

Word from the Wood

HIGHGATE WOOD SCHOOL PSA NEWSLETTER



The Sustainability Society is hoping to take advantage of HWS's spectacular green surroundings -- see p.6

WE'RE BACK!

The PSA is delighted to be bringing you the second edition of *Word from the Wood*. With just days to spare before the end of term, we've managed to put together a bumper Spring edition packed with exciting updates from the school, which is a hive of activity after the relaxation of Covid restrictions. This time we've dived and delved to discover what makes HWS stand out, and, as the contents of this issue show, there's definitely more to HWS than meets the eye. We've also got the latest announcements from the PSA and an at-a-glance list of dates for your diary. Scroll down to read up on all things Highgate Wood!

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KEEP IN TOUCH

[SIGN UP](#) TO RECEIVE OUR PSA UPDATES

FOLLOW US ON TWITTER: @HWS_PSA

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- [HIGHGATE WOOD PARENTS](#)
- [HIGHGATE WOOD PSA](#)
- [HIGHGATE WOOD PARENTS BUY SELL SWAP](#)
- [NEW YEAR 7 \(2022 INTAKE\) VIRTUAL MEETING PLACE](#)



What's on: Upcoming PSA events – see p.3

WHAT'S ON

UPCOMING PSA EVENTS

HWS RAFFLES



WIN
WEEKEND PASSES TO READING FESTIVAL
and
DECLAN MCKENNA LIVE AT THE ROYAL ALBERT HALL

Enter now to win these fabulous experiences for you or your kids

HWS PSA is raffling:

TWO VIP WEEKEND PASSES to
Reading OR Leeds, including
camping!
26-28 August Bank Holiday Weekend

Two tickets to
Declan McKenna & Friends



Declan McKenna plays live at the Royal Albert Hall on Monday 2 May 2022

ENTER FESTIVAL
RAFFLE NOW

Closing date 31 May

ENTER McKENNA
RAFFLE NOW

HURRY!
Closing date 31 March

WHAT'S ON

UPCOMING PSA EVENTS



London's hottest, fast-paced, fun-fuelled, raucous and action-packed game-show style quiz is coming to Highgate Wood School! Recommended by *Time Out* and receiving rave write-ups on *Design My Night*, we are super excited to be hosting this event – strictly for parents and carers only! – on Friday 13th May. (And if anyone tells you it's an unlucky date, don't worry! Just take precautions: avoid ladders, black cats and ridiculous superstitions. And play musical bingo.)

Musical Bingo is just like regular bingo, but instead of shouting out numbers, the DJ plays songs! People mark off songs as they appear, whilst one of the fabulously entertaining comperes introduces the rules and the prizes. Read more about it on the adrenaline-pumping [website](#). It's enough to get you dancing on the tables before you've even booked your tickets.



...AAAAND IT'S BACK!

WATCH THIS SPACE...



It's been almost three years since the last legendary MADFest was held in the summer of 2019 at Highgate Wood School, but we haven't forgotten how to party! If anything, we're keener than ever before to put on a good time for everyone. This is our 'big' school fundraiser that brings together everyone who makes up HWS – students, parents and teachers – and celebrates music, art and drama, as well as our wonderful school community. MADFest will take place on 24th June. Make sure you [sign up to receive our updates](#) so that you don't miss ticket info.

THE HIGHS

LATEST PSA EVENTS

WINTER AUCTION

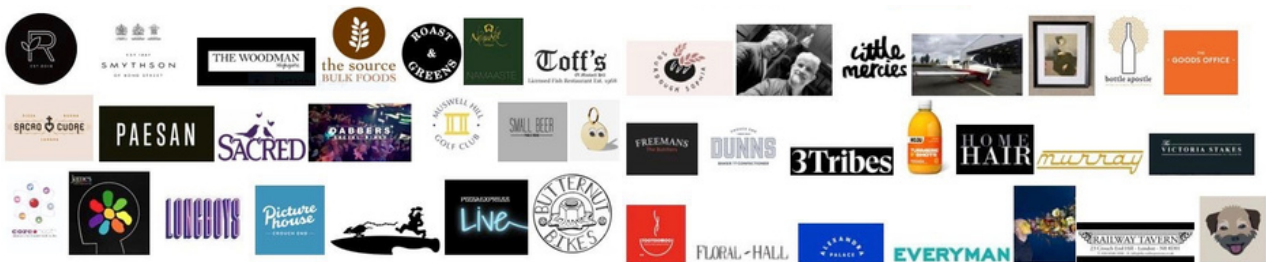
The Winter Auction took place entirely online this year and raised **over £7,500** for the PSA fund. We were supported by many fabulous donations from local businesses such as **Butternut Bikes, 3 Tribes, Small Beer, The Railway Tavern, The Source Bulk Foods** and **Floral Hall**, as well as some exceptional donations from members of the school community. Chris from **Mathnasium** offered an assessment and one month's maths tuition. **The Woodman** pub in Highgate supported us with gift vouchers, explaining: "We've had some great guys work [here] that have come through Highgate Wood School and it would be our pleasure to show some thanks... We would also love to donate some free mulled wine and mulled cider for any staff drinks." True to their word, The Woodman generously supplied the beers and ciders that were served at the Staff Appreciation Christmas Tea.



The 30-min flight in a Van's 4-seater Aircraft RV10 achieved £200, while VIP priority entry tickets to see James live went for £170

Every donation, from the everyday to the truly unique, helped us to achieve our impressive total. Some of the more unusual items that got bidders into a spin were: a baking workshop offered by **Sourdough Sofia**, an **artwork by Lorna Doyan**, a home baked **luxury Guinness cake** and a **flight in a Van's 4-seater Aircraft RV10**. VIP tickets for **James** live and some luxury items from **Smythson** also smashed their target value and gave the auction an extra boost.

Alongside the auction, we also asked parents to donate directly into a fund for the library wishlist and a fund for the music department to put towards instruments. We were thrilled with the response and will continue to keep these donation opportunities open. We were particularly grateful to the family who got in touch and offered an almost new digital piano to the music department for free.



The PSA would like to thank everyone – businesses, patrons, bidders, supporters, donors and winners alike – who contributed to our auction. We couldn't have done it without you.

THE HIGHS

LATEST PSA EVENTS

Sustainability Saturday



(Above) Eleanor and Florence (Year 8) with their bargain books
(Below) Sarah with Charlotte (Yr 7), happy with her find at the Book Swap



Our first live event of the year took place on a thankfully dry Saturday in February. It was a cocktail of small-scale sustainability-themed efforts to reduce waste, raise awareness, revitalise the school grounds and regain a sense of school community after a long Covid-enforced period of disengagement.

A spring clean of the Food Tech garden was combined with a books and clothing swap shop, a second-hand uniform sale, and a cake and coffee stall. Those who popped along picked up some fantastic items from the swap shop.

Kit and Daisy (both Year 8) were thrilled with the clothes swap. Both had brought along clothes to give away, and picked up some quality items in return. "It's like going to a charity shop without spending money," said Kit. "It makes you feel better about getting new clothes because you're saving it from landfill," added Daisy, as she picked up a striped shirt. One person's trash is – sometimes – another person's treasure.



The PSA also invited the local conservation charity CREOS (Crouch End Open Space) to attend. CREOS consists of a group of local people who donate their spare time to help manage the area of open fields, woodland and allotments flanking the tennis and cricket clubs adjacent to the school. HWS is very lucky to be situated in an area rich in greenery, natural landscapes and open space, and the fact that the public can enjoy it all is down to the hardworking members of CREOS, who keep it tidy and under control, encourage bio-diversity and maintain the pathways.

Jacky Wedgwood, committee member of CREOS, hopes to engage further with the school on its sustainability efforts. Jacky said: "We would like to foster a more productive relationship with the school and encourage the students to take more interest in nature. We would be delighted to lead groups of students on guided walks to show them what CREOS does and teach them how to take care of their environment."

FUNDING FOCUS

WHAT'S ON HWS'S WISHLIST?

This is where our funds go...

SUSTAINABILITY PROJECT

As the school adapts to life beyond Covid, other concerns have come to the fore. Chief among these is a commitment to **sustainable initiatives**. The PSA is delighted to be helping the school act on that commitment and has already supporting some sustainability themed projects. Assistant Headteacher Tristan Ashman has taken the lead with teachers and parents, establishing a focus group to instil a more eco-conscious approach across the board. Mr Ashman commented, "We are progressing to explore plastic free, rewilding, sustainable energy, recycling and developing our wider educational plans for sustainable living."

Meanwhile, Assistant Headteacher Emily Issitt is working closely with the 'Sustainability Society', an enthusiastic group of HWS students who want to tackle some of issues around environmental education, sustainable living and appropriate stewardship of the planet. There are plans to work with local community gardens, the team at Crouch End Open Space, Haringey Council and local waste management services to understand how HWS can promote sustainable objectives. The school has started its very own eco Twitter feed to document its sustainability journey. Please [click](#) to follow.

OTHER FUNDING AIMS

The school is also hoping to improve provision for neurodiverse children at HWS by linking up with a charity called the **Umbrella Project**, which helps schools and other organisations enhance their awareness and understanding of atypical learners. The PSA will be funding this endeavour. The PSA is also funding **Future First** (launching after Easter), an indispensable platform for the school and its leavers to keep in touch with each other. It's a tool that will enable the school to build a better idea of the destinations of their school leavers as well as facilitating a constructive flow of knowledge and experience between past and present students, for example, through alumni returning to the school to share tips and advice on life beyond the school gates.

More generally, the PSA is also supporting the school with a concerted effort to improve its extra-curricular and **enrichment provision**. HWS is keen to widen its offering of activities and initiatives for all students. The PSA will be contributing financially to this project, but we are also recruiting parents and carers who may be able to directly help by providing instruction in extra-curricular activities. Please [get in touch](#) for more information on what we're looking for, if you are interested. Finally, we are also helping the school on a long-term plan to improve its **sports and PE facilities**, particularly the changing rooms.

Every event we hold, every coffee we sell, every body who comes along to a PSA event is helping the school to realise these aims.

SCHOOL NEWS

WHAT'S GOOD AT HIGHGATE WOOD?

DEBATE MATE



On Thursday 3 March, a serious incident took place on school grounds. Witnesses described how heated arguments broke out between pupils from HWS and three other local schools.

Fortunately, this was no playground parley, but a formal debating challenge: Round 2 of the Urban Debate League (UDL) was hosted by HWS and attended by students from Bishop Douglas, the Archer Academy and Heartlands.

The HWS debate team, largely made up of pupils from Years 7 and 8, saw off their opponents in five out of six exchanges, despite being pitted against KS4 students! Then again, the HWS debate team is pretty well rehearsed; every week, around 30 HWS students gather at the **Debate Mate** club to argue a variety of topics under the instruction of Debate Mate mentors, for instance: should countries ban companies because of their environmental footprint? Should homework and sanctions be banned from school? Should politicians have the right to privacy? Later this year, the debate team will take on more challenges and competitions, including the UDL Finals.

Debating helps students expand their knowledge of the world. It helps to make them more empathetic, think critically, research effectively and speak confidently in public. It benefits their ability to organise thoughts, write persuasively, structure arguments and respond to new information while also helping with their social skills, collaboration, leadership and confidence.

In the next academic year, Debate Mate will open up again to new members and will organise a 'mock debate' for all KS3 and year 10 students so they can see what a debate looks like. Interested students will be able to sign up and come to an initial meeting to express their interest and have a go at debating.



SCHOOL NEWS

WHAT'S GOOD AT HIGHGATE WOOD?

THE WIZ



The lion has roared, the scarecrow has sung, the Tin Man has creaked into life, and the secret is out: the first school production since 2019 has been announced as **The Wiz** – the 'super-soul' 1974 musical based on The Wizard of Oz, which was also adapted into a film released in 1978 starring Diana Ross – and rehearsals are now well underway.



The students playing the Scarecrow, the Lion and Dorothy during early rehearsals, and [right] the promotion poster for the 1978 film production of *The Wiz*



What with the flurry of catch-up events jostling for space in the calendar alongside exams after the long period of hibernation, *Word from the Wood* can't say for sure when the production will take place, but it is likely to be in July. Performance dates and times will be communicated as soon as they are confirmed.



Year 9 and 10 students playing Dorothy, Lion, Tin Man and Scarecrow

CAREERS FAIR

The school was very pleased to be able to hold its annual Careers Fair *in real life* this year for Year 8s, 11s and post-16s.

Representatives from the police, the Army, local colleges, universities, ITV, marketing and nursing attended the event, which was held on 4th February.

The theme of the day was "I wish someone had told me...". Students were encouraged to think about different questions to ask the careers representatives and to consider the eight 'essential skills' of a successful career-navigator: Listening, Speaking, Problem Solving, Creativity, Staying Positive, Aiming High, Leadership and Teamwork.

Below: some photos from the event showing students and vocation spokespeople



SCHOOL NEWS

WHAT'S GOOD AT HIGHGATE WOOD?

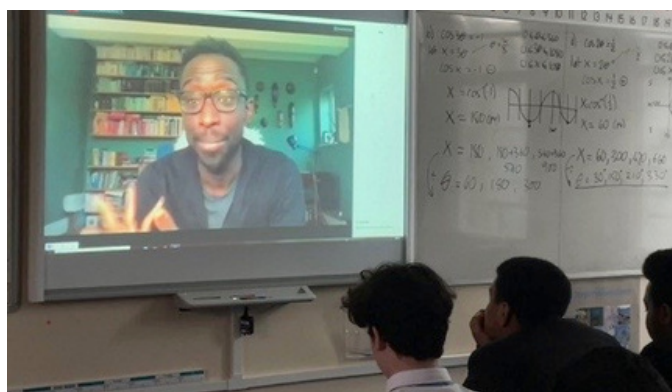
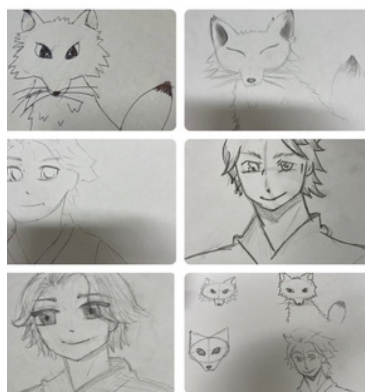
LEARNING RESOURCE CENTRE

The Learning Resource Centre (LRC, aka the library) is an invaluable asset to HWS. It provides regular workshops for students that broaden and encourage their learning.

In February, a group of Year 8 students completed a 12-week course creating their own illustrated stories. Run by the locally-based Every Child An Achiever network and funded by Erasmus, the stories focused on tolerance, respect for all, diversity and inclusion. The stories will be published in an anthology.

The LRC also took part in some wonderful online events as part of the Virtual Conference for Secondary Schools run by the National Literacy Trust. Students from Year 8 attended a workshop with Julian Sedgwick and Chie Kutsuwada, author and illustrator of *Tsunami Girl*, a book about the 2011 tsunami. The kids produced some impressive illustrations of their own. Year 9 students attended an event with Bill Edgar, sports journalist for *The Times*, as well as a discussion on the book *What Is Masculinity? Why Does It Matter? And Other Big Questions*.

Year 10 students attended an event with Aamah Rahman and Nikesh Shukla (novelist and editor of *The Good Immigrant*) on the power of storytelling to change our thinking about who we are and to help us step inside another's experience.



[Left] Some of the Year 8 students' illustrations from the the *Tsunami Girl* workshop; [Right] Students engaging with Jeffrey Boakye, one of the authors of *What Is Masculinity?*

For World Book Day in March, eight members of HWS staff dressed up in an assortment of disguises for a series of three videos. These were shown in the days leading up to World Book Day and the disguised readers read excerpts from a selection of great books. All students were invited to submit their guesses as to the readers' identities, for entry into a prize draw. On World Book Day itself the final video was shown, all identities were revealed, and the prize-winner was drawn.

The school librarian writes a brilliant [blog](#) tracking all these exciting events and all things literacy and book-related at HWS. You can read it by clicking [here](#).

SCHOOL NEWS

TIME TO REFLECT

WE NO LONGER REFER TO THE REFERRAL ROOM...

In November 2021, HWS asked parents, pupils and staff members to take a survey about the school's behaviour policy. Following this, HWS has made some changes with regard to behaviour management. A notable change is that what was commonly known as 'referral' and 'out of circulation' has been rebranded 'reflection'. Hence, the Referral Room is now the Reflection Room. The aim is to help students take ownership of their behaviour and not see the sanction as something that has been done to them, but rather as a consequence of their own actions and decisions. The new approach also means that students are able to remedy, rectify and learn from their actions.

Students sent to the Reflection Room (the reasons for which haven't changed) will have to complete a Reflection Sheet, writing down which decisions led to them being sent to the Reflection Room. Same-day detentions also involve a 'reflection conversation' with a staff member and, if done properly, they will be let out early (after 30 minutes instead of 60).

Dean Mansfield, HWS's Head of Behaviour Management, explained, "We have found in the past that students were not given opportunities to consider what behaviour choices led to them being withdrawn from the learning. The concept of being sent to the Reflection Room encourages students to consider where things did not meet HWS's expectations. It allows them to consider how next time they should make different choices, and, really importantly, it allows them, in the Reflection Conversation at the end of the day, to rebuild the relationship with the teacher or staff member before returning to the next lesson or in their next interaction."

TALKING CONFLICT

Lately, school leaders have had to tackle a brand new issue: talking about events in Ukraine with the students. Staff are mindful that conflict needs to be dealt with carefully as it is a sensitive subject for many individuals and there is no simple response.

Teachers have been instructed on how to deal with anxieties in children affected by the news and there has been dedicated work in PHSE/LifeSkills and during tutor time.

What with climate change, Covid and the effects of Lockdown, the addition of a war zone so close to home leaves children facing an onslaught of drama and possible cause for trauma. The school is acutely aware of this and staff are reviewing how best to support students as they manage their emotional responses to what they learn from the media, whilst managing the experience of growing up and coping with school.

SCHOOL CALENDAR

REALLY USEFUL DATES

- Tue 29th March 2022 – Year 12 Parents' Evening
- **Fri 1st April 2022 – End of the Spring Term**
- **4th April – 18th April 2022 – School Holidays**
- Tue 19th April 2022 – Start of Summer term
- Tue 10th May 2022 – Year 10 Parents' Evening
- Fri 13th May 2022 – Musical Bingo Night
- 30th May – 3rd June 2022 – Half term
- Fri 24th June 2022 – MADFest
- Tue 28th June 2022 – Year 13 Celebration Evening
- Mon 27th June 2022 – Primary Transition Day
- Fri 1st July 2022 – Year 11 Celebration Evening
- **Thu 21st July 2022 – End of Summer term**

CATCH UP WITH A 'WOODER

Out of the Woods

SCOTT OWEN - CLASS OF 2000

Scott Owen – pictured left in as he was in Yr11, and as he is today, right – left Highgate Wood School in 2000 after meeting his future wife Kimberley at the school. His own three children now also go to HWS



Favourite subject?

Design Technology

Best memory of school?

Getting through years 7 to 11 with 100% attendance and punctuality and being presented with a certificate at the end of year 11 for it. That's a whole 5 years of no lates or absences!

What have you been doing since leaving?

Working, studying further and having my own family – I met my partner, Kimberley at Highgate Wood School and we now have three children in years 8, 9 and 12.

Plans for the future?

I'm a mechanical engineer and project manage multi-million pound projects around the UK. My ambition is to continue to succeed in my career and become the big boss!

Any advice for your younger self?

Work hard and don't get too worried about friendships – it works out over time.

If you know someone who may want to be featured as an Out of the Woods alumnus, please email janemhegarty@btinternet.com

AND FINALLY...

HOW CAN YOU HELP?

JOIN THE PSA

The PSA provides an essential link between home and school. We rely on a dedicated group of parents to do this, and we need more parents! We are always seeking new committee members to maintain our numbers, in order to increase our output, maximise our reach and broaden our demographic representation, and we need you now!

We are currently missing a few members and are actively recruiting. Check out [the PSA page](#) on the school website for a bit more info, and if you think you'd like to know more about joining the PSA, please [get in touch](#). There is no commitment at this stage; we'll invite you to sit in on a meeting before you decide.

HELP US FUNDRAISE

The PSA is always fundraising. We're here to support the school and fundamental to that is keeping enough money in the pot to help it grow and develop in areas where it needs the most help. We largely fundraise through events. If you have any inspiration about fundraising events you'd like to run, please do get in touch to discuss your proposals. We are always open to new ideas.

There are other ways you can help us fundraise without any extra cost to you and with little effort on your part:

- [Participate in the HWS lottery](#) for just £1 per month
- [Register with EasyFundraising](#) to raise funds for us as you shop, at no extra cost to you
- Register with [Amazon Smile](#) to raise funds as you shop, at no extra cost to you

ENRICHMENT PROGRAMME

The school wants to enhance their cultural enrichment provision. On behalf of the school therefore, the PSA would like to connect with practitioners, teachers and expert enthusiasts in complementary areas such as mindfulness, sign language, martial arts, dance, origami, cooking, drumming, flower arranging, bee keeping, portrait painting, tennis, self defence, hula hooping, magic, graphology, drawing, pottery, massage, knitting, singing, etc.... Any extra-curricular fields, as long as it's age-appropriate. (This list is just by way of example.)

If you can help, or think you might know someone who can, we would love to hear from you. Please send us an [email](#) at hwoodpsa@gmail.com.

HELP US BE MORE REPRESENTATIVE

The PSA Committee doesn't yet reflect the demographics of the school. We don't have enough BAME members, and we don't have enough men. We need to change that situation so that the PSA can draw on more diverse backgrounds, and properly understand and address the experiences of all HWS families.

If you belong to a group which is under-represented: please, join us and make us stronger. You can sit in on a meeting as a silent spectator to see what you think before committing. All you need to do to express your interest is [drop us an email](#) at hwoodpsa@gmail.com.

DID YOU KNOW...?

THE SCHOOL HAS A DEDICATED COUNSELLING SERVICE

Spotlight on...

THE MAYA ANGELOU CENTRE

HWS launched the **Maya Angelou Centre (MAC)** in September 2021 to offer students support and counselling. The MAC supports students who are struggling with generalised anxiety or who find it hard to settle back into school after Covid. It also supports students who are unable to self-regulate, those whose behaviour has become a concern as well as students not able to cope in lessons for numerous reasons. The Centre consists of six rooms designated for mentoring, counselling and respite. It is located in the main school building and is open and staffed all day by a team of mentors, counsellors and behaviour-support staff, led by manager Liz McCartney. There are computers that the students can use if they wish to complete homework or do revision for tests and exams.

When a student is referred to the MAC, parents are contacted in order to establish communication between home and the school. In some cases, parents initiate the intervention by sharing their concerns with Heads of Years. Students then have timetabled access to the Centre, but, if seeking a quiet environment, are also able to access it before school, during break-time and after school. The MAC offers each student a tailored package. Mentoring is offered when a child needs help in a specific area, for example self-organisation or friendship difficulties. Children who require respite from mainstream lessons, whether because of behaviour or due to struggling with the curriculum, are offered six-weeks of dedicated lessons in the Respite Room, after which they are integrated back into mainstream lessons. Counselling may consist of cognitive behavioural therapy, art therapy or integrative therapy.

Since September, 120 students have been referred to the Centre. More than 40 Year 11 Students have access to 'Ground Work', an outside academic mentoring programme which provides tutors who come into the school four days a week to work with these students individually.

The MAC is a key part of HWS's 'inclusion' provision. It is there to ensure that no-one is left behind and proof of the school's commitment to its motto: Everyone Matters.