

## Sparsholt College Hampshire 2015

The College is still in "good shape" despite the gloomy outlook for public funded services generally. The fact that the number of 16/18-year-old students at our Andover College campus increased significantly in autumn 2014, and that an increased recruitment at Sparsholt College is likely to occur this autumn, indicates the main ways in which the College is able to counteract the reduction in government funding per student which applies to all colleges.

We continue to increase the number of subsidised coaches and buses coming to the College commensurate with increases in student numbers (continuing our historic trend of controlling private travel) and following the reduction in transport support from other sources. The number of 17 and 18 year olds who drive to College continues to be very low and we are currently arranging direct bus and coach routes for around 900 students on a daily basis. We have some students who travel 3 hours/day to get to college, which is a clear indication of the extent to which the College is seen as somewhere which really meets their needs and where the courses we provide, generally speaking, cannot be accessed elsewhere.

This year the College completed its new equine cross-country course which has proved invaluable to the curriculum and much appreciated by those who use it. In addition, the College has also completed the last stage of the Engineering Buildings upgrades with the construction of a new state-of-the-art centre for Agricultural Engineering and Motor Vehicle. The latest building was opened for us by no less than Formula One World Championship Driver Jody Schechter and Ross Brawn (Principal Formula One World Championship Engineer). Both had started out as Engineering Apprentices and it was delightful to have them opening our facility, addressing young aspiring Engineering Apprentices. This new building has state-of-the-art environmental sustainability features built in which include photovoltaic harvesting of sunlight energy from the rooftops, rainwater harvesting and natural ventilation systems.

The emphasis of the College on environmental sustainability, and particularly renewable energy, is an important strategic ambition for the College and resonates with the skill set requirements which we know that young people will be required to have in working in a diverse rural economy in the future. There is very clear reference to this in the Local Enterprise Partnership's Strategic Economic Plan with Sparsholt College being cited as a future 'Hampshire Centre for the Demonstration of Environmental Technologies' which can be seen on Page 31 on the following link (identified as Page 19 on the PDF itself) <http://www.enterprisem3.org.uk/uploads/b01eb103c8b05d66ba7d036bcf1267057dc9f5c6.pdf>. Mention is also made of this on a document produced for Winchester City Council <http://www.winchester.gov.uk/assets/files/20349/CAB2586-BackgroundDoc2.pdf> and in particular the Key Messages on pages 6 and 7. The technologies and related skills to be illustrated and developed include wood fuels, bio-methane production from anaerobic digesters (AD) and others. In addition to providing skills for the rural economy of the future, the opportunities provided by these and increased photovoltaics rooftops will also

significantly reduce the College's carbon footprint and, of course, our running costs at a time of tight fiscal control. Last year we held an open consultation event and intend to repeat that kind of exercise again as components of the Hub emerge and where our concern is always to minimise the impact of these on our local resident community. We have kept the Parish Council up to speed on our ambitions and will continue to do so.

The continued staging of events like the 'Lambing Days' and the 'Bunnies and Chicks' weekend, has been very useful for the College and, in particular, the extent to which this provides opportunities for students to interact with the public and develop effective communication skills, which their future employers really value.

The College nursery partner, Farley Nursery have had a very successful launch of its Yurt Nursery near 'Garstons' (which has proved a big hit with parents and children alike) and expect the number of children attending to increase, within the terms of the planning permission. The presence of this facility has also been extremely helpful in supporting our curriculum with Environmental Interpretation in Animal Management.

Tim Jackson - Principal