

New-look Sixth Form

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FOR CHILDREN, FAMILIES AND COMMUNITIES



Welcome

Last term was a busy one across the Wensum Trust. We had the official opening of the refurbished Hellesdon Sixth Form and, from speaking to the students, I know the improved study centre and common room facilities are already providing a much-improved learning experience for those taking their next step in their educational journey with us.

Plans have also been announced for a new school building for Firside Junior and we are working closely with the Department for Education who are overseeing the project as part of their School Rebuild Programme.

However, whilst the Trust remains committed to investing in all our schools, our biggest investment is in our children, families and the wider community. We know some families are facing real challenges and teachers and staff across all our schools are working hard to provide support - for example Acle Academy students collected and delivered food to their local food bank ahead of the school holidays to help families who rely on free school meals.

Looking ahead to when the days get lighter and the weather gets warmer, our vision to open two new ASD Specialist Resource Bases at both Acle Academy and Alderman Peel are progressing, and we will continue to work with our partners to offer unique and exciting opportunities to young people.

Daniel Thrower
CEO, Wensum Trust

New-look Sixth Form for Hellesdon Students

The newly refurbished Sixth Form building at Hellesdon High School has officially opened.

The Wensum Trust has invested £278,000 into the Sixth Form to provide an improved learning and social environment for students from Hellesdon and the surrounding areas.

The building, which now boasts a bigger study centre and a brand new common room, was opened by former Norwich City FC player, Adam Drury, on Thursday 1 December.

Adam has a special connection with the Sixth Form - as Football & Education Manager for Norwich City Community Sports Foundation's Football and Education Programme, which partners with the Wensum Trust, he works with a number of the students.

The new common room has been kitted out with kitchen facilities and a large social area with new furniture, and the study centre has doubled in size.



John Smith, Chair of Trustees, said it was an important investment: "These new and modern facilities enhance our provision to students who are preparing to take that next step on their future career path.

"It is extremely important to us as a Trust that the Sixth Form provides many opportunities for aspirational young people in a supportive environment and this is enhanced by the unique partnerships we have with organisations such as Norwich City's CSF, Norwich Theatre and Lovell."

As well as the new facilities, Hellesdon Sixth Form also has a new logo. Principal Mike Earl added: "The new logo helps mark the start of this new modern era for our Sixth Form. We are particularly delighted with it as some of our own Graphic Design students from Years 11, 12 and 13 held a workshop with the brand agency FOUR to help create the new logo. This has given them the opportunity to work with a professional company, as well as contribute to the look of our Sixth Form."



Kate's Hellesdon Encore

A former Hellesdon High student has returned to her roots to help bring the school's latest musical to life.

When Head of Drama, Dan Rayner, put out a call for a choreographer for their musical 9 to 5, Kate Pantry was quick to take on the role.

Kate, who left the Sixth Form in 2014, is no stranger to the stage herself having performed in a number of previous Hellesdon shows including Oliver, Annie, The Sound of Music - and The Beauty and the Beast in which she played Belle.

Kate, who still performs in shows in Norwich, said: "I had so much fun performing as a student at Hellesdon, and it taught me so much about life, that I wanted to give something back. I have loved being involved and it honestly feels like I never left."

Kate says her favourite role whilst at the school was playing Belle but now, as an adult, she realises that performing went far beyond the stage itself: "It's really nice to see how things run behind the scenes. When you're a student you don't appreciate how much the staff at the school do to give you these opportunities. It's not just honing your skills as a performer, it's about learning to be resilient and disciplined, showing respect and etiquette - and helping young people grow their confidence.

"It's a massive commitment, to helping young people develop valuable life skills and reach their aspirations, and I am so grateful that I get to be part of it."



Kate as Belle in Beauty and The Beast



Kate with the cast of 9 to 5



BroadsBeat Sail Into Arden Grove

Norfolk Police's BroadsBeat boat sailed into Arden Grove Infant School at the end of November.

The police team, which patrols Norfolk's famous waterways, came into the school to speak to the children about how they protect the broads and talk about water safety.

Some of the children got to demonstrate how to help someone in trouble in the water and they all got to take a tour of the boat.



Specialist education to grow across the Wensum Trust

Plans to open two new Specialist Resource Bases (SRBs) to support young people with Autistic Spectrum Disorder are well underway.

The Wensum Trust is working with Norfolk County Council to build the SRBs at Acle Academy and Alderman Peel High School.

The settings will support young people to overcome their barriers to learning, be better able to cope and to be integrated into a mainstream setting in which they can reach their full potential.

A public consultation for the plans at the end of last year received significant support and the SRBs are due to open in 2024 at Alderman Peel and 2025 at Acle.

The Wensum Trust opened a Specialist Resource Base for Primary aged children at Arden Grove Infant School in Norwich in April 2021.



Food For Families

Students at Acle Academy have been helping feed families during the cost of living crisis.

The school held a non-uniform day, but rather than donating money, students contributed food to the Acle Food Bank.

The idea originated from the Student Service Area Charity Group who chose Acle Food Bank as this year's charity in light of the current cost of living crisis.

Principal Helen Watts said: "Although some families receive the Local Authority funded grant of £15 per month, this doesn't stretch very far with the cost of food in supermarkets today. At Acle Academy, we offer free breakfast in addition to the free school meal for eligible children. Our School Parliament has also successfully campaigned to offer a free snack at break time for students in receipt of free school meals.

"We are very proud of the community spirit and care for others shown by our students. The support from students and their families has been tremendous."



Trust welcomes High Sheriff

The Wensum Trust welcomed the High Sheriff of Norfolk to see the work taking place to improve the lives of children, families and communities.

David Hill joined Chair of Trustees, John Smith, on visits to three of the schools in the Norwich Hub.

Mr Hill's first visit was to Heather Avenue Infant School to see a Wise About Words session taking place. The Wise About Words programme, in partnership with Norwich Theatre, aims to help develop speech and language of children in the early years and help children emotionally connect with themselves and others.

He also spent time with Headteacher Stacey Coleman to find out more about the work of the Wensum English Hub, which supports schools across Norfolk and Suffolk to improve reading.

Mr Hill was then given a tour of the newly refurbished Hellesdon Sixth Form, before visiting The Base - a purpose built Specialist Resource Base at Arden Grove Infant School, which provides support to children with social, emotional and mental health needs.

Following the visit Mr Hill said: "I very much enjoyed meeting the team at Wensum Trust and visiting some of the schools as well as The Base. The Trust's emphasis on a relational approach, as well as the wellbeing of your pupils, is so important after the challenges of the last two years. It was an inspiring visit and thank you for taking the time to show me around."

"Chair of Trustees, John Smith, added: "I was pleased to be able to show the High Sheriff what we are doing across our schools. We were able to discuss some of the challenges young people face, how the Wensum Trust is approaching these and how we are trying to extend our support to families. I am looking forward to working with him in the future to improve and enhance the lives of our children, families and communities."



Community Spirit Paves Way For Trim Trail

Children at Burnham Market Primary School are eagerly awaiting a new Trim Trail thanks to the generosity of the local community.

Following a successful craft fair, the Craft Fair Committee of Burnham Market have donated £2,000 towards the building of the new trail on the school field. The school have also received £1250 from a local charity, The Harold Moorhouse Charity and the Lord Nelson Pub donated money from a quiz night. Funds have also been raised through the PE & School Sport Premium.

Headteacher Rachel Stroulger said: "As a school we are incredibly lucky to have wonderful support from our local community, enabling us to buy additional resources which will improve the lives and education of our children. I would like to thank everyone for their hard work and generosity and we look forward to having the Trim Trail up and running as soon as possible."

In partnership with... Norwich Theatre

In this edition of Wensum News we speak to Stephen Crocker, Chief Executive and Creative Director of Norwich Theatre.

What was your educational and career route to where you are today?

I've had the joy and privilege of working at Norwich Theatre since 2017 having previously worked in Greater Manchester and been Deputy CEO of The Lowry in Salford. I started my career as a performer and then was lucky enough to have a portfolio career of performing and working in the cultural sector away from the stage, but eventually settled on supporting leadership within arts and cultural organisations.

How important is the partnership between Norwich Theatre and the Wensum Trust and why?

The partnership is hugely important because it brings creativity into the classroom in an immersive and collaborative way. By enhancing teachers' skills to confidently tell stories and bring them to life, it has a positive impact in engaging children in the love of stories and reading for pleasure. This then develops children's story-sharing abilities alongside confidence, teamwork, resilience, and all of the skills children need to learn in the classroom that might not be formal.

We know the pandemic has been really difficult for children with the lockdowns hindering their speech and reading abilities. We need to be responsive and can't ignore the fact that some are finding readjustment and the return to school difficult. This scheme will be closely monitored to see how creative engagement through storytelling could further broaden educational outcomes going forward.

What would be your advice for someone looking for a career in any aspect of theatre?

Go and see lots of work. The core of theatre is the work on stage, and as an employer and

someone who has worked a long time in this sector, seeing as much theatre as possible gives you experience and passion. Secondly, no idea is a bad idea, and thirdly be kind along the way, it will stand you in good stead.

What has been your proudest moment so far with Norwich Theatre?

Working with Carlos Acosta to co-produce his show, *On Before*, has been a huge highlight. It is always joyous and inspirational to work with Carlos. He is someone whose passion and commitment is just infectious and I love working with someone who is so driven by creativity and vision. This project was very special to us not only because of the show itself but also because of the spirit of bravery, diversity, determination and commitment to dance that brought us together with Carlos again this year.

What or who inspires you?

Any performer who is constantly evolving and pushing their boundaries I find massively inspirational. A classic example would be Madonna, she's always bold and brave and different, I find that truly amazing. Another is Sir Ian McKellen (who I've been lucky enough to meet a few times) who's still touring in panto in his 80s. I remember a decade ago when he said: 'I want to be in *Coronation Street*', and just went and did it. We must pursue our dreams whenever and however we can!



Robotex Final

After winning the regional Lego Robotics Line Follower competition in July, Alexi and Lily from Alderman Peel High School travelled to Estonia to compete in the international finals. They were the only British representatives, along with a student from Sheringham High School.

They competed in two heats against stiff competition and came a very respectable 10th place.



A Mini Adventure

Product Design students from Acle Academy enjoyed an exclusive iFactory tour at the Mini plant last term.

The iFactory is where the 5-door, 3-door and Clubman chassis are constructed. Students walked around the fully automated factory watching the ABB robots in action, with an audio commentary given by a member of staff with over 30 years experience.

After the tour of the iFactory, students were transported down to the assembly line where they witnessed the interiors of the Mini being constructed. The Oxford plant creates 1,000 Minis a day and employs over 3,000 staff.



Firside Junior School to get a new building.

Firside Junior School is going to be replaced with an entirely new building.

The school was selected by the Department for Education as part of the School Rebuilding Programme.

Under the government scheme, all costs are being covered for the new building which will create a modern education environment, providing new facilities.

The school will also be net-zero carbon in operation, helping to meet the government's net zero target.

Daniel Thrower, CEO of the Wensum Trust, said: "This is wonderful news for the Firside community and those who are working and learning in the school every day.

"The Wensum Trust has invested more than £300k since Firside joined the Trust to keep the building safe. This has included roof and window repairs and installing a new boiler. However, it is the fabric of the building that is not fit for purpose and the Department for Education has concluded the long term structure of the building cannot be sustained.

"The new building will have a significant positive impact on the children's experience at school and on the staff, as well as benefiting the whole community."

The building work is expected to begin in August 2023 with the new school being ready to open in September 2024.



SOCIAL SNAPSHOT



Firside Junior School held their Norfolk Open Studios art exhibition.

Budding weather presenters at Lodge Lane Infant School



Burnham Market Primary School had a visit from British BMX Halfpipe Champion Mike Mullen.



The children at Garrick Green performing the Nativity story.



Hellesdon High School Students have been learning CPR with the East of England Ambulance Service



Kinsale Junior School raised £526 at their Book Fair.



Year One children at Lodge Lane got to take part in a gymnastics festival



Students from Wells Primary and Alderman Peel High, took part in the London Lord Mayor's Procession.



Students from across all our schools raised more than £1,000 for Children In Need.

FACILITIES HIRE



Do you run a group or club?

Are you looking for somewhere to meet regularly? Or somewhere to host a one-off event?

Many of our schools have facilities which you can use as your base.

Whether you're running exercise or antenatal classes, slimming world sessions, adult education classes or drama groups, we can help accommodate you.

If you're interested in talking to us about using our facilities, please get in contact with Kris Hart by emailing k.hart@wensumtrust.org.uk or call 01603 254327.

Alternatively visit our website www.wensumtrust.org.uk to look at all the facilities we have on offer across the Trust.

"We are delighted to have access to the great facilities at the Wensum Trust. As a grassroots football club, they have been able to support us in providing good quality facilities at each of the formats we need; 5, 7, 9 & 11 a side, at prices that mean we can make football accessible for the children of our community"

Dan Henry Costessey Youth



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