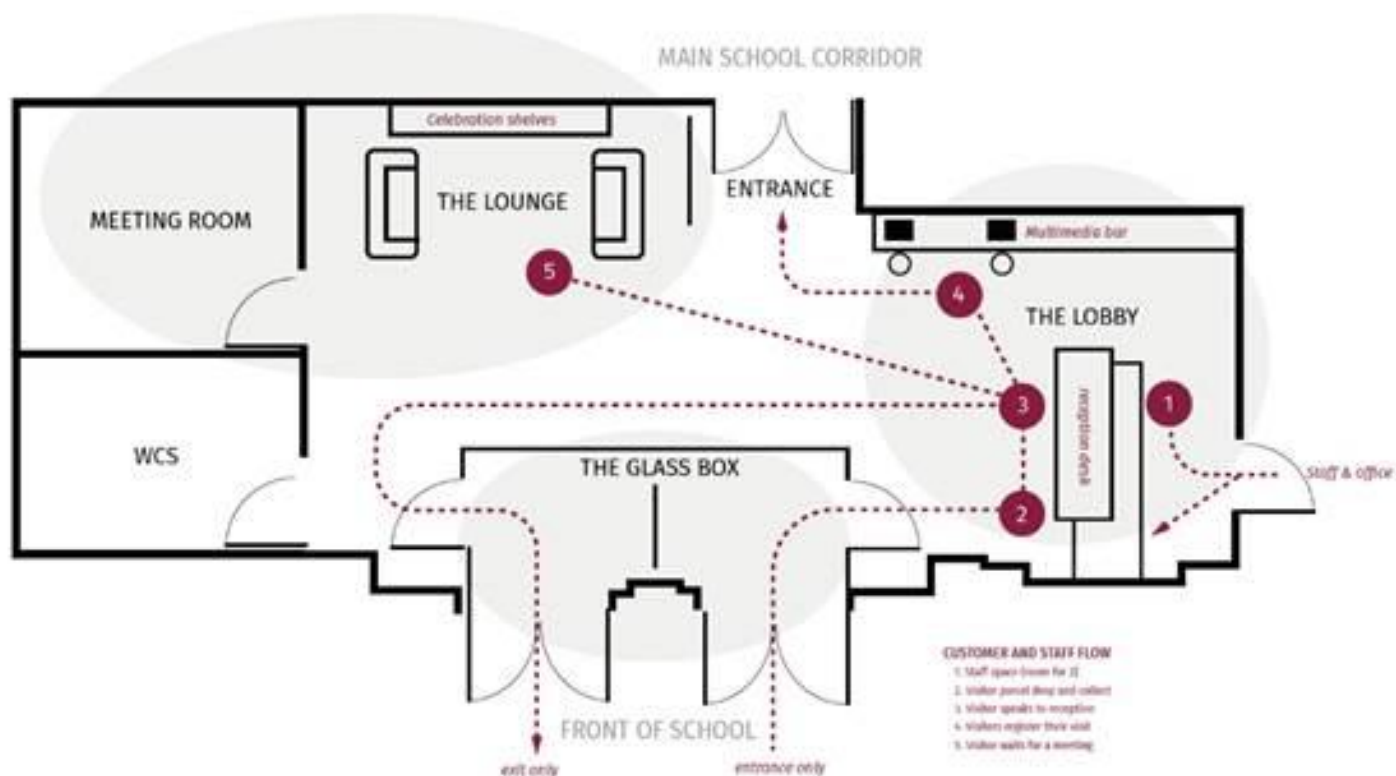


## NEW ENTRANCE & STAFF ROOM

At the time of writing the project to create new entrance for our School is now well underway. This essential project has been some time in the planning and will enhance the protection of our students, increase safety and create an entrance that reflects the quality of our School.

The entrance to the School is being entirely remodelled – the new design will move the existing staff room area, with entry and exit doors in the centre of the main building. The project is being funded through a combination of a generous gift from the Aylesbury Grammar School Foundation and from the capital expenditure of the School budget. It has become increasingly important for these essential changes to take place – our site is still rather exposed on the Walton Road and we need to do all we can to safeguard our students and staff.

The designs for this area are detailed below:







A vital part of the project is the relocation of the staff room. The new staff room will take the place of the existing entrance lobby and main office, as well as there being an extension to ensure that the footprint remains similar to the current staff room.

We very much look forward to welcoming you back to AGS via our new entrance in the new term.



## ECO-TEAM

In our Spring Newsletter we reported that construction work on the planned urban Eco-garden was just about to start and it did! Over the Easter break with the excellent project management of Mr Martin Frampton (AGS parent) and a small but hardworking team of volunteers the AGS Eco-garden was born. This area is being used primarily as a flower garden but we couldn't resist putting some strawberries in too. An enthusiastic band of students have been tending to the garden in their year group bubbles, expertly led by our Biology Technicians, Mrs Levitt and Mrs Giles.



## BEFORE



## AFTER





# AFTER, AFTER!





And let's not forget the school vegetable garden project which continues to bear fruit.....or.....errr....vegetables! The rhubarb, onions and garlic have been growing well, so much so that we were able to donate our first crop of rhubarb, mostly to Mrs Levitt and Mrs Giles, and the onions to Mr Warner, our catering manager who will be using them to feed the masses in the dining hall in due course.





## MR RAMSBOTTOM IS RAISING FUNDS TO SUPPORT CARDIAC RISK IN THE YOUNG – PLEASE SUPPORT HIM IF YOU CAN...

Mr Ramsbottom is doing something amazing for our students and to raise awareness of the incredibly important charity CRY. His aim is to create a CRY hardship screening fund here in School to support the screening of our students. In the autumn term we will set up screening days at AGS to screen our students. We want to do all we can to raise awareness and to prevent sudden cardiac deaths.

*I'm fundraising for the fabulous charity CRY - Cardiac Risk in the Young. CRY's Vision is preventing young sudden cardiac deaths through awareness, screening and research, and supporting affected families. My ambition is to raise as much money as possible, to build an AGS CRY screening fund, to be used to provide screening opportunities and also, to support our families who are not in a position to fully fund screening for their sons themselves. As an ambitious target, we have provisionally booked CRY to come in for two days screening in the autumn term this year.*

*CRY supports young people diagnosed with potentially life-threatening cardiac conditions and offers bereavement support to families affected by YSCD. CRY promotes and develops heart screening programmes and funds medical research and offers subsidised ECG and Echocardiogram screening to all young people between the ages of 14 & 35.*

**Mr G Ramsbottom**

<https://www.justgiving.com/fundraising/agsrambo141miles>



## YEAR 11 - VIRTUAL WORK EXPERIENCE

At the end of June we held our first ever Virtual Work Experience Programme for Year 11. We have encouraged all students to gain a greater understanding of the world of work by meeting with employers through video call and undertaking industry appropriate remote tasks as directly by the employer.

Many students have sought their own placement either directly with an employer or through schemes organised by agencies such as Springpod, Speakers for Schools and InvestIN.

We have also been delighted to assist nearly 50 students in making contact with 30 different employers through the generous support of the AGS community including parents and Old Aylesburians who have offered a huge range of fascinating opportunities to our students.

It has been really inspiring to take advantage of the remote working experience gained by employers over the past year and a half to enable access to careers experiences that may not have been available in the past and continue to prepare our students to be successful in their future.

## HOUSE TROPHIES – FINAL RESULTS

A slightly streamlined series of competitions this year due to Covid-19 but we were please to complete both trophies. Congratulations to Paterson House and Hampden House for their respective triumphs and well done to all students who competed at any time throughout the year and to all Heads of House and their Head Boys and Deputies for leading from the front as always.

### BRODIE (SPORTS)

1st	PATERSON	19.5
2nd	HAMPDEN	18.5
3rd	RIDLEY	15
4th	DENSON	14.5
5th	LEE	9
6th	PHILLIPS	7.5

### WATSON (ARTS)

1st	HAMPDEN	18
2nd	RIDLEY	15
Joint 3rd	LEE	14.5
Joint 3rd	PATERSON	14.5
5th	DENSON	12
6th	PHILLIPS	10



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Following the suspense, occasional euphoria and ultimate disappointment with the culmination of the delayed EURO 2020 competition we still have to look back to the Summer of 1966 for England's only international tournament win. And when Bobby Moore lifted the Jules Rimet trophy along with hat-trick hero Geoff Hurst and goal-scorer Martin Peters, plus those eight other players who didn't play for West Ham 😊 AGS was just about to start filling our brand new (heated) indoor swimming pool – a fabulous facility still in constant use to this day.

We wish our entire AGS community a fantastic Summer break and look forward to seeing you all again in September.





# AYLESBURY GRAMMAR SCHOOL

*Founded 1598*

Nurturing Character since 1598

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