

2nd January 2024

Dear students and parents

I hope everyone in our community had an enjoyable break over Christmas and would like to begin by wishing you all a Happy New Year. As the new term starts, I am writing as usual to provide updates across a range of college areas and share some exciting new initiatives at Collyer's.

The autumn term was as always very busy and positive with lots of different activities going on as students settled into their studies. Well done to all students for everything you've achieved in the last few months which will form a fantastic foundation for strong performance this summer. It's also been great to see the continued very high level of engagement in Collyer's 360 – both in Pro-Study sessions and the incredible range of more than 130 enrichment activities that are run by both staff and students.

Recent events

On the 8th and 9th November we welcomed well over 2,000 prospective students and parents to our autumn Open Evenings. There was a real buzz around the college and my thanks go to students who volunteered to help and to all staff for two hugely positive events. I know everyone visiting very much appreciated having such a warm welcome to Collyer's and being able to experience the atmosphere here. Our applications opened in early November and are already well over 10% higher than last year's record numbers. Part of this is growing demographics in each Year 11 cohort that comes through but part is also our strong reputation across the region as one of the leading sixth form colleges in the country. In my update on our property strategy later in this newsletter I highlight our ambitious plans to grow Collyer's to be able to accommodate additional students, in keeping with our founder Richard Collyer's wish for '*none to be refused likely to learn*'.

In December we had two key events that represent our sense of community and speak to our heritage. On December 5th we welcomed over 200 guests, including both college and local communities, to St. Mary's Church for our annual Christmas Concert. I know everyone there was incredibly impressed by the musical performances and thoroughly enjoyed singing carols together for some festive cheer:



Just before we broke for Christmas we had our annual prize-giving event in the Duckering Hall at Collyer's. Welcoming back students from the class of '23 as well as a wide range of local dignitaries and stakeholders, it was a wonderful opportunity to celebrate the achievements of last year's cohort and catch up on how they have progressed as Old Collyerians:



Heritage

In November at the AGM of the Old Collyerians' Association, Ruth Mitchell was elected as the new President of the OCA, taking over from Prof. Roger Dalrymple. Like Roger, Ruth is a huge supporter of the college and fully committed both to celebrating our heritage and the memories of our Grammar school days as well as looking forward to how our alumni association can develop to support the many new members it gains each year as our students leave. Collyer's and the OCA are working closely together to develop events and networking opportunities that will help our more recent Old Collyerians as they embark on their careers – more to announce soon.

Collyer's in the press

If you live in or around Horsham then I'm sure you'll know of a local magazine called AAH (All About Horsham). We think the editor Ben Morris and his team promote the town and its surroundings really well and capture a whole array of events that are going on. We were delighted therefore that Ben agreed to come into Collyer's to find out more about what our community does here and what makes it such a special place. He also took the time to meet with the Old Collyerians' Association as well. Please do take a moment to read the articles in the December edition (link in the picture).

Partnerships

At Collyer's we continue to be fully committed to working with partners across the town and beyond, for the benefit of our students as well as young people across the region. Recently we were delighted to hear that our joint bid into the Local Skills Improvement Fund alongside all the other colleges across Sussex was successful. This £4.5M project will focus on delivering high-quality technical education and for our college will create a brand-new immersive teaching space with the very latest technology. Work will take place over the summer break in time for the start of the 2024/25 academic year. Development is also well underway with the other Mercers' Associated Schools and Colleges for this summer's Year 12 conference. The inaugural event last year focused on sustainability involved students from eight schools and was hosted at Reading University, featuring a keynote presentation by Lord Professor Robert Winston. As soon as we have the final details we'll promote the event to our 1A students.



Property strategy

We're always busy improving the estate for the benefit of our community at Collyer's. Sometimes this is creating new spaces like the Café or the Shelley Building, sometimes it is equally important maintenance and enhancing existing facilities. Visitors to the college in recent months will have seen some very significant scaffolding along the front of the buildings and also inside the campus. This has been in place to allow most of our flat roofs to be replaced – a £0.5M project that was largely funded by the Department for Education. Thank you to all our community for handling the minor inconveniences so well and I'm pleased to say that the last section of scaffolding was struck over the Christmas break.

Also during the last couple of months we've been busy improving the security and access of our gates around the campus, as I flagged in my autumn newsletter sent out on 11th September. These works have now been completed and we have Paxton systems installed at all entry and exit points meaning students and staff will sometimes need to swipe in using their ID cards on arrival at college. To ensure we are considerate to our local community and manage the flow of pedestrian and bicycle traffic as safely as possible, we have implemented the following arrangements which are now fully effective. If a student has forgotten their lanyard and ID card and arrives between 10-3 then they will need to enter via the Visitor Entrance by pressing the intercom for Reception. All students who forget their lanyards must go to the Library to get a temporary wristband for the day.

Student Entrance	Main pedestrian entrance for students. ID access only from 10 – 3.
Visitor Entrance	Intercom connection to Reception. Fully accessible.
Grammar School Entrance	Secondary pedestrian entrance for students. No access from 10 – 3.
Richmond Road Entrance	Student bicycle entrance only. ID access only. Must be registered.



Looking ahead, we're continuing to develop our estate to provide social, catering, sport and teaching spaces. We hope to build a second outdoor canopy to provide sheltered seating in between the Sports Centre and the Library during the spring term. Finally during the spring term we will finish the process for appointing our new design team to lead the next phases of the estates masterplan – first a large new Sports Centre open to our local community in the evenings and weekends and then a state-of-the-art Tech Centre with library, social and event space. For more information please do take a look at our [Quincentenary Fund](#) section of the college website.

I wish everyone a productive spring term, all the best with your studies and I'll write again after the Easter holidays.

Kind regards

Dan Lodge
Principal