

# Spalding Grammar School Sixth Form Newsletter 25 June 2021

As the marking and moderation process of all GCSE and A level assessments has come to a close, we teachers draw a breath of relief in the certainty that we worked hard and rigorously to make sure that our students achieve the grades they deserve.

Year 12's are now well underway with the post-18 programme, researching options for the future. Already, all students have successfully registered on UCAS though they might decide to start an apprenticeship or seek employment after their Sixth Form studies. Through the use of Unifrog and collaboration with many external providers we help our students receiving the best guidance. In recent weeks alone, they have spent very informative and exciting sessions with Nottingham Trent and Northumbria Universities, which offer good outreach programmes based not only on how to choose a course and a universities but also what life at university is like. Sheffield University and Imperial will come to see us next.

Trial Exams are now completed; these will inform the predicted grades for UCAS along with the assessments students have completed so far. I am confident that the extensive revision programme put into place in Form Time and during Private Study periods since the beginning of the year, will pay dividends. Good luck, Year 12's!



# Prefecture & Students Leadership Team 2021-2022

The two weeks before half-term saw a very busy period for the Year 12 Prefects, with 22 out of the 52 who were successfully selected to be either Ambassador or Minister applying for one of the three available positions in the Senior Student Team.

Having begun their application process with a letter, a two-minute video presentation and then the staff and student vote, the last element in deciding on Head Student and two Deputies was the panel interview; quite the daunting prospect given the panel consisted of Mr Wilkinson, Dr Leadbeater, the incumbent Head Boy, Jake Barnes, and me! Interviews were scheduled for 30 minutes, with two rounds of questions lead by Mr Wilkinson; the candidates were tested on their responses to scenarios, their ability to answer multiple-part questions, demonstrate how they would meet the expectations associated with the role and provide examples of when they have shown the attributes they felt were fundamental to the position, amongst other things!

Understandably the candidates were nervous but all 22 held it together to give excellent interviews; some of them had never faced any interview before, let alone one as formidable as that, and some were able to draw on extra-curricular experiences to explain how they felt they were best suited for the role, evidencing to the panel the vast array of activities our students are involved in.

In the end, however, there can be only three, and after much deliberation the students selected to be Deputy Head Boy & Deputy Head Girl are Oliver Drakard & Poppy Gill, and the new Head Boy for 2021/22 is Benjamin Birdseye.

Thank you to all who applied, the process is deliberately tough, and you all showed tremendous strength of character throughout each part, but particular congratulations to our new Senior Team, Benjamin, Poppy and Oliver. Our work on the various Prefect roles has already begun and I am very excited to see our plans unfold as the academic year continues.

*Ms AJ Dearing*



For more information about our newly restructured Prefecture and the specific roles of Ministers and Ambassadors, visit our webpage following the tabs: Sixth Form>Life in the Sixth Form>Prefecture





# Head Boy 2021-22: Ben Birdseye

The position of Head Boy is one that I have thought about a lot throughout my time at SGS. Once I overcame the first hurdle of becoming a Prefect, I focused on producing a presentation on the subject of 'change' and after being stuck on this for some time, I eventually settled on the topic of efficiency. It's an area that is important to me and I try to be as efficient as possible whether that comes to school or sport, it is always helpful to waste the least amount of energy as one can. However, the most daunting part of the application process was the interview, mainly because we were going in blind, with little knowledge of what we were going to be asked. Therefore, my preparation had to cover a lot of different areas that I thought would be relevant. I thought over different scenarios and how they would have to deal with, what I wanted to achieve with my time as Head Boy and what made me suitable for the role. I enjoyed the different tasks and felt that I have gained a lot from the experience of applying which will help me down the road.

As for the future, I think that everybody will agree that the last few months have been trying for everyone, with the school having been split up into the different year groups. As such, year groups have not been able to mix and some of the newer boys to the school have not experienced what it is like to communicate with older students. Therefore, I want to try and help to re-build the community spirit that existed in the school before COVID-19 and recreate the comradery that was felt between the students. I also understand that there were many plans set for the senior team and the prefecture that had to be put on hold so I would like to try and carry these things out and get the ball rolling again as it were. Getting back to normal will take some time and effort and I hope that myself and those around me can contribute in an impactful way.



## Getting to know Ben!

<b>At SGS since</b>	September of 2015, Year 7
<b>A Levels studied</b>	Chemistry, Geography and Maths
<b>Post-18 plans</b>	Study Geology at University
<b>Sports played</b>	Rugby and Cricket
<b>Other hobbies</b>	Cooking (my best dish is Chicken Jambalaya), Baking (walnut and Coffee is my favourite cake) and Gym (unrelated to the cooking and baking!)
<b>Favourite film</b>	Shawshank Redemption
<b>Favourite singer</b>	David Bowie
<b>Quote</b>	Hard work beats talent when talent doesn't work hard



# Students Leadership Team 2021-22



The application process for Head Student was a challenging one but an exciting experience as its features mimicked aspects of adulthood. In our futures we will be expected to attend job interviews or propose our ideas as we did in our videos about 'change', being able to formally write a letter of application predominantly selling ourselves, is an event we will have to enact repeatedly throughout our lifetimes. I had to take the time to understand what my strengths and weaknesses were as a candidate for the role and be able to talk about myself confidently, furthermore in the interview I had to prepare for these personality traits of mine to be discussed and explored, preparing to be questioned on topics I couldn't know tested my adaptability and resilience. I was proud that the interview felt positive as that was my first formal interview.

I was overjoyed to hear I successfully obtained the role of Deputy Head Girl and this was further amplified by the coming together of the senior team for photos; I'm grateful to be able to work with such motivated and optimistic people. In my role overseeing the Ambassadors prefect team I'm excited to continue to bring people into a community. I want to promote positivity in our school environment and channel this down through our prefects into the lower years to maintain the joyous collective SGS is known for. I hope to eventually leave the role feeling as if I have spread my passion for learning and optimism to as many people as possible; I always want to put the well-being of our students as a priority, so that everyone's school experience is as motivating as it can be.

**Poppy Gill Head of the Ambassadors**

A position in the Students Leadership Team is one that I had thought about for some time and saw as a great opportunity to help the school to improve and to set an example for others to follow. When the Prefecture applications came around I knew I wanted to apply. The whole process was simple, a small application letter in which I explained why I wanted the position and why I thought I had what it takes. The next step however was a little more difficult and daunting. Creating a video based around change that lasted for two minutes. While it may not seem like much, without a plan it is very easy to overrun that time constraint and still not be finished with the meat of your talk. After a couple of takes, I had a video I was happy with and sent it in. Interviews were then scheduled, the last step that I had any real control over. I had never actually done a real interview before, but I had done research and answered the types of questions and scenarios given before in different communities online. The most important part of any interview is to remain calm and have a set of talking points either written down or in the forefront of your mind. I did just that and the results were fairly clear.

I feel communication has broken down in the school not only between year groups, but between staff and students too. My priority is to bring back that communication and continue plans that were placed on hiatus due to COVID that would assist with breaking down this communication barrier. I want students of all years to be confident and have the ability to ask questions, ask for help and talk with other year groups that could provide this support. I also want students to have the confidence to hold their own opinions too and to be able to have healthy discussions with their peers and the senior team in which all sides listen to each other, something which seems to be increasingly lacking, especially online. **Oliver Drakard Head of the Ministers**



# SGS DEBATES: The 2021 Final

On Tuesday 25<sup>th</sup> May, “For” the motion “University Degrees are better than Apprenticeships”, Koebi Austin, Samuel Rees and Blake Norton debated (and lost!) with the “Against” team made up of Tom Kerigan, Maddie Harris and Hannah Wilkins. In front of the whole year group, Form Tutors and Mr Rowe, arbitrator extraordinaire, this final debate concluded a series of intra and inter-form events aimed at exploring post-18 options available to our students while developing essential oracy skills.

As part of the Enhancement Programme” in Form Time, all Year 12 students took the opportunity to explore debate matters in depth and then work cooperatively with the rest of their team to voice opinions articulately, listen to and respect others, grow confidence in public speaking and enhance persuasive language skills, among other qualities.

Mr Rowe is in the process of formalising a Debating Society which we will, hopefully, be able to open to other year groups in the near future under the leadership of the Sixth Form debaters.

In the words of Hannah, below, and Maddie on the next page:

“We spent the weekend preparing our statements and even got together with last year’s head Boy, Jake Barnes, to ensure we were on the right track. Following Koeby’s opening statement, Maddie presented a strong rebuttal based on how apprenticeships offer equivalent degrees and can be completed in a shorter amount of time in comparison to a university course. Between her statement and Thomas’, we quietly discussed our tactics for counter arguments against the opposing team’s statements as well as Thomas’ statement on finances, and the benefits of earning whilst working. This was followed by Blake’s statement, after questions from both Mr. Rowe and the opposition were asked and answered, who highlighted statistics about mental health at university. However, my statement for the apprenticeship team discredited their arguments totally, as I pointed out “the irrelevant statistic from the 1960s and focused on the detrimental statistics that have been found more recently about university dropouts”. *Hannah Wilkins*



# SGS DEBATES: The 2021 Final

"Personally, I greatly enjoyed the research that went on in preparation for the debate – As I've done a few debates prior to this one, during the EPQ periods, I was already somewhat experienced with debating and debate preparation, outside of the University vs Apprenticeship discussion, which I felt gave me a slight edge. I was responsible for a sizable proportion of the research, and it was incredibly interesting; some points we planned to make had to be dropped or changed in light of new data we found, we even found some surprising new statistics, such as the ones pertaining to mental health disparities between apprentices and university students. My team and I sorted through what we found and collaboratively organised it into six distinct points, which we then delegated during our practise. I found that actual practising of the debate also quite enjoyable, it was useful to give feedback to each other on demeanour and how we were putting forth our arguments, we even spoke to head boy Jake Barnes, which helped settle some pre-debate anxieties. Research was definitely our team's biggest strength, we knew what we were doing but also had enough to be flexible when the time came, if the debate needed it.

- Even the actual debate itself was enjoyable, although incredibly nerve-wracking as we were in front of the whole year group. It was thrilling to listen to the oppositions arguments and to know some of the statistics they were citing and critique them and have appropriate counter-arguments – There was a degree of accomplishment felt in seeing our preparation coming into fruition, even if we did ultimately loose the *popular vote*. Debating is important, especially in the modern day, where matters are becoming increasingly polarised, it is essential to know your beliefs and be able to properly articulate and defend them, with properly done preparation. Debating also sometimes involves arguing for motions that you don't even personally agree with, which opens you up to exploring alternative views and perhaps ultimately becoming more sympathetic to them. *Maddie Harris*



Long live SGS Debate Society! Under Mr Rowe's guidance, I am sure that they will make us proud in future competitions.





# Josh Haines: on Race, Identity and Prejudice

As a mixed-race young man, with a Zambian mother and British father, it is no surprise my attention has been drawn to the recent publicity about the Black Lives Matter movement and the more open and frequent conversations about race.

Following on from reading Dr Leadbeater's column in a previous Newsletter on the tragic, cold blooded murder of Steven Lawrence, I decided to research and reflect on my own experience growing up as a person of colour in Lincolnshire, where the ethnic minority population stands at about 10%.

Only as I've grown up, I've started to realise how hard it would have been for my mother to feel integrated in a community where not a lot of people could relate to her life journey, to her roots. I have fond memories of me and my sisters asking who she said hello to on shopping trips in town, only to learn she greeted her fellow person of colour almost as a method of support. I'm sure most other people will be able to relate when I say as a child, ethnicity was not a relevant factor in any aspect of life. Apart from coming into school shiny-faced from the wedge of cocoa butter Vaseline my mother would put on my face every morning, my skin colour and culture did not have a large effect on anything I did until I finished primary school. In fact, it was as late as Year 5 when one of my peers informed me that people of colour are called "black people" and he referred to himself as "white". I put this in quotation marks to show my disdain for this way to refer to people who all belong to the same human race, although these are the official words used to describe one's ethnicity.

Growing up, being a mixed-race child, the statements "you're not black Josh" or "you're basically white" were often thrown around and were always perceived as jokes and banter. Similarly, in their life, my Asian peers have been on the receiving ends of endless stereotypical and insensitive "jokes" that, more often than not, cut deeper than one might think. It is important that people of all ages know what goes on in our society and why this is such a problem, because times have changed and there is no place for a "slip of the tongue" or inconsiderate comments.

Wanting to contribute to the ending of racism in society by raising awareness and improving people's sensitivity to the problem surrounding diversity in society, I wish to extend the commemoration of Steven Lawrence's death through a "Steven Lawrence Day" in Sixth Form. Established by Prime Minister Theresa May in 2018, the day was introduced to enable citizens to become part of the national conversation about racism and to become more committed to contribute to a fairer society. This can be through the creation of poems or art, highlighting the significance of diversity, or by using the hashtags below to widen our impact and inspire others as much as possible. I hope that this will encourage younger people to be proud of their heritage and acknowledge their uniqueness as early as possible- no matter what anyone says to them. We should all reflect on your own culture and help combat systematic racism by dismissing the labels and stereotypes and accepting the human. Just like candles, we all burn different wax but produce the same flame...

#ChallengeAccepted #StevenLawrenceDay #LiveOurBestLife

Joshua Mambwe Haines





## James Watkin: Homelessness in Lincolnshire ...what do you do about it?

I am a member of a small local action group, the NCS Pollen Jocks Lincolnshire, from across our county who have partnered up with Lincoln City Foundation to work together on a variety of issues that affect our communities. In particular, we look at homelessness which, in line with the national picture, is quickly increasing in Lincolnshire. Increased unemployment combined with higher levels of personal debt, has led to many more people in our area becoming at risk of losing their home, especially in the last few months.

We started off in November with a Christmas fundraiser for EDAN Lincolnshire and St Barnabas Lincolnshire, which raised £926.

For our next project, we decided to create something that could be sent to schools to help spread awareness of a major problem within a large portion of the UK. We partnered with YMCA, which is a charity focusing on empowering and inspiring youth and improving people's well-being. The video in the link below focuses on how people in their local communities can help to combat the effects of the homelessness crisis so that we can make a lasting impact fighting it as our generation assumes more responsibilities moving forward. This was the main driver of the project: coming together to target an issue that we feel to be key and important today. The final video can be found at: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tBweSUI8bA4>.

Throughout the projects, I have learnt how to communicate as a team and split workloads between members to create a positive working environment. Especially during the video project, we were forced to work tightly towards deadlines as we had to work with both editors and the other members of the group to piece the whole video together. I feel that by participating in this opportunity, it has improved my soft skills, for example teamwork, communication and working towards deadlines, which will help me in a future workplace. What seems like working for free is actually one of the most beneficial things I can do while in Sixth Form. Volunteering helps to grow your confidence, make new friends and contacts and be a part of your local community. It also challenges you, testing your abilities to work in different environments with people you don't know. I strongly recommend it to my peers. *James Watkin*

