

Biddenham E-Newsletter 3



If we needed evidence of the strength and caring nature of the Biddenham School community, then this term has provided it in lorry loads!

Everyone, students, staff and parents have all done a fantastic job to keep the school running, with very little disruption to the important job of education. On behalf of the Governing Body, through this newsletter, I would like to thank all students and their families for their huge contribution to this. We have near normal attendance, bucking the trend not only locally, but nationally.

This has been achieved by everyone following the strict, but obviously successful rules put in place to safeguard the health of everyone. It has been supported by the care towards others which students have shown to each other and to staff, and the sensible way in which they have behaved. At our last meeting, we heard from the Head boy and girl about their efforts to re-introduce mentoring for younger students, based on their concerns about all students in the school. It spoke volumes about the sense of community in and beyond the school.

I hope you all have a happy and safe Christmas break.

A message from our Chair of Governors Carole Bell



**A very Merry Christmas and a
Happy New Year from all the staff**

Students return to school on Tuesday 5th January 2021



A message from our Principal David Bailey

Dear all,

Welcome to our newsletter that since lockdown one has developed into a less of a newsletter about trips and visits etc and more about what has been going on in school, in classes with our students and showcasing some of the fabulous work that they have been producing.

I would like to begin by congratulating our students on their support for the measures we have put in place to ensure our school community is safe - they have really done well and consequently we have not experienced too many COVID cases and not had to send many young people or staff home to self isolate. This is great because we are very much enjoying being back to some semblance of normality and I know the students are too. We do need to keep it going though...

As you can see from this newsletter our young people have come back with the intent to get back to their learning and we are pleased that we have been able to facilitate that and all lessons are back to normal - the students are very aware that they need to ensure that they are producing their best work possible in all years to both lessen the learning loss that has occurred since March and to show what they are capable of were we to return to some form of Centre Assessed Grades.

Again, I applaud them for that...

We like to think of ourselves as a school that is at the heart of the community and we are looking to ensure that we do everything we can to support our students - physically, mentally and educationally - at this difficult time. The main thing we have done is to make school as normal as possible and to do that we need to gradually re introduce some of the things we've had to stop - and we have started that with the reintroduction of some after school activities since half term.

It has been difficult, but I do sense that we are at the beginning of the end - but we will be living with this for a few months more at best...please continue to be vigilant as that is what will protect our school, keep it open and be in everyone's best interest.

Thank you for your ongoing support and have a safe, healthy and happy Christmas break

David Bailey

A message from our Head of School Eleanor Grylls



Dear all,

What an unusual, yet amazing and productive Autumn term this has been! I have been incredibly impressed with the way that our school community - students, staff, parents/ carers and governors - has pulled together to adapt to the new safety measures, but manage to stay focused on the important job of learning.

Students have been able to access a full, varied and engaging curriculum, including practical and creative opportunities all supported by technology through the chromebooks. We have also learned so much about how to deliver effective remote learning for any of our students who have needed to be at home, for whatever reason.

This newsletter is testament to that hard work and resilience in the face of change; bursting with high quality work and creativity. I hope you enjoy reading about all of the wonderful work that has been going on. So, as we move into the Christmas break, let's all take the time to power down and enjoy a well deserved rest with family and loved ones.

Take care and stay safe.

Eleanor Grylls

The MFL department has put together a German Christmas Advent Calendar. Open the doors and find special challenges underneath if you want to take part and win some prizes along the way.

Follow this link!

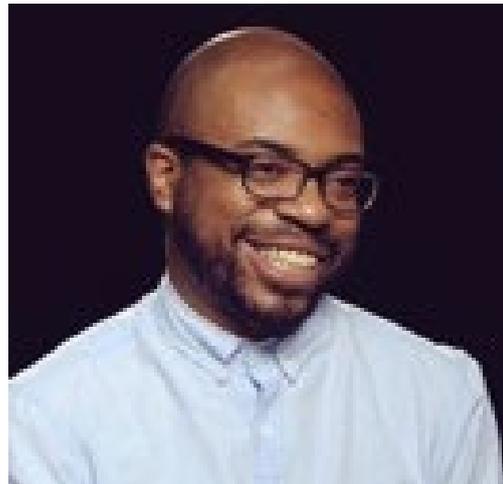
<https://calendar.myadvent.net/?id=8dac3c267d134cbcdcdf6f-97639d21c8>

In the summer term we wrote to our students predominantly, regarding 'Black Lives Matter' and pledged to do more to ensure we celebrated diversity explicitly and challenged prejudice and hatred in all its forms.

To start our work in this area at the beginning of term we launched our 'Inclusivity Charter', which has been adopted by both our year teams and curriculum departments. We are developing our curriculum practices, to ensure that our resources in lessons address inclusivity for all. Additionally our pastoral teams are ensuring we can still enable wider community engagement, through virtual assemblies and videos. Every month, there is a different inclusivity focus, which departments can adapt existing work to include and year teams can support through tutor time and assemblies. October focused on UK Black History Month, November was Disability History Month and December is focused on community work, collecting and distributing food hampers and Christmas presents for those less fortunate.

We would encourage any parents/carers who would like to be involved to contact Cathy Eckett, for further information. We are always looking for members of our own local community to present to our students, this can be with a career focus, inclusivity focus or both!

BLACK LIVES MATTER



Sixth Form Inclusivity Assembly

Jemel Polson - Journalist for the Independent Newspaper, presented a live assembly to our Sixth Form students this term on both Black History Month and also being gay. He wrote an article about planning for this, which can be found on the link below.

Jemel Polson is a social media manager for Channel 5 and journalist from London, who graduated from University of Winchester in 2012.

He has previously written for The Telegraph, Esquire and Attitude magazine.

www.independent.co.uk/voices/black-history-month-sexuality-lgbt-blm-transgender-intersectionality-b1075992.html?scrl-brkr=3600840c

As part of the History Department's focus on Black History Month there were tutor time activities relating to discussing racial microaggressions (microaggressions are small actions or comments that can contribute to a person feeling unwelcome and uncomfortable because they are being treated differently or excluded on the basis of their race or ethnicity).

Having these discussions in the safe environment of a tutor group allowed our students to explore their own behaviour as well as that they have seen around them and gain a wider understanding of the power each of us has and the importance of being mindful about our words and actions. Conversations about such things can be challenging but are important for encouraging us to better understand diversity.

This year the History Department's focus on Black History Month (October) was bigger than ever with a competition as well as a cultural food cooking challenge that staff and students could participate in. Several students entered the competition and prizes this year included books written by Black British authors.

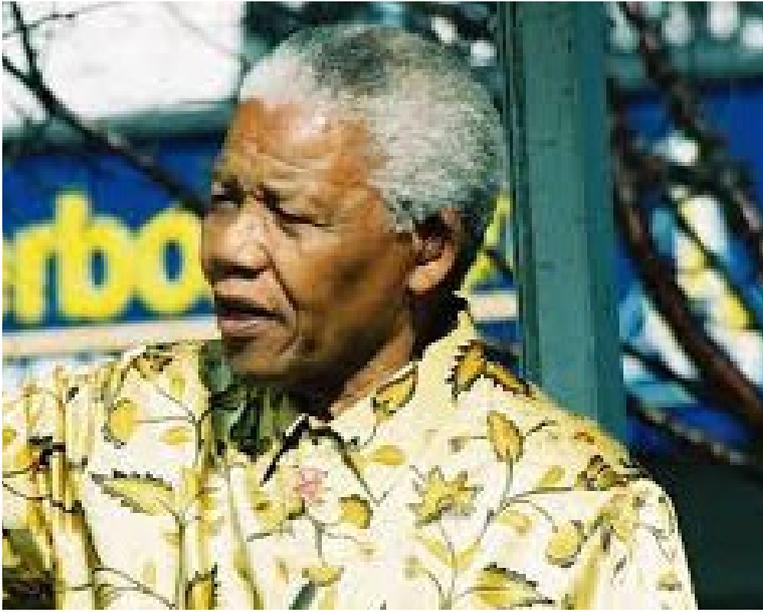


Winners in KS3 (Years 7 and 8) were Aleena Najjuma, Hala Elabd and Abu Hanif while winners from years 9 - 11 were Khadija Hussain, Stephanie Omorogbe and Amour Amour. From the Sixth Form we awarded joint first place to Gift Ezeh (Y13) and Dharishna Reddy (Y12). See *next pages*



Competition winners pictured with their books

Nelson Mandela - A Biography by Hala Elabd



“May your choices reflect your hopes, not your fears.” This was a quote by Nelson Mandela, who was a South African political leader, anti-apartheid rebel (this means that he was against and did not support the racial segregation) and was the president of South Africa for a few years. He was a great freedom fighter and was able to achieve many things in his life; with the help of other activists.

Nelson Mandela when he visited Bedford in 2000

Nelson Mandela was able to end the apartheid system, which was racial discrimination against Black people, who also didn't have equal rights (they were mostly focused on those with different skin colour and different facial features). Although he is famous for many things and is respected by many people, not many know about his childhood or his past.

Rolihlahla Mandela (this was Mandela's real name and it was a Xhosa term meaning “troublemaker”) was born into the Madiba clan in the village of Mvezo, in the Eastern Cape, on 18 July 1918. He was the son of Chief Henry Mandela of the Madiba clan of the Xhosa-speaking Tembu people. His mother's name was Nonqaphi Nosekeni and his father was Nkosi Mphakanyiswa Gadla Mandela. In 1930, when he was 12 years old, his father died. He grew up with two sisters in his mother's care in the village of Qunu, where he tended herds as a cattle-boy and spent much time outside with other boys.

Nelson Mandela went to a Christian mission school, in which he was taught the British education. He learnt all about British ideas, British culture, and British institutions. He absorbed all this information and the good in British values.

Mandela - while he was slowly beginning to be politically involved from 1942 - joined the African National Congress in 1944 when he helped to form the ANC Youth League (ANCYL). The ANCYL started protests against racial segregation and raised awareness for the discrimination against non-whites. The South African Government did not tolerate these protests, so they (the protests) were often met with force by the government. Mandela was arrested in a nationwide police swoop on 5 December 1956; he was also arrested for illegally leaving the country and was classified as a terrorist by the South African government and sent to prison. Overall, he spent 27 years in prison and they were split between different prisons: in Robben Island, in which he spent 18 years in, in Pollsmoor Prison and in Victor Verster Prison. Finally, Mandela was able to be released by President F.W. de Klerk in 1990.

After Nelson Mandela was released, he toured Africa and other countries to develop the prestige and resources of ANC (African National Congress). He delivered speeches, held meetings with various groups and urged the leaders of the international community to continue the sanctions against South Africa. He then worked hard with de Klerk to create an end to apartheid, which also led to the 1994 multiracial general election. He was elected to become president and served as this role for 5 years (1994 to 1999). A year before that, Nelson Mandela and F.W. de Klerk won the Nobel Peace Prize in 1993 because of the work he did to terminate the apartheid scheme. After he was replaced by Mbeki as president, he retired from politics, however he continued to be a global advocate for peace and social justice.

Britain's political system actually inspired Nelson Mandela to turn South Africa into a model similar to Britain's, by turning his country into a free, multi-party democracy. This was because Britain was a major part of the anti-apartheid movement. Britain itself turned into one of Nelson Mandela's favourite destinations, visiting it several times for all kinds of purposes.

Nelson Mandela was a great man, who influenced many non-white people who were treated cruelly and made their lives much better. In general, he drastically changed many things and countries to the better; he made a difference that we could not have seen if he didn't work hard his whole life. Even though racism carries on today, his great work helped seriously decrease the amount and suffering non-whites have to deal with.

John Boyega - by Khadija Hussain

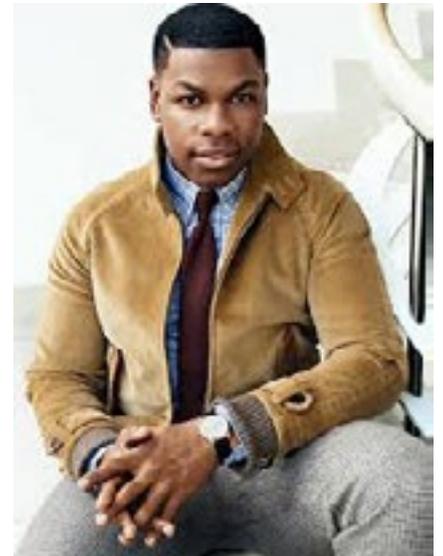
When I think of Black History Month and black voices, I think of John Boyega. I feel that he is one of the most inspiring actors of our generation and a role model for young British people today.

He is a British Nigerian actor raised in Peckham, London.

He spent his adolescence at Theatre Peckham which is a special learning theatre for young people in South London.

South London is not known as the best place in London.

John's talent got him where he is as he was noticed by many people such as Teresa Early, the artistic director of Theatre Peckham and JJ Abrams, a famous Hollywood director.



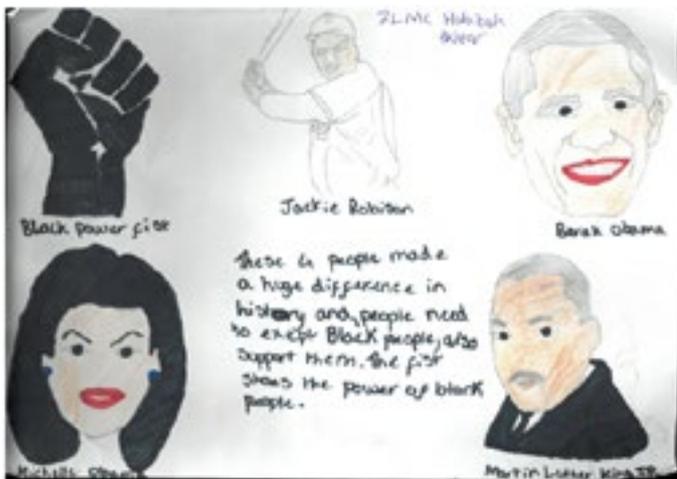
Many people will know him as Finn from the Star Wars sequel. Being a young black actor he was taken advantage of by the movie industry and recently came out about it. When he was being trained for promotion on the first Star Wars sequel: The Force Awakens, he was stereotyped as the 'angry black man'. They wanted him to look less 'aggressive' just because he was black, his peers were not treated like this and he felt like he had a totally different experience compared to his co-stars. In the first movie, he was told that he was the new face of star wars by director JJ Abrams essentially being the main character which gave him hope and made him joyous. However, when the second movie went into production and JJ Abrams was no longer directing, the story changed very dramatically. John's character, Finn was sidelined as a joke, he was no longer a character with an important story like he was promised. Unfortunately for Hollywood, this is typical of them as they regularly sideline black characters and black actors. *(continued on next page)*



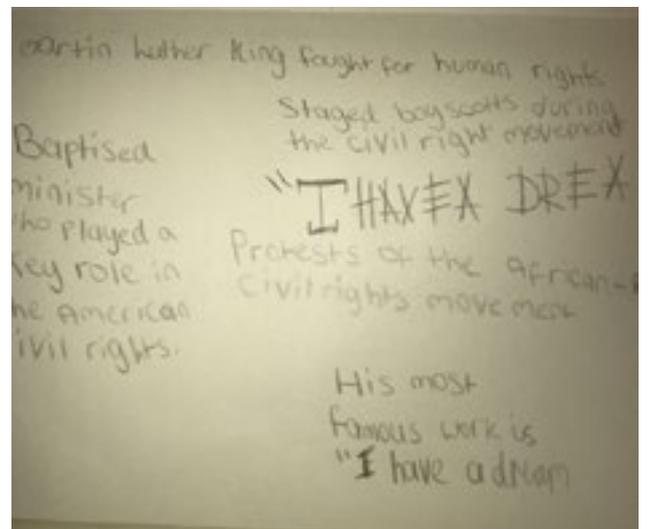
Bridget Liz



Frederica Omorogbe



Habibah Akhtar



Zainab Basharat

Amour Amour

Harold Moody

- He was born in Kingston in Jamaica
- He was considered to be a British citizen
- He studied at King College London in 1904
- He was a doctor, preacher, athlete, entrepreneur
- In London that time not a lot of black people lived in London and had a lot of racist people
- He had to ask a lot of people to get a house but many had refuse so it took a long time to get a house
- He had the best qualification but it was hard to get a job because people were racist to other race and nobody gave him a job because of his race
- He started his own business
- With the help of his wife
- He started to help more black immigrants
- He made organisation (League of Coloured People or LCP) to help more people of different race





Queen's Park Community Organisation Food Parcel

This is a free delivery service run by volunteers:

We run a food parcel delivery service. The service is aimed at families, couples or individuals who are destitute, have no recourse to public funds or have refugee or asylum seeker status. We also receive referrals for people in financial difficulties, making a decision on such referrals on a case-by-case basis.

In order to benefit from this service, you need to be referred by one of our partners:

Places of worship

Bedfordshire Police

Friends of Refugees

Carers in Bedfordshire

BRCC Community Champions

Domestic violence projects

Children's centres

Councillors

Schools

YMCA

BRASS

PBIC

**To order your parcel, please call or email: 01234 480 660 or
qpco.bedford@gmail.com**



@QPCOBEDFORFD

Biddenham are so excited to be working with The Queens Park Community Organisation which offers help and support for those who may need it in these difficult times. If they or we can help in any way please contact Clare Warburton at school
clare.warburton@biddenham.beds.sch.uk
or the Queens Park Community Organisation directly.



Bedfordshire & Luton
Community Foundation

Surviving Winter 



Surviving winter Dec to Feb 2021



@QPCOBEDFORD

Introduction

Queen's Park community Organisation (QPCO) is part of the Surviving Winter Campaign with the 2020 appeal #StayWellThisWinter ran by The Bedfordshire and Luton Community Foundation.(BLCF)

At this crucial time of Lockdown and uncertainty, more people than ever are expected to face financial difficulties. This is why we are launching 'Surviving Winter' to help people during the colder months. We believe that no one should ever face a choice between eating and heating, especially as temperatures plummet. Isolation and loneliness are also ever-increasing issues. This is both in towns and rural areas of our county. With the added pressure and limits of the Coronavirus restrictions, mental health and wellbeing for all ages is a growing concern. By delivering this service, we hope to help individuals and families in Bedfordshire.

What support are we offering through this appeal?

There are 2 key areas of focus for the funds as follows:

1. **Helping people to pay energy costs (gas and/or electricity)**
2. **Providing essential items as part of a care package/winter package-** this could include such items as winter clothing, blankets, hot water bottles. Or more specific items for those moving into temporary accommodation/fleeing DV such as kitchen essentials, toiletries etc.

Who can we help?

- No recourse to public fund
- vulnerable families
- people facing financial hardship and poverty

How can you help further?

Can you help to promote the campaign?

Furthermore, we will use our Total Giving site as an easy platform for donations:

<https://www.totalgiving.co.uk/appeal/survivingwinter>

Year 7 News

Year 7 have had a very busy half term, after having a virtual transition they have all settled in beautifully and are an asset to the school. They were then our first ever cohort to receive a virtual meet the tutor evening and what a success that was. Our year 7 ambassadors have been active in creating a newsletter each week of what they have been doing in lessons

The climate for learning in lessons is wonderful and students have really embraced the secondary school experience.

Here is just a snippet of some of the work being completed in lessons and through extracurricular. Students have shown excellent organisation skills in bringing in ingredients and Mrs Ward has praised you all for your wonderful baking skills - not one burnt scone!

Feedback from students

'I have really enjoyed learning about tactics, small games, passing and shooting in football practice'

'Dance company has been so much fun! It is different to lessons and we are learning some really complicated dance routines, I love dancing to the different music and meeting new people as well'

'My favourite activity since starting was doing our in class anti bullying pledges, as a class we feel this is really important'

'I have loved exploring how to create a podcast in Project Based Learning, it is a fun way to show my research and share something I feel passionate about'

'I am really enjoying my maths tuition sessions; they have given me more confidence to take part in my normal maths lessons'

On the following pages are some excellent examples of work from students. More will follow in our exhibition of beautiful work as we continue to develop our website this academic year.

Year 7 events to look forward to :

Golden ticket movie night

First Give community action - the opportunity to win £1000 for a local charity- a social action and oracy project parents /carers invites to follow

Geography year group fabulous finish

Year 8

Golden ticket movie night

Up for debate - regional oracy debate competition

Virtual Kid talk Parent/ Carer showcase invites to follow

500 word story computing with local author Sue Upton as the judge

Year 7&8 opportunities

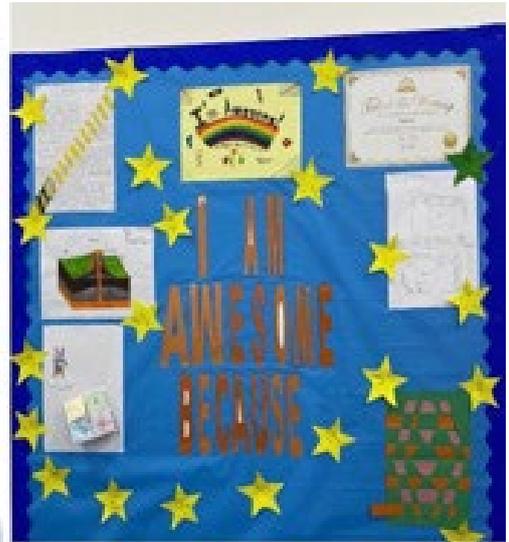
Exhibition of beautiful work on our school website

Opportunity to develop Oracy by being part of our students forum to have a voice on what's happening and what you would like to see happening in school.

Project launches and celebrations of excellent work.

Biddenham KS3 @BISK... · 29/09/2020 ...

Wonderful start to the year! Celebrating all the hard work our new year 7s have done through the distance learning period. Wonderful displays ready to share tomorrow. Well done year 7 #rewardsgalore #soproud #goingbig



Year 7 in their food lesson this morning. They were making Tiffin bars which were delicious!! 🍫🍫 #biddenham #year7 #foodlesson



Biddenham KS3 @BISK... · 21/10/2020

A snap shot into just two examples of wonderful homework produced by our year 7's to show their understanding of the topics they have learnt about this half term #biomes #geographyracks more examples of work to follow tomorrow #watchthisspace



Biddenham Int School - 22/10/2020

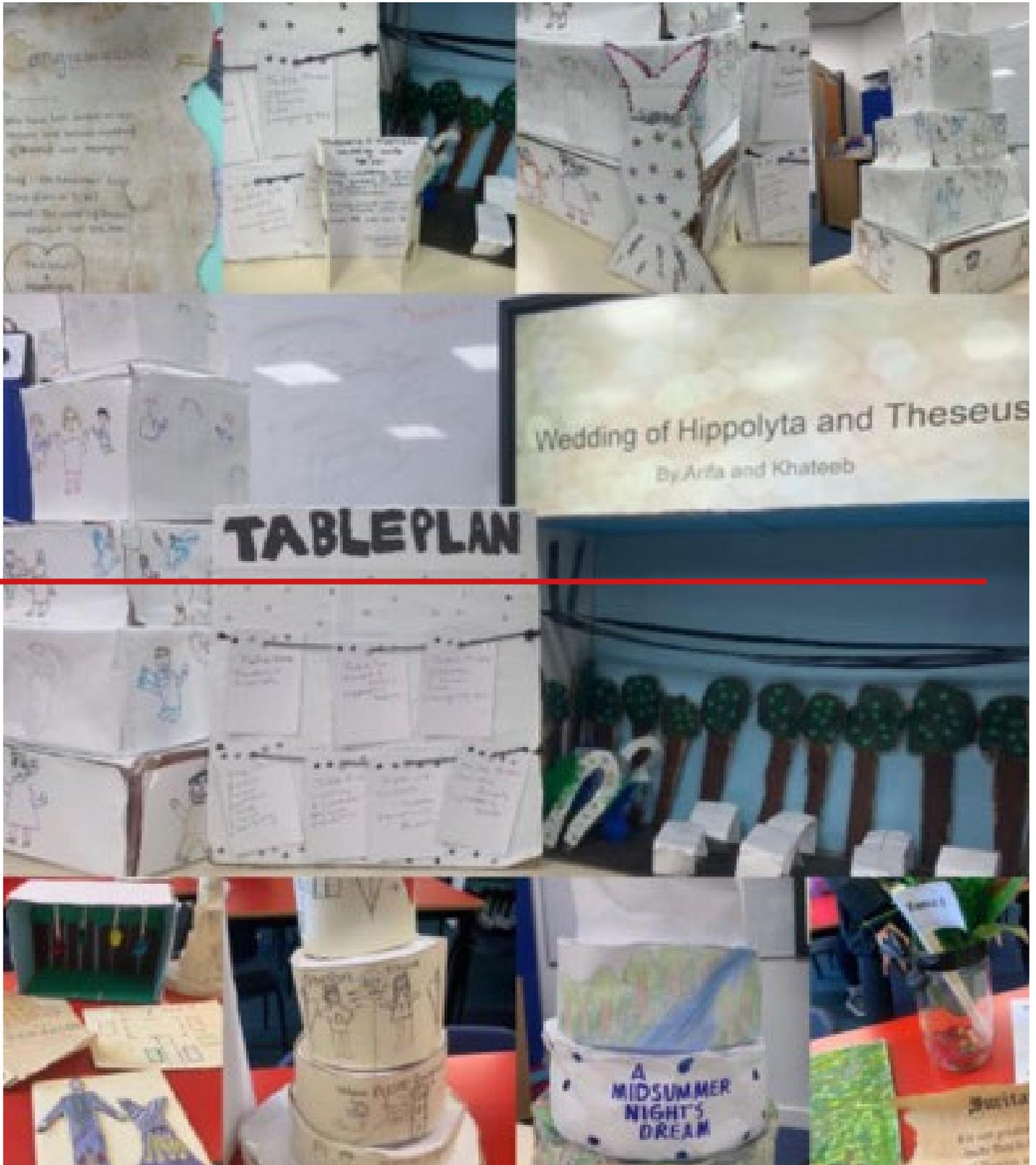
An excellent piece of Geography homework by a student in 8PBN showing a 3D waterfall project that was completed to an extremely high standard #greatjob



Our fabulous Year 7 students enjoying their well-deserved hot chocolate and cookie treat for earning more than 100 house points in their first half term!! #proudH #biddenhamfamily #rewards



Comments about the work of Year 7 can be found on our twitter page @BISK33



Task: Explain why Shakespeare wrote “A Midsummer Night’s Dream”

This is a very complicated question, because we do not know about Shakespeare as much as we want to, the inspirations, truths and events that impacted his ideas and the stories in the plays. However, we can still understand the purpose of A Midsummer Night’s Dream by explaining the relations between the play and Shakespeare’s life and events that occurred during his time.

The first possible reason can be found through the dominant theme of a Midsummer Night’s Dream, which is love. In this play, the main events are connected to romance and conflict; this play is about appearance and reality, which explores how the main characters (and even people in real-life) fall in love with those who appear beautiful to them because of their features. Shakespeare wanted to shed light onto this idea and share it to the audience, possibly to gain their feedback and opinions.

Secondly, another reason that made Shakespeare write A Midsummer Night’s Dream was the treatment of women in marriages.

During the Elizabethan era, marriages were usually forced upon women and were borne out of the wanting of gain and power, instead of happiness. If a woman would not oblige, she would be sent to a nunnery or killed. Shakespeare definitely witnessed many of these marriages which had no regard to a women’s feelings and this element can be seen in Hermias’ situation, in which she had to marry Demetrius rather than her true love, Lysander. Shakespeare wanted to add this into a story and turn it into a very important aspect in the main plot!

The third reason to answer why Shakespeare wrote A Midsummer Night’s Dream was because he was influenced by the public’s views on fairies. During this time, there was an extremely high belief in magic and fairies. After the Reformation, changes were made in religious practices, holiday customs and a new definition for fairies. This belief became a big debate, which was why it inspired and encouraged Shakespeare to create a play about it, which later became A Midsummer Night’s Dream. The views of fairies during the Elizabethan era inspired so many details about the fairies and how they acted, the way they lived and the way they looked and how they are thought of by the characters.

**Hala Elabd, Year 7
English Homework**

Bursaries and Scholarships 2019

The Harpur Trust

The Harpur Trust Charity started a Bursary Scheme working with 8 schools in Bedford to support up to 16 local students each year. The Charity provides these students with a bursary of £3,600 over 3 years. Since 2007 the Harpur Trust has awarded over £116,200 to students from Biddenham. Students who are eligible have to go through a lengthy and rigorous application process.

The Trustees at the Harpur Trust decide who will receive the awards.

This year, the two people received the award were:

- Ryan Bezer
- Tasnim Zakiyah Ali

They were presented with their awards at a virtual ceremony in September.

The Connolly Foundation

The Connolly Foundation Charity was set up by Michael Connolly in memory of his wife Kathleen. One of the aims of the Charity is to 'give meaningful assistance to those in need...helping young people acquire new skills and qualifications. All Biddenham students who are in their final year at school are encouraged to apply for a Connolly Foundation Scholarship. Since 2012 another staggering sum of £136,500 has been awarded to Biddenham Students!

Likewise, there is a rigorous application process for these students. Since 2015 these scholarship (the Main Awards) have been merits tested which means all students had to achieve A*- B across their three A level subjects to be eligible. Biddenham, have also been given the opportunity to award six discretionary Awards to our most deserving students who did not apply for the Main Awards. This year a total sum of £8,250 was awarded to 12 of our most able and deserving students.



Recipients of the 2019 Bursaries
and Academic Awards

University of Leicester

We have had a long-standing relationship with the University of Leicester through the support they have provided for our students as they prepare for the university applications. Over time, the University has become a destination for a number of our students.

In 2019 our connections with the University of Leicester was taken to a new level when we became a Partnership School with the University. This means that (along with other benefits), we at Biddenham can nominate one of our students who attend the University to receive an Award of £2,000 for their undergraduate study. This year, 11 of our students have gone to study at the University of Leicester, so it was an extremely difficult decision to nominate a deserving student since they were all extremely strong candidates.

Our nomination for 2020 was Haleem Hussain.

Haleem will receive £2,000 whilst he is at Leicester. He achieved an A grade in Media Studies, a Distinction* in Information Technology, a B grade in Computer Science and a B grade in EPQ. He is reading Computer Science with a Year in Industry.

Needless to say, this financial help was gratefully received by all students and we acknowledge our grateful thanks to the Harpur Trust, the Connolly Foundation and the University of Leicester for helping our students on their way.

The Level 2 Course

The level 2 Course is our one-year course designed for students who didn't quite get the grades they needed in year 11 for progression or for students, who are new to the country and need to get a suite of GCSEs under their belt.

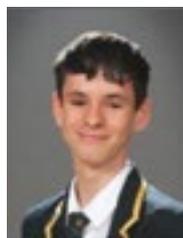
This course gives our students a realistic second chance to get the qualifications that they need. The achievement of these students is something to be proud of and to celebrate. By the end of the year many of them had achieved the qualifications that they needed to progress onto level 3 courses or employment with training.

University of Reading Scholarships

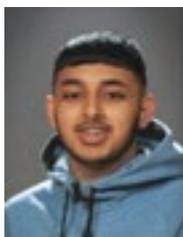
The following year 12 students have successfully obtained University of Reading scholarships:



Ahmed Elbad - Chemistry



Ciaran Russell - Maths



Hamaad Taj - Business



Saima Shenwari - Business

Year 9 tutors have their say...

9SA

I love my tutor group because they are all so polite and attentive. I genuinely look forward to them coming in every morning. I really enjoy the little conversations we have about our lives outside of school! I have learnt the most about them this year and I feel like I have made such a lovely connection with them.

9MNA

My tutees are amazing students and I am proud of each and every one of them. Although my tutor group keep me on my feet, they are some of the nicest students I could hope to work with and I look forward to supporting them throughout their time at Biddenham.

9ARW

I am now into my second year with this tutor group and I wouldn't change it for the world. We have a diverse mix of students in 9ARW and they all complement each other well. Every morning I look forward to seeing how they are and what new things they have learned throughout the week. I especially like when they all support each other as a team; there is a real sense of camaraderie within the group.

9MAB

I love my tutor group because they always have mature and insightful discussions in ELS, and have taught me about issues going on in the world that are not in the mainstream news. They care about wider world issues and are learning how to express their thoughts in effective and mature ways.

9CJ

I'm just getting to know my new tutor group but they are my absolute favourites. We are lucky to have such a great mix of personalities and talents. I am delighted with how they have settled back into school in such a mature way and have shown tremendous sensitivity towards each other in these difficult times.

9DJL

I love my tutor group because it is full of genuinely lovely people. I like all of them and this makes being their tutor fun. I realise that I have only had a few months to get to know them, but I am looking forward to the next few years, seeing them grow into young men and women.

9CAB

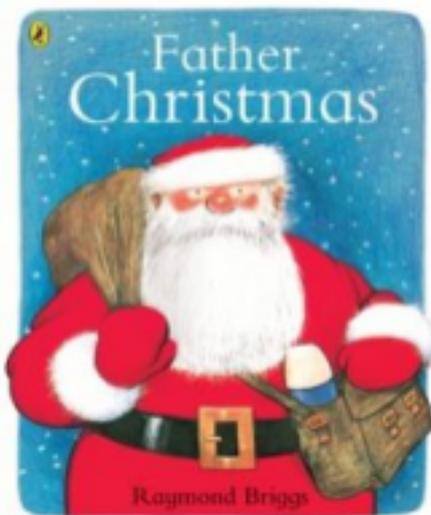
There are some characters in the class, but there is a sense of loyalty to me and everyone else in the room by them that makes me smile and no matter what emails I get to alert me to attendance or DBL's they are all genuinely lovely people. I look forward to supporting them through all of their journey's for the remainder of their time at Biddenham.

9ALW

I am really proud of how well 9ALW have come together since the start of this year. Each of them brings something unique to the group and it's been great to have this expanded as we've welcomed some wonderful newcomers to the class, there's really never a dull moment in tutor time. It was lovely to see them achieve the prize for being the best form for their carousel lessons as this reflected how wonderful they can be.

Books celebrating Christmas

These titles and many more are available to borrow in the school library

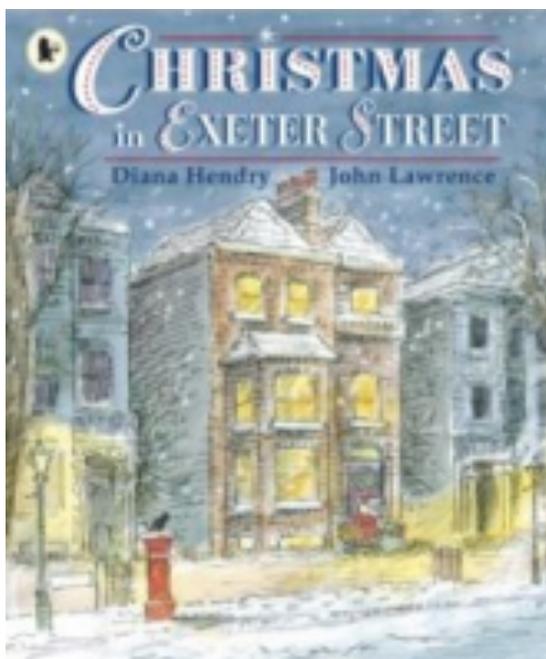
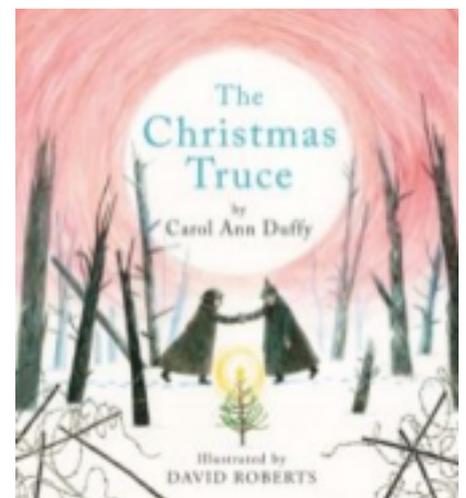


Father Christmas by Raymond Briggs

Raymond Briggs, who also created The Snowman, introduces us to a rather grumpy Father Christmas. In this hilariously irreverent Christmas book, Father Christmas has awoken from a dream of summer sun to discover it is December 24th, Christmas Eve - the start of his longest night's work of the year!

The Christmas Truce by Carol Ann Duffy

Down at the front, on a cold winter's night in 1914, amidst the worst war the world had ever seen, an inexplicable silence spread from man to man. Belief was in the air. Then the soldiers ceased fire and the magic of Christmas took hold . . . Carol Ann Duffy's brilliant poem celebrates the miraculous truce between the trenches, when enemy shook hands with enemy, shared songs, swapped gifts, even played football, and peace found a place in No Man's Land.

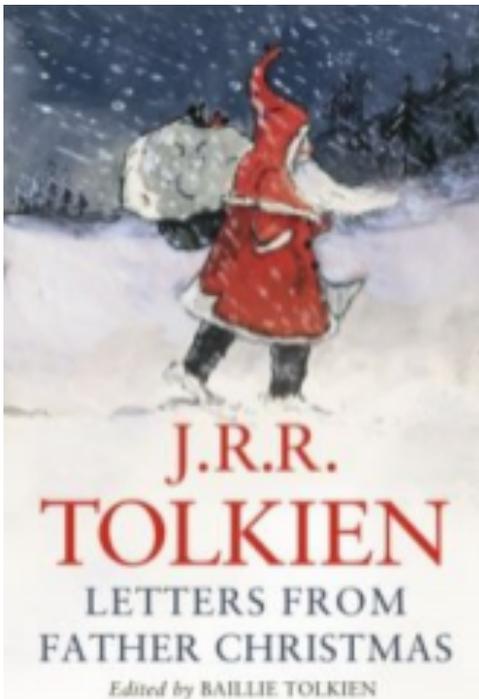


Christmas in Exeter Street by Diana

It's Christmas Eve, and the house in Exeter Street is full to bursting!

There's a guest in every nook and cranny from top to bottom - and even a baby sleeping in the kitchen sink!

Will Father Christmas be able to find them all? This gorgeously illustrated and atmospheric picture book about a house packed full of guests perfectly captures the sense of excitement and sharing that goes with this very special time of year.



Letters from Father Christmas by J.R. Tolkien

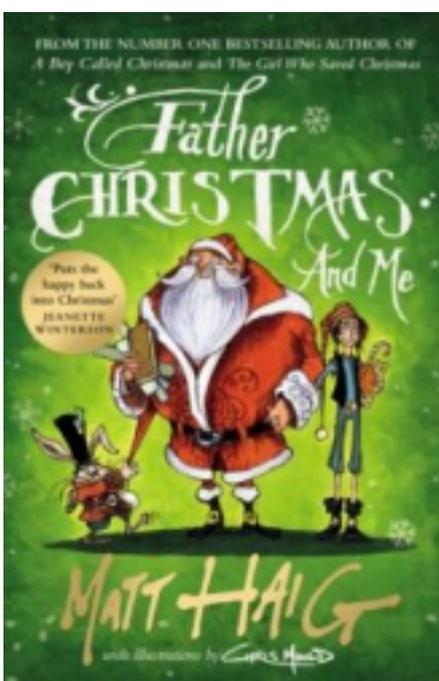
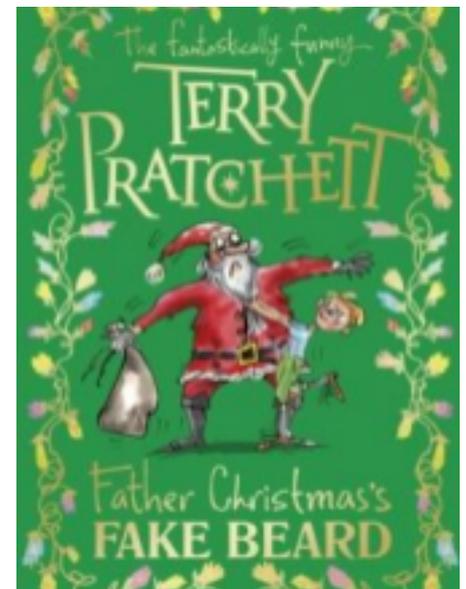
Every December an envelope bearing a stamp from the North Pole would arrive for J.R.R. Tolkien's children. Inside would be a letter in strange spidery handwriting and a beautiful coloured drawing or some sketches.

The letters were from Father Christmas. They told wonderful tales of life at the North Pole: how all the reindeer got loose and scattered presents all over the place; how the accident-prone Polar Bear climbed the North Pole and fell through the roof of Father Christmas's house into the dining-room; how he broke the Moon into four pieces and made the Man in it fall into the back garden; how there were wars with the troublesome horde of goblins who lived in the caves beneath the house!

Father Christmas's Fake Beard by Terry Pratchett

Have you ever wanted Christmas to be different? Turkey and carols, presents and crackers - they all start to feel a bit . . . samey. How about a huge exploding mince pie, a pet abominable snowman, or a very helpful partridge in a pear tree?

What if Father Christmas went to work at a zoo, or caused chaos in a toy store, or was even arrested for burglary!? These ten stories will have you laughing, gasping and crying (with laughter) - you'll never see Christmas in the same way again.



Father Christmas and Me by Matt

It isn't always easy, growing up as a human in Elfhelm, even if your adoptive parents are the newly married Father Christmas and Mary Christmas.

For one thing, Elf School can be annoying when you have to sing Christmas songs every day - even in July - and when you fail all your toy-making tests.

Also it can get very, very cold. But when the jealous Easter Bunny and his rabbit army launch an attack to stop Christmas, it's up to Amelia, her new family and the elves to keep Christmas alive.

Before it's too late . . .

Sixth Form News

Ready2lead conference

This year a few students in sixth form were chosen to participate in a ready2lead conference where both private and state schools in Bedford also took part. The ready2lead conference was very beneficial to us and it is a great experience to take part in. It not only helped us to enhance our knowledge and improve our leadership skills but also developed our skills in teamwork, when we were in groups with students from other schools and had many discussions to reflect and share our opinions on lectures we heard.

All schools in Bedford were then asked to participate in the Global Goals competition where we chose one of the Global Goals and played an active role in completing and achieving it.

Biddenham Sixth form chose the global goal of responsible consumption and production. The topics within that area we chose to talk about were; how responsible consumption is a main factor that contributes to global warming, clothes landfill- how to fix this and the impact it has on the environment and how to reduce food waste. We created posters to place around our school to make people aware of food waste and fast fashion as well as delivering a presentation to explain our topic.

Biddenham year 12 student Matilda Crafter was nominated for her contribution in group discussion and for overall effort in leading the project.

Ready2lead was very helpful in making us strong and independent leaders, and should you ever get the option we would definitely recommend taking part.

Lucia Scozzari
Year 12



Supporting children and families during challenging times

Biddenham International School is pleased to support Marcus Rashford's campaign to support children and their families with free school meals and end child food poverty.

During the half term the school gave Aldi vouchers to families whose children receive school meals – a £15 voucher per child. The school also supported the local businesses and charities that generously stepped forward to offer free meals during this time

In addition, the Senior Prefect team organised a Food in the Box Harvest for Bedford Foodbank. With the help of the entire school they were able to help provide 840 meals and a total weight 353.06kg. The school has organised another Food Harvest at Christmas.

The SEVA Trust UK, who provided more than 50 food parcels for Biddenham families during the lockdown period, are offering a winter service. This will be a monthly pack of 5kg of items such as rice, long life milk, cereal etc and will run from November until February.

Principal David Bailey said' "We are acutely aware that the pandemic has placed huge hardships on many of our families and children. I am proud of the school, its pupils and their families for supporting each other and the community during this difficult time."



Senior Prefect Team with their Food in a Box Harvest for Bedford Foodbank.

Biddenham Discover Societies



The Biddenham Discover Societies were designed with the aim of helping to guide students into exploring what subjects most interest them.

The societies are split into two subsections; STEM, which includes Science subjects, alongside subjects such as Engineering and Maths, and Humanities, which covers subjects like History and Law for example. This gives students the opportunity to engage in a variety of subjects within their general field of interest. In addition to this, there have also been sessions focused on developing skills such as CV writing and advice on how to write a Personal Statement, which is essential for the University application process.

These societies are run by Sixth Form students, who are designated 'subject specialists', under the guidance of Mr Shakoor. It is our job to plan and lead each session. Within these sessions, a variety of activities take place. This can range from informative talks to engaging in debates, undertaking research projects and many more. This is all aimed to develop students' skills in areas such as oracy and academic writing. Our overall goal is to ensure students are informed and well equipped in deciding what subjects they are interested in pursuing after they leave Biddenham, and hopefully encouraging them to be aspirational in their plans, so that every student can achieve their full potential.

Ann-Ellen Kennedy

A virtual musical advent calendar



I am a member of the Goldentones (Bedford's favourite a acapella quintet) and we are making a virtual online advent calendar of Christmas songs and carols.

The group was founded in 2017 and comprises Eve McGrath (soprano), Lottie Greenhow (soprano), Sally McGrath (alto), Harry Bagnall (tenor) and Henry Vann (bass). We are all local to Bedford and we have performed at a number of events locally and further afield and are due to perform at the rescheduled river festival next July.

We will release a video every day from 1-25 December, in collaboration with local professional beatboxer Ozzlebox. We are raising money for Bedford Hospital Charity and Friends to help them through what will undoubtedly be a very hard winter.

We have been releasing videos throughout the first lockdown to raise people's spirits and also to give ourselves something to do! We released a video earlier this year of "Somewhere over the rainbow" which raised over £500 for the same hospital. We are hoping to match that with our online advent calendar.

Dr S McGrath

Science News

Year 11 students attended a two-hour workshop with Lockheed Martin, a company that works with advanced technology on aerospace.

We spent a couple of lessons learning about this industry and types of careers we could make out of it.



It was interesting finding out about the events that occur and the subject on a whole was fascinating.

We were given the task to create a mission, deciding which sort of aircraft would be best to go to the moon according to a variety of scenarios. In groups, we presented our ideas to each other and a few members of the staff from the company.

It was great to be given this opportunity this year as we have been given another option to help us decide what career path we would like to go down, also making us aware of what qualifications we would need in order to study them. Furthermore, it was also a simple session which gave us all an insight into this industry, so those who are interested will have a better understanding on where to look to find out more.

In conclusion, this workshop was helpful for us and these opportunities are much appreciated.

Shazmin Islam

Year 11

We have started working with the science leads at our feeder primary schools (namely GDPS and QPA) to work on transitioning between KS2 and KS3 science. We are trying to join together our STEM clubs and broaden the mindsets of young people to gain science capital and to view science as an exciting and prosperous subject. There is much more collaborative work coming up in the spring term.

Suzie Squair, Head of Department



Biology

In the past few lessons, we have been looking at the structure of DNA and RNA and the differences between them. DNA is an information storing and carrying molecule with a double helix structure. RNA stores genetic information as well but it only has one chain. DNA is stored in one place and can't move, however, RNA can send messages and transcribe genetic material as there are different forms of it such as tRNA and mRNA. In RNA the four nitrogenous bases are cytosine, guanine, adenine and uracil. However in DNA there is no uracil but there is thymine. DNA is made up of nitrogenous bases, a phosphate backbone which is bonded to a deoxyribose sugar but in RNA, the sugar is just a ribose sugar. In (see right) the lesson we used sweets to model the double helix structure and how the bases bind to it. We also used them to show how the different backbones of DNA and RNA were formed.



Millie
Year 13

At the end of November Dr McGrath organised for a virtual panel of three engineers to talk to twelve of our sixth form students who are interested in this career. The three engineers, who studied at the Universities of Cambridge and Salford, have taken very different paths after their first degrees, one managing million-pound projects below the streets of London, one starting up his own business and one moving into consultancy. They spoke through their backgrounds and careers and the students had the opportunity to ask them questions relating to their university experience, the pros and cons of the job, a typical day (turns out there isn't such a thing as it's so varied!) and of course salaries!

Some quotes from our students are below:

"I learned about the courses available at university and the requirements and specification for specific types of engineering, eg. Civil, Mechanical etc."

"I most enjoyed the part where they talked about what they do on a daily basis at work as it helped me understand what the job is actually about."

"I enjoyed hearing about the wide variety of different roles within specific engineering sectors. Before now I wasn't really aware of the range of career paths that engineers could pursue and this opened my eyes to alternative options available to me."

"It was very interesting to hear that there are routes into engineering that don't require physics A level, this means I can consider it as a strong possibility."

Later in the year the sixth formers will be hearing from doctors, a medical physicist, an astrophysicist, a medicinal chemist, a food technologist, a statistician and more.

Inspirational engineering lecture

In October, the A-Level physics class welcomed the brilliant minded Abu Ahad, a Civil Engineer & Certified Risk Professional, who has worked on various large-scale projects across the globe. Joining us through a virtual meeting, he presented his thoughts and ideas with us, giving us all an insight into the various branches of engineering.

After a brief introduction, he brought us into the minds of famous engineers like Thomas Edison & Nikola Tesla, teaching us their resilience for their specific engineering disciplines and accomplishments.

Ahad then moved on to present his worldwide successful projects. These contrasted from pumping stations, which he manufactured as a flooding hole in Folkestone, to the Dubai 2020 expo in Abu Dhabi. Through this, he perceived the importance of the concepts of projects, from the initial planning stages all the way through to the execution of the process and the final documentation. This included:

- Initiation (defining the project)
- Planning (refining the idea and beginning designs)
- Execution (construction and industrial work)
- Closeout (documentation for the client)

As he brought the future career paths of engineering to a close, Abu described to us the needs and specifications for an engineering career, on an A-Level scale, inspiring all of us to achieve the best of our capabilities. These included qualifications in Maths, Physics and other physical sciences such as geology and fluid dynamics. However, despite the need and requirements of these subjects, Abu motivated us to achieve the best possible grades as they can lead to any form of engineering degree in higher education, even if they weren't a form of science.

Concluding his presentation, Abu summarised the knowledge and work experience that us as individuals will learn and achieve in the future of our engineering courses.

This varied from industrial placement and an incisive decision between either contracting (physical work) and consulting (office-based work). Wrapping it with various Q&A's, the whole Physics class walked away with the extended knowledge of requirements and needs to become an engineer, and therefore how to achieve the highest possible outcomes in our university degrees.

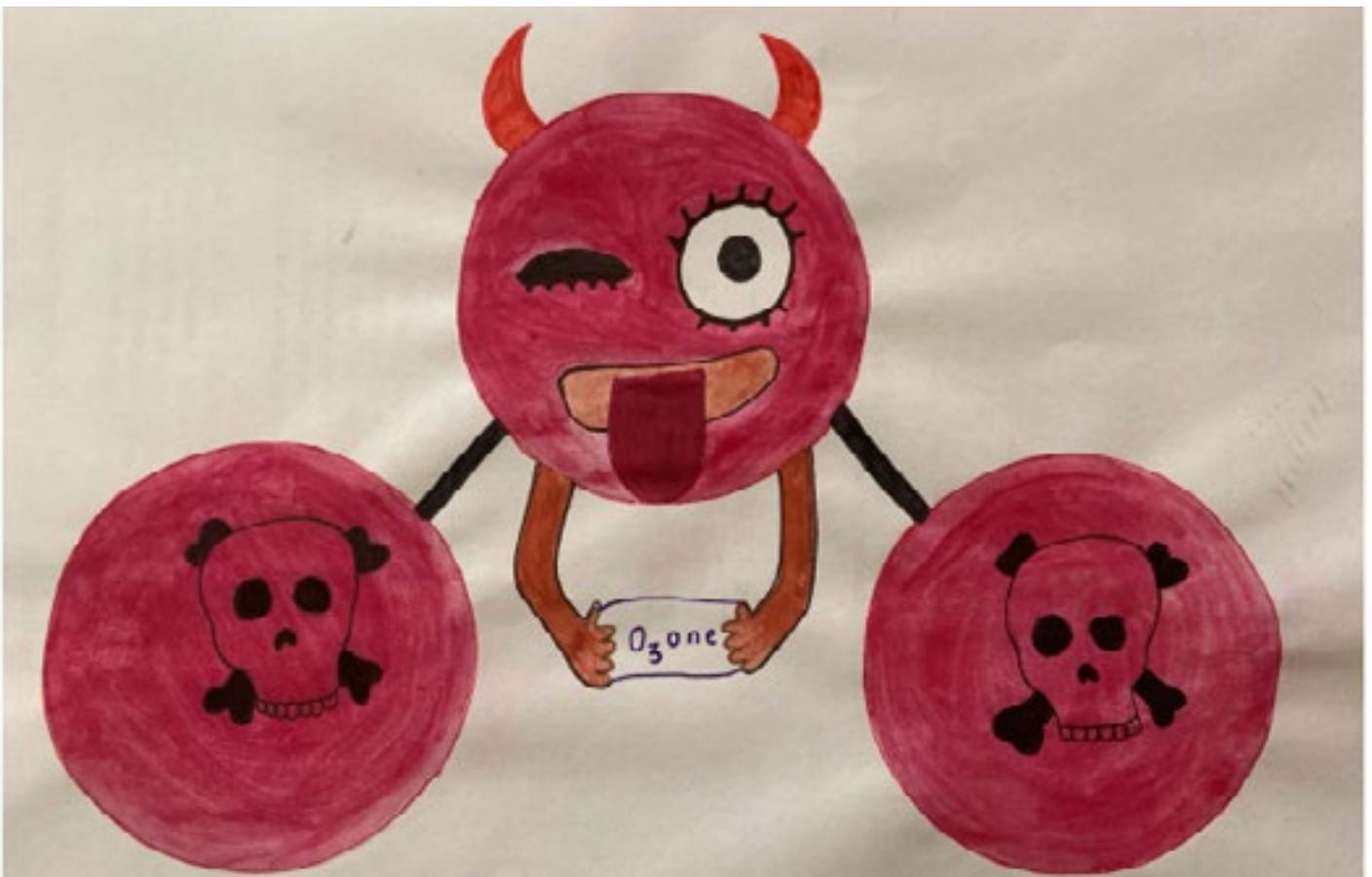
Royal Institution Christmas Lectures

This year we participated in the Royal Institution Christmas Lectures.

We were given a task to draw characters in the shape of greenhouse gas molecules that are most abundant in our atmosphere. This activity enabled us to destress and express our creativity. I chose to draw a molecule of ozone (O_3) as it absorbs the most UV radiation contributing to global warming and climate change (see *below*). Overall, I found this activity interesting and interactive and probably the most simple task we have been given so far during A levels.

A big thank you for organising this activity!

Sahar
Year 13



A laptop for every student BEFORE covid-19



The importance of remote learning and laptops for schools has become a very important issue in recent months. But in Biddenham school was way ahead of the game even before Covid-19 struck.

Seven years ago, the school took the strategic decision to issue all of its students with a Chromebook to keep for the duration of their time at the school to help with their studies.

When the school closed in March our students already had the equipment to hit the ground running for remote teaching and learning.

David Bailey explained, “We use Google and Google classroom specifically, but it meant that during lockdown we were able to keep the learning going (Through a mix of Google classroom, pre-recorded lessons and live lessons) and, importantly, maintain our contact with all of our students.

“Since September we have been able to maintain the learning of our students by ensuring that any students at home use Googlemeet to tune into the lesson they would have had and effectively take part remotely. Similarly, any teachers who may have to be at home are teaching their lessons from home to their students in school, whilst the group is supported in school by a cover teacher. Should we return to a full lockdown we are ready to continue learning remotely.”

During these challenging times Biddenham School proved to be a good example of a state school supporting its community both educationally and in terms of its wellbeing and continuing to safely provide a top-quality education to all of its students.

Virtual Schools Panel: Oracy Parliamentary Inquiry

In recognition of our pioneering work on oracy, Biddenham was nominated by Dr Arlene Holmes Henderson, Senior Research Fellow from the University of Sussex, to contribute to the All Party Parliamentary Group 'Virtual Schools Panel' on 9th December. We were one of only nine schools nationally where students were asked to present their views to a live online panel of MPs and members of the House of Lords.

Oracy plays a key role in the curriculum at Biddenham and it was a marvellous opportunity for our students to showcase their skills and engage so directly with the democratic process. The event marked the launch of an interim report by the All-Party Parliamentary Group on Oracy (download report here) and we look forward to making further contributions before the final report is published next summer.

As the report shows, MPs on the Group are concerned that not enough priority is given to oracy in schools and it calls upon the Government to do more to raise the status of oracy in our education system. Here at Biddenham School we offer an oracy programme as standard in Year 7 and 8 and we are slowly embedding 'talk-rich' learning opportunities across Years 9 - 13.

Working with the Year 8 class 8CD, the students identified three particular questions to explore in their short five minute presentations. These were:

1. Do students need to be explicitly taught oracy? How is it part of your lessons and what skills do you learn?
2. How has developing your speaking and listening skills helped you personally (e.g. with your studies, confidence, socially)?
3. Why is learning to express your views and feelings even more important following the challenges of lockdown and ongoing uncertainty and disruption? Has the ability to express yourself and talk about concerns helped in recent months?

In their live answers, the three students showed maturity, eloquence and great fluency, and were living examples of what those with access to good oracy programmes and experiences can achieve. I know that when you see the student presentations, from Hala Abedh (yr8) Natasha Atchison (Yr12) and Emmanuel Ansare (Yr13) you will agree that they rose to the occasion and did the school, their families and themselves proud.

The current Covid-19 crisis has highlighted the need for all young people to develop high level oracy skills, not just to improve future employment prospects but help with social relationships, personal well-being and active citizenship.

Emily Simpson
Assistant Head Teacher
KS3 and Oracy Coordinator.

See the full video of the event here
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=jqc-_MzrbC4

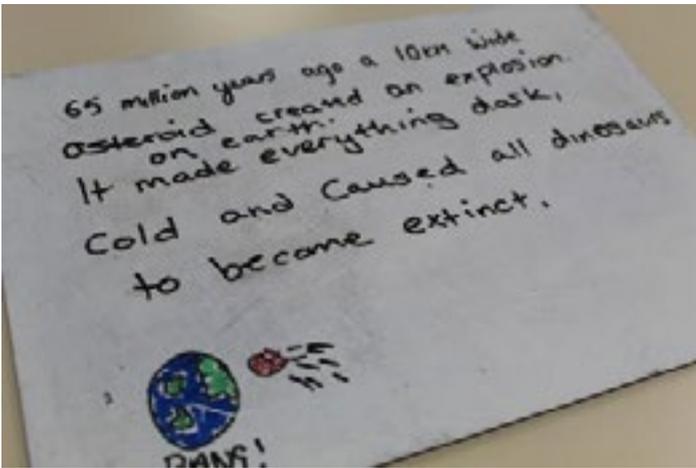
Geography Fabulous Finish

On Friday 11th December Year 7 students spent a day off timetable completing their geography Fabulous Finish (see photos below).

The day included several workshops leading up to students creating their own short documentary about their chosen Biome.

It combined skills needed across many subjects, but most importantly allowed students to be creative within the subject. All students worked well and engaged in the day fantastically.

Well done year 7!



Careers News

Student Website

We now have a Careers Department student website. Accessed via the student homepage, this is where students can find details of how to self refer for a careers appointment, a link to Unifrog - our dedicated careers platform, labour market information apps and our post appointment feedback form.

What the feedback says....

'Your opinion matters to us...' is something we all hear so often after we have either made an online purchase, been for an appointment or paid for an experience of some sort. Here at Biddenham, providing a high calibre careers facility is vital to the long term life success of our students. In order to capture our students' voices and opinions, we are offering all those who have had a careers appointment the opportunity to feedback to us about their experience. Here's what students have said so far this year...

61.5% of students who completed the form said that the help they had during their appointment had a really positive effect on how they felt about their future choices.

38.5% said that the help they had had quite a positive effect.

76.9% of students said that their careers appointment had a really positive effect on their motivation to make a plan for their future.

And here are a few quotes that students gave when asked what they liked about their session...

'It's cleared up a few questions that have been plaguing my mind for a few weeks now'

'I like how it gave me a time to reflect on my choices and all the bombarding thoughts I had'

'I liked being able to know what options to choose since I was stuck on that and couldn't choose for a while and finding out stuff about different paths I can take'

'I liked how I could talk to you freely without thinking you would tell someone else'

In the new year.. The Biddenham Careers Map competition....

Look out for road maps dotted in the ground floor windows - you'll see that each map represents the career journey of somebody who works either within the school or as a Biddenham Governor.

Continued on next page

Can you guess who they are? Each map guessed gets 5 house points for the person who guesses! Please email your answers to Mrs. Purvis on rachel.purvis@mybiddenham.com

Virtual activities linking curriculum to careers

One of the most contemporary and relevant aspects of our careers curriculum is our focus on the link between subject and careers. After all, why do we come to school?

Ultimately, we come to school so that we can have a career. Learning about how the study of each subject can help us achieve this is paramount to empowering our students to navigate their future careers.

The extra curricula opportunities offered throughout the year support and reflect this.

Examples include : Q and A with a Government Analyst (STEM), NHS (Bedfordshire) Academy (Health and Social Care, Science) and, A Trip Through a Carbon NanoZoo (Science department).

NHS Academy

Students in the Health and Social Care departments and those interested in a career in Medicine were invited to join the NHS Bedfordshire virtual academy. The academy's doors opened in October and since then, all members have had some amazing opportunities...

So far this term, Academy students have been able to look at the role of the consultant nurse, learned about the role of a nurse practitioner, looked at a simulation of an emergency resuscitation, learnt how to put someone into the recovery position, looked at the role of the paediatric nurse and at the role of the clinical support worker.

All of this takes place virtually either during health and social care lessons or in the students' own time.

The year 12 workskills students are studying a unit on 'how to build Relationships with colleagues'. Having learnt the theory for the unit, they needed to work together on a project that involved other people also in order to test their New skills.

Biddenham is a very friendly school and all staff look forward to Christmas celebrations every year; sadly this year we are unable to, but to keep us all positive and happy we devised 'Postbox cheer', a chance for staff at Biddenham to send happy thoughts or a thank-you to another member of staff.

The students are eagerly sorting through the many hundreds of notes already posted in the postbox and working together to make sure all are delivered by next Friday, the last day of term.

We would like to say a big thank you to the WorkSkills students, as the job is much bigger than we originally anticipated.



Workskills students with Post Box cheer.

Performing Arts News

The Performing Arts department have really enjoyed being able to have our students back in to work on our extra curricular projects. We have had more than 80 students attending a range of clubs that we have had on offer. All clubs have maintained our year group bubbles.

The Dance students have been working on a piece inspired by the current situation we find ourselves in. We have explored contrasting styles and the use of chairs as a feature of the set. The energy and enthusiasm we have experienced has been truly inspiring and has proven to be a lovely way to end the teaching day.

The Drama students have enjoyed thinking on their feet by working on their improvisation and characterisation skills, they have created many wonderfully ridiculous characters providing lots of laughs! They have also been developing their sight reading skills whilst working on a variety of short scripted scenes. The passion and interest in character development has been brilliant, it's been lovely to see their confidence grow.



Music Department

We have had an amazing term. 7GM have been learning to play the drum kit each Monday morning and we have loved hearing their percussive sounds all across A block. On Monday evenings we are all having fun at our online choir rehearsal 'Choirantine.' We look forward to sharing our first virtual performance with you.

On Tuesdays we have a busy group of ten Year 7 ukulele players who are enjoying playing their favourite songs at lunchtime in the music department.

Thursday's is Trombone Day! Twenty Year 7s have joined trombone club and are enjoying playing their brightly coloured instruments in their lessons and sometimes even on the field.

Our peripatetic teachers have been busy mentoring our students to learn to play piano, bass guitar, electric guitar, bassoon, flute, violin, drum kit and ukulele and it is a joy to hear music radiating from our practice rooms once more. This term, Year 7 and 8 have been learning how to read rhythm and will be working towards their grade one snare drum. Whilst our GCSE students have been learning about the great composers from the Baroque period and brushing up their listening skills ready for their up and coming exams.

We have a large group of musicians who will be joining in with the virtual Modulo programme whereby our students will get mentoring from professional musicians in the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra. This will lead to a big, virtual performance with other schools across the country.

A big well done to all our musicians.



Trombone club

In the trombone club we are practicing christmas jingle bells with the trombone we are also learning numbers instead of letters here is the jingle bells theme in numbers 3334|222334|2333334|234.

We are starting from basics and I am really enjoying getting to learn a new instrument and meeting new friends in other classes.

This is only a small part of what we are doing in the club.

Watch this space for more information.

A picture of Kenzie, Year 7, holding the trombone

Biddenham Discover Magazine

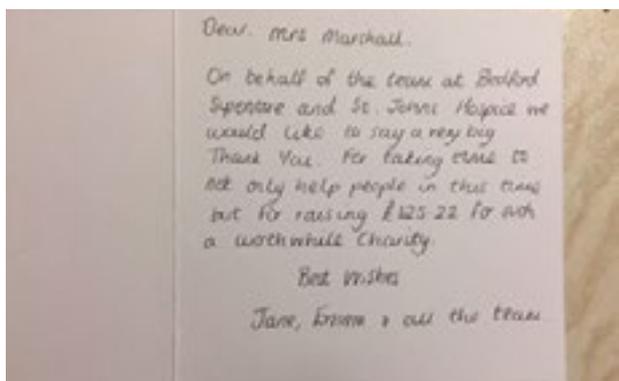
The Biddenham Discover Magazine is a platform where students from all years can get involved whether it is to write articles on academic topics that they are interested in, or to write/draw something more creative. This magazine, established by sixth form students, is open to all students at Biddenham to contribute, under the guidance and supervision of Mr. Shakoor.

The magazine is a great opportunity for students to express themselves in addition to establishing and strengthening their academic writing, reading, and oracy skills - necessary in higher education. It has been tailored to be understood and engaging to all years of age whether it is students, staff, or parents. It is structured to help students and guide them to potential future prospects. In addition to the article written by the students of Biddenham our Magazine also has many other useful segments such as a dedicated UCAS, Personal Statement, and Work Experience area for sixth form students to help strengthen their application to post 18 options, alongside many more. All students have access to both physical copies and online copies of the Magazine and all students can read and learn from it.

The purpose of this is to further open students' minds, educate students beyond the A-level and GCSE specification. We at the Biddenham Discover team, want to help kindle the interests of our current and future peers, to ignite their full potential.

Wasim Rafiq
Year 13

Fundraising for local hospice



One of the Biddenham staff members retired mother has been very busy making masks for the Sue Ryder foundation. She has now made around 70 masks, which the staff and students at Biddenham school have been kindly purchasing. So far the amount of £125.22 has been raised for a worthwhile charity. Well done Biddenham.

PE Update



Extracurricular sport this term has been like a dramatic cup final, a tale of two halves.

The first half dominated by Covid restrictions meaning nothing happened and no extra curricular sport. To now in the second half with a flurry of activity and enjoyment echoing around the school, seeing large numbers of students across all year groups, week in week out turning up to badminton and football clubs, to enjoy time with friends, develop new skills and be active.

This is alongside time for our GCSE PE students to hone in their skills. Clubs are open to all students on different nights of the week and will be changing each half term, so to keep up to speed with what is going on add yourself to your year group PE Google Classroom for updates on sports on offer and notifications of any changes that may be upcoming. The PE department look forward to seeing more of you here in the new year.

Sleep out 2 Help Out for Transitions UK



This December we are raising much needed funds for a fantastic regional young people's charity – Transitions UK

Families, bubbles and groups of up to six were invited to get together to Sleep out 2 Help out on the evening of Friday 11th and Saturday 12th December 2020, to raise money for the work Transitions UK does to support disadvantaged young people at risk aged 14-25 to ensure they transition to happy, healthy and fulfilled adult lives. To keep everyone safe in these unprecedented times, we are asking you to Sleep out 2 Help out **AT HOME**, this can be outside in your garden, your living room floor, even on your sofa. Please ensure that you stick to the Tier rules for your area.

If you weren't able to make that date but would still like to take part please get in touch with Sarah Grimes on 07736 943350 or at sarah.grimes@transitionsuk.org to arrange your own separate activity.

Prizes are offered for the most creative, so don't forget to post your pictures and tag TUK and use our hashtag [#sleepout2helpoutbeds](https://twitter.com/hashtag/sleepout2helpoutbeds) on your social media posts!

Suggested minimum sponsorship £200 per person or £500 per family.

Create your sponsorship page here:

www.totalgiving.co.uk/charity/transitions-uk

Don't forget to share with friends and family! Good luck and thank you for your support