



**PRACTICAL ETHICS
COMPETITION AWARD**



**COMMITMENT TO
SUSTAINABILITY**



USA TRIP



Varndean
College Brighton & Hove

UPDATE

SPRING 2023



STEM CENTRE OPENING

OXFORD UNION SCHOOLS DEBATING COMPETITION

Four Year 1 students competed in the prestigious Oxford Union Schools Debating Competition, the largest debating competition in the UK aimed at students aged 14-18 years.

Lily Tanswell, Erik Hendry, Alice Symonds and Annabelle Holland travelled to Ibstock School in Roehampton where Vardean College was one of only two state funded institutions taking part and our students competed against other teams from independent schools.

The competition uses the British Parliamentary style of debating in which students compete in pairs against three other pairs. There were two debates: 'The rise of short-form content has done more harm than good' (eg Tik Tok, Instagram and Facebook reels) and 'This house supports ecoterrorism'. The competitors had only 15 minutes to prepare and were not allowed the use of any electronic devices during this time. The Vardean teams gave excellent speeches and fielded points of information from other debaters with confidence. Sadly, we didn't make it to the final, but the whole experience showed just how much talent there is at Vardean.

THE LOFT LIBRARY CELEBRATES

The Loft Library at Vardean College is on the precipice of celebrating a decade of serving students. This airy modern facility boasts numerous areas of study geared towards students' diverse individual needs. Nestled in the highest reaches of the college, students describe the library as a "safe space" to "focus and prepare properly" for their studies. The library spans a large area with additional silent study space, as well as an individual study room that doubles as a prayer room when needed by individual students.

Aldona Wheeler, Library manager, whose son attended Vardean

College, sums up the library as a "sanctuary for our students". Aldona who boasts a Law degree and has more than 30 years librarian experience having spent time in, both, corporate and university libraries said "it is vital to teach our students to be independent learners able to effectively conduct research in the library with the tools needed to be discerning information seekers."

The library is open daily including some weeks during the holidays. On Fridays it has the library dog Badger visit, a gorgeous one-and-a-half year-old black female Cockapoo.

COMPUTER SCIENCE STUDENTS GET TOP MARKS IN NATIONAL PROGRAMMING COMPETITION

On Wednesday 16 November, eight Vardean College students took part in the 16-18 years category of the UK Bebras Computing Challenge, a national programming competition attracting 11,730 entries nationwide. Five of the students achieved a Distinction grade putting their marks in the top 25%. Two Year One students, Tommy Crees and Harry Dutta, achieved within the top 10% of grades nationally and will be entered for the next round, the Oxford University Computing Challenge (OUCC) due to take place in January.

Excellent news, congratulations and good luck to them in the next round!





SPORTING NEWS



Varndean College students studying Sport or Sport & Exercise Science have been very busy honing their skills as sports leaders, coaching primary school students in Brighton and Hove as part of their unit in sports coaching. Visiting Balfour and Carden Primary Schools, students utilised their learnt skills to motivate, organise and lead pupils in a series of activities as part of their practicals.

Our Sports leadership students have also undertaken an amazing job, volunteering and officiating at the Year 8 Brighton School Games Indoor Athletic event. The Brighton Half Marathon saw our students from the Sports Department also volunteer their time to support and provide assistance to the more than 8000 competitors.

Meanwhile in football, following a 5-0 win over Reigate College in January, our superb RMA 1st team secured a spot in the last 16 of the English Schools FA national football cup. Despite not securing the final win in the National Cup, we are proud of their hard work and dedication to their gruelling training schedule. RMA Varndean 1st X1 2-1 against Haywards Heath College with Oliver Parker-Williams and Jack Duckett scoring the winning goals.

On the rugby front, we participated alongside several other colleges across Sussex during a line-up of tournaments creating a strong empowered team who worked consistently hard and showed up motivated and resilient, said their tutors.

Our Basketball team kicked off the competitive season with a series of games that showed the true spirit of camaraderie as they worked together as a seamless unit in a series of competitive matches.

The Sports Department offers enrichment activities in Football, Rugby, Basketball and Netball and all teams are actively engaged in matches, fully supported by staff and the Varndean Community.



GREEK EXPERIENCE FOR CLASSICAL CIVILISATION STUDENTS



Classical Civilisation students enjoyed a wonderful trip to Greece in February. We arrived late at night in the small seaside town of Tolo to hear the waves sweeping the shores outside our hotel and enjoyed our first Greek meal.

The next day we visited Epidauras and saw the Ancient Greek theatre built in 340 BCE, holding 14,000 spectators and where some of the plays we study were first enacted. Students had the opportunity to make some impromptu speeches and practise their acting.

Next was a trip to Mycenae, a prehistoric Greek site in Peloponnese, celebrated by the poet Homer as 'broad-streeted' and 'golden'.

At Olympia we held our biannual Olympics 400 metre race, this year won by Jacob. We then tucked into a Greek buffet lunch. Students had free time in Nafplion town where the sun shone warmly upon us. When we returned to Tolo some brave students even swam in the sea below the hotel!

At the Acropolis we heard about several ancient buildings of great architectural and historical significance, the most famous being the Parthenon. After a busy and very fruitful four days we then made our way to Cape Sounion; the beautiful Temple of Poseidon, enroute to the airport, and bought some souvenirs to remind us all of our trip. Students were brilliant and it will remain in our minds for a very long time to come.

Our Cultural Event held for the first time at Varndean College was celebrated across two days. The event organised by students saw our student community take responsibility for the publicity of the event, the organising of helpers and delegating the cooking of food. The first day had our students offer a range of foods from diverse cultures and backgrounds. We celebrated our diversity through cuisine and on the second day, students wore traditional gear sharing their cultural dances and music. Money was raised for charity and students felt empowered having organised such a dynamic event. Countries represented ranged from Sierra Leone to Morocco, from Turkey to Iran, to name only a few.

VARNDEAN CELEBRATES ITS CULTURAL DIVERSITY



OUR ONGOING COMMITMENT TO SUSTAINABILITY

ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY STUDENTS VISIT EARTHSHIP AT STANMER PARK

In February, Year 1 Environmental Sustainability students paid a visit to Stanmer Park to visit the sustainable house, Earthship. The house is designed along the lines of other 'Earthships' around the world to demonstrate sustainable living. Students were given a tour of its features, including solar panels for energy, a solar thermal heater for hot water, south facing windows and air vents to keep the building cool in summer and warm in winter. The building is made of 'eco cement' and old tyres to reduce Co2 emissions. Food, water and sewage are also taken care of sustainably. It gave students a great real-life example of what they'd been discussing in class.

BIODIVERSITY ON OUR COLLEGE CAMPUS

Members of staff and students from our Environmental & Climate Action enrichment group planted some 100 tree saplings along the college boundary earlier in March. The trees, which were donated to us from The Woodland Trust, comprised of Hawthorn, Rowan, Blackthorn, Silver Birch, Hazel and Sessile Oak, and will contribute to the college's biodiversity. We look forward to watching them grow and flourish over the coming years.

As part of Vardean College's commitment to climate education and our pledge to promote the embedding of carbon literacy into our curriculum, staff and students of A Level Textiles, Photography and Graphics recently undertook a collaborative and creative project, enabling multiple pieces of content to come together in one final outcome.

The theme of the project was sustainable clothing which involved A Level Textiles students making aprons and face masks using only sustainable materials, which were then photographed and edited by our A level Photography students. The Graphics students used their skills to design posters displays; the content of which was to raise awareness of current issues relating to being sustainable in all that we do. The successful collaborative project between these three subjects was then one of a number of Teaching and Learning Projects showcased at our annual Teaching & Learning Fair in January.

Programme Leader for Textiles, Helen Brewer, said "It has been such a valuable experience to collaborate on this project. Not only have we been able to embed the important issues surrounding sustainability into our visual arts schemes of work, but the students have responded so positively and creatively to exploring this theme. We are looking forward to continuing the development of sustainable methods of working in our classrooms and the wider college."

Vardean College continues to promote education for sustainable development and this project demonstrates how students and staff from different disciplines can come together to engage with the issues of climate change. It also provides a forum in which students can empower themselves either individually or as a collective to take action on one of the most pressing issues of the 21st Century.



UK MATHS CHALLENGE

Thirty-nine Vardean students were entered into the UK Senior Mathematical Challenge back in October, with 4 attaining the top Gold award, 11 attaining Silver and 12 attaining Bronze.

The Senior Mathematical Challenge is a 90-minute multiple-choice paper, encouraging mathematical reasoning, precision of thought and fluency in using mathematical techniques to solve problems.

The four students with Gold (76+ points), Alba Braham, Carmen Maria Pia Nista, Lucas Oliveri and Anastasia Wright, were then invited to compete in the Andrew Jobbings Senior Kangaroo competition in November.



CHEMISTRY NEWS

OXFORD UNIVERSITY AWARD CHEMISTRY STUDENTS HIGHLY COMMENDED IN PRACTICAL ETHICS AND RESPONSIBILITY COMPETITION

Four Year One A Level Chemistry students recently entered the University of Oxford's Uehiro Centre 'Practical Ethics and Responsibility' 2023 video competition. The university receives a large number of entries into the competition from schools and colleges worldwide with the standard of entries always being exceptionally high. Our students' entry was assessed by two academics based in the Uehiro Centre and, although not placed in the top final four this year, was awarded Highly Commended and

placed on the reserve list for the final. Their video is to be featured as a Highly Commended entry on the university's competition webpage. Huge congratulations to Wala Mussa, Jasmin Doherty, Tessa Greaves and Mia Macrae.



MICHELLE WINS STEM SMART SILVER AWARD

Year Two International Baccalaureate student, Michelle Lin (formerly of Oathall Community College) has been awarded a STEM Smart Silver Award by the University of Cambridge.

STEM Smart is an online widening participation programme, launched by the University of Cambridge in September 2021. It offers enhanced learning and encouragement to UK state school students studying A Level Maths and Science (or equivalent) who have experienced educational disadvantage or less likely to apply to university. The programme provides extra resources including weekly online subject supervisions with Cambridge academics, regular meetings with a student mentor to discuss life at university, as well as even a Cambridge residential stay. Michelle's assignments were



focused on Physics, Chemistry and Maths and said "I found it very useful when undertaking my revision and learning new topics ahead of the IB syllabus. When I came across these in class, I was already familiar with the topics. During the summer last year, there was a week-long residential hosted by STEM SMART at the University of Cambridge where there were group revision sessions which I found to be extremely helpful and I was able to learn about life at university."

2023 RSC OLYMPIAD WINNERS

Eight A Level and IB Chemistry students entered the 2023 Royal Society of Chemistry Olympiad in January and this year won four Gold, two Silver and two Bronze medal awards.

The Chemistry Olympiad is open to schools and colleges throughout the UK, aimed at those students in their last year of study before higher education. The competition is designed to challenge students, develop their thinking and problem-solving skills, and test their knowledge of chemistry in real-world situations.

Congratulations to Ella Tingley, Michelle Lin, Jeroen Van Weelden, Ben Wright, Omar Hamayoon, Zoe Vanstone, Domitius Sawyris and Vinicius Pimentel.

Anna, Lola and Daniela said: "We felt extremely grateful for the opportunity to conduct these experiments and feel incredibly inspired to explore the field of analytical chemistry further."



WORLD CANCER DAY

Varndean College's Additional Support staffs supported World Cancer Day in February by dressing in pink and draping the support study area in swathes of pink. This year the global Cancer community used the slogan 'Close the Gap' alongside a call to unite voices worldwide and continue to raise awareness. This ongoing effort is to prevent millions of deaths due to the incurable disease, raise continued awareness amongst communities and to continue to find ways to take action against it.

3D DESIGN STUDENTS LAUNCH THEIR PERSONAL INVESTIGATION UNIT AT KEW GARDENS

First year students studying A Level 3D Design launched their Personal Investigation unit with a trip to Kew Gardens earlier in March. Students completed a site visit and recorded the incredible architectural structures and plant forms there. They explored the site and will now use the drawings and photographs as a starting point to investigate one of the themes of Skeletal Structures, Growth and Decay, Biomimicry or Protection.

Students will go onto producing an architectural structure to be based at Kew (a bridge, treehouse, seed bank, glass house, café, pavilion, aerial walkway etc) or a product such as a piece of lighting, a full-size piece of furniture, site specific sculpture, cutlery/ implements, vessels, body adornment, jewellery, automata etc. We look forward to seeing their final outcomes.





AMERICA. HERE WE COME!

February was a busy month for 39 Politics, History, Law, Sociology and Economics students as they and their teachers spent five days in Washington DC and New York, exploring the sights and learning more about their subject areas.

After delays at Heathrow and getting through US customs, we arrived in Washington DC as the sun set, our first opportunity to see the monuments and buildings floodlit.

The next day started with a tour of Congress at the US Capitol Building, before embarking upon a walking tour visiting the Washington, Lincoln, FDR, Martin Luther King, Korean and World War II memorials. After lunch, it was time to visit the African American Museum of History and Culture. Starting three floors underground to experience the effects of the slave trade, we gradually made our way upwards towards the election of Barack Obama and beyond.

Friday brought a long coach drive to New York City, with a much appreciated stop off at a local Walmart store! Arriving in NYC late afternoon, we walked to Times



Square, then to the Rockefeller Centre to go to the 'Top of the Rock'. The 360° views at sunset were just stunning.

Our first full day in New York saw us breakfast at Applebees, then take the Metro to Battery Park via Wall Street and the Charging Bull. We got the ferry to Liberty Island and spent time exploring, before moving onto Ellis Island to learn about the experience of immigrants. Back on Manhattan Island we visited the 9/11 Memorial before students then had free time. Many chose to walk with us to Greenwich village, passing the 'Friends' apartment block and the iconic Stonewall Inn.

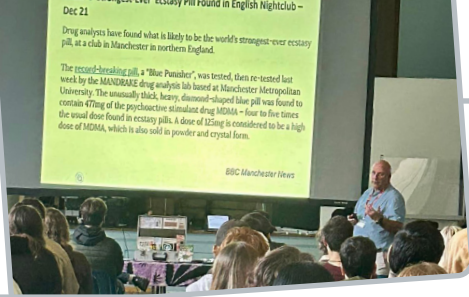
Sunday, we made our way to Harlem. Here the history and politics of the civil rights movement along with the gentrification of this unique urban area were explored. Students

then went off in groups to the Museum of Modern Art, the Guggenheim or explore Central Park. Some students decided to watch the Super Bowl in Times Square.

Our final morning saw us make our way to the United Nations for a look at politics, human rights and development on a global scale. Last minute shopping, then back to pick up our luggage and off to JFK airport for our overnight flight home.

Head of Business and Social Science, Avril Mackenzie-Parr, reflected, "After all the delays from the pandemic, it was so good to get this trip back in the diary. It was an amazing opportunity for students to explore the history, politics and culture of the US. We packed a lot into a short time but students and staff had a great time"

Later this year, Politics students will have the opportunity to visit the UK Parliament and Supreme Court, as well as see the West End musical Hamilton in preparation for their studies next academic year. We hope to go back to the US soon, but are also planning trips nearer to home to Edinburgh and Berlin.



DRUGS AWARENESS

Back in November, Vardean College hosted an entire day dedicated to Drug Awareness for Year 1 students. Students were allocated slots to listen to an hour-long presentation by DRED UK which has supported schools since 2003 in their personal, social, and health education, tailoring talks to specific needs across all key stages. The talk discussed the direct and indirect impact of drugs and how they are referenced across the media. The host used South Park, a popular American television show, to engage students while educating them on the law, as well as the short and long-term consequences of substance misuse.

COLLEGE PLAYS HOST TO CRIMESTOPPERS & SUSSEX POLICE

Earlier in March, the College played host to the Crimestoppers County Lines mobile awareness van, geared towards creating awareness amongst our community youth.

Pictured is Director of Student Engagement, George Marshall, standing alongside a representative from Crimestoppers. George said: "This initiative is to create awareness to spot signs of exploitation. The information contained in the leaflets is in an effort towards creating an active awareness to ensure safety."

The following week, Vardean played host to Sussex Police who visited the College to educate students on hate crime, what constitutes hate crime and how to report it. Deputy Principal, James Gordon, said; "it's about having an innovative approach to learning. This means we do not limit students' knowledge to solely curriculum-based academics. Our academics are strong and in addition our enrichment programmes add value. The talk by Sussex Police is yet another way of ensuring our students are equipped beyond college to be empowered in identifying and speaking boldly against issues affecting their communities."



RU-OK?

Ru-ok? is part of Brighton & Hove's adolescent health service which provides confidential advice, guidance, support and information on drugs, alcohol and sexual health advice for under 18s. In November, a representative from Ru-Ok? came to speak to our students in an effort to raise awareness on substance abuse and where to find local support.

Students were able to ask questions freely and even wore beer goggles to experience how senses change when intoxicated with a focus on the dangers that accompany this. The charity works with residents across Brighton & Hove, as well as with groups and individuals who attend local schools and colleges and who require their help.



FIFTEEN-YEAR-OLD LILY WINS FESTIVE CARD COMPETITION

Huge congratulations to Vardean College student Lily Kershaw, who was this year's winner of our Festive Card design competition.

Lily, who was previously home educated and is now an Intermediate student at Vardean currently studying a package of GCSEs, is pictured here being presented with her £50 cash prize by Principal, Donna-Marie Janson back in December.

Lily's truly imaginative design captured the eye of the senior management team and will be used as the official Vardean College card this year. Well done Lily.



It was a huge pleasure to welcome Professor Robert Winston to officially open Varndean College's £2.9m STEM Centre on 23 November. Delayed two years by the Covid pandemic, the centre was created to inspire the next generation of scientists, technologists, engineers and mathematicians and puts Varndean at the forefront of offering the finest opportunity to

those students wishing to pursue a career in these fields.

Attended by the Mayor of Brighton & Hove, Councillor Lizzie Deane, along with a host of local dignitaries, as well as students from eight local secondary schools, the event included a dynamic and exciting Chemistry Magic Show by Chemistry tutor, John Luton; a range of STEM Masterclasses within the new

centre; a 45 min inspirational talk given by Professor Winston, followed by the official opening and unveiling of the plaque.

Professor Winston is Professor of Science and Society at the Imperial College London, Emeritus Professor of Fertility Studies, Chair of the Genesis Research Trust and on the board of trustees of the UK Stem Cell Foundation. He truly is an inspiration to all and his prolific

VARNDEAN AT LAST OFFICIALLY OPENS ITS £2.9M STEM CENTRE



work in the field of science has been recognised by his numerous awards over the decades. He has produced over 300 scientific publications about human reproduction and is well-known from his ground-breaking TV documentaries 'Child of our Time', 'Your Life in their Hands', 'A Child Against All Odds', 'Walking with Cavemen' and the BAFTA award winning 'The Human Body'.



STEM CENTRE ROOMS GET NAMED

To coincide with the opening of the STEM Centre, the college held a hotly contested competition for students to name the STEM Centre rooms and laboratories and in December, some of the competition winners enjoyed hot chocolate and mince pies with the Principal, Donna-Marie Janson, in order to celebrate their winning entries. Students chose, among others, Marie Maynard Daly, Prof Robert Winston, Brahmagupta, Rosalind Franklin and Katherine Johnson as room names.

Present to oversee the handover of certificates were Assistant Head of School for Sciences, Brian Marriot and Assistant Principal (Progression) HOS Maths and Science, Jo Hambleton.



As part of the nationwide series of events for Green Careers Week in November, Varndean College was delighted to host Claire Potter from Claire Potter Design, along with her colleague Clare Harris, who presented on Circular Economy. They provided an interesting and informative talk to include an overview of what the Circular Economy is and the different opportunities that are present, not only in the green sector but in a variety of other sectors.

They provided details into the role that design plays in the circular economy, with a focus on some examples of how green pathways can be shown through product design and discuss entry into suitable careers that students would not have considered. The talk provided an opportunity for the college to help create

students who are well versed in the circular economy and how that can be applied in product/3D design as well as service design and behaviour change amongst other examples.

Crucial information was given on the range of jobs that students can find, finishing with examples of Sussex University alumni who are all working in the Circular Economy in large multinational companies such as Dyson® and Lego®. Both Claire Potter and Clare Harris are based at Sussex University in the School of Engineering, Informatics and Design; Claire Potter is a Senior Lecturer and Course Convenor for Product Design and Clare Harris is a Senior Teaching Fellow in Creativity and Design based in Engineering and Design.

Green Careers Week was supported by STEM UK, The Royal Society and the Met Office.

FILM STUDIES DEPARTMENT AWARDED RECOGNITION

In December, Varndean College's Film Studies department became a Commended Centre by Eduqas, after the submission of a film called 'Party Time' by student Ruby Herman, inspired by 1966 Czech film 'Daisies' by Věra Chytilová. The judging panel felt that both tutors and students at Varndean were deserving of a commendation based on the quality of the production work submitted.

INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY 2023

Vardean College staff and students embraced the theme of International Women's Day 2023. The #EmbraceEquality campaign spearheaded by the IWD in an effort to distinguish between Equality and Equity was taken up by our Student Union who called on students across our college to highlight those topics they felt needed to embrace equity. Students highlighted that "gendered actions or assumptions" as well as "celebrating women's achievements" were

vital to the #EmbraceEquity voice. The campaign sparked conversation on why Equality and Equity cannot be used interchangeably. Communications manager, Eve Deacon said: "While equality means giving the same resource or offering the same opportunity, Equity delves deeper in recognising that individuals have different circumstances and so resources and opportunities need to be allocated in line with those specific needs."



PAUSE

At Vardean College, students are at the heart of all we do and the Wellbeing and Health Coordinator, Sheila Sword, shared via social media with students and staff the PAUSE acronym which was devised to create coping mechanisms that instilled resilience in challenging moments. The acronym is to facilitate a quick recall for users to immediately deal with anxiety.

P - Pause - to immediately pause and be still

A - Attention - to draw the attention to the present and stop the mind from racing

U - To focus in that particular moment on yourself, on **YOU** and your breathing

S - Stillness - to create stillness around you through breath, inhaling and exhaling

E - Exhale all the pent-up frustration and start over

NORLAND COLLEGE VISIT

Earlier this term, Vardean College Childcare and Education students listened to a guest speaker from Norland College, a 130 years-old world-famous educational establishment that offers a rigorous academic degree in Early Years education.

Our students studying for the two-year Level 3 Diploma in Childcare and Education are able to apply to Norland or any university following their college studies. Norland is famously referred to as producing elite child carers and cited in BBC reels as "super nannies who work for royal families and can earn more than doctors".

In previous years, Vardean College has had more than 50% of its students go on to study a BA (Hons) in various fields from Social Sciences and Primary Education to BA (Hons) in Childhood and Youth. Our students have progressed to study at Brighton, Chichester, Plymouth and Northampton universities to mention a few. At least three of our students have attended the prestigious Norland College.



VARNDEAN COLLEGE STUDENTS ARE ACHIEVING ACROSS THE BOARD

Flora Burleigh was selected as a finalist in a Psychology Essay competition run by Northeastern University London. Over 5000 students entered and her essay was in the top 12%. Flora answered the essay question: How could Psychology explain atrocious acts towards humans, such as during war times? Assistant Head of School, Helen Chong, said: "We are very proud of Flora and how she displayed full analytical comprehension of the task at hand and secured an impressive finalist place."

Another one of our students, Year 2 IB student Isobel Hallworth, went to Birmingham earlier this year to address judges and talk about the Brighton Period Project. She secured a win and won £1500 for the project. The Lions Club International young ambassadors and Shipshape programme and awards recognises, encourages and supports young people (15-18 years) who are actively involved in helping others. The Brighton Period project was founded in July 2021 and is led by a group of young trailblazing individuals.

Dorcas Mimbulu travelled to

Clacton-on-Sea with her dance troupe Premier Dance Academy where she has trained for the last 7 years. Her experience has paid off as she won three dance solos in freestyle, winning trophies, t-shirts and hampers. She is now the freestyle dance champ and we are very proud of her dynamic achievements.

Neil Baker Assistant Head of School PE, Health and Social care praised Sports student Sam Holden for gaining his black belt for warrior kick boxing. The sport requires discipline and consistency and Sam has proven his dedication to the sport by securing a black belt.

Isaac Wood and Sam Hall have designed and launched a D & D (Dungeons and Dragons) Enrichment Programme. Their first

session of their 'beginners guide' to D & D gaming was very popular with more than 30 students signing up. It took both students half a term to plan the logistics of it all before launching it to the student cohort. They rolled the dice and took the initiative and it paid off with Isaac being the go-to face of the D & D Enrichment while Sam works more on the administrative side.

A HUGE WELCOME TO OUR ALL NEW 2023 APPLICANTS!

The College was delighted to welcome over 1300 new applicants in for their admissions interviews during January and February.

Pictured was Vice Principal (Student Services), Lisa Watkin-Stevens, welcoming prospective students on the first day of interviews in January. Lisa said: "We are thrilled to be meeting students from schools across Sussex over the coming weeks. Varndean College transforms the lives of our students and community through our provision of exceptional education."

We look forward to meeting our new applicants again in June when they visit for a New Students' Day.



EMPLOYER SPOTLIGHT SERIES

Varndean College has welcomed a diverse range of speakers from varied career pathways to engage with our students.

In December we hosted our regular Employer Spotlight events, with students having the privilege to listen and learn from Bank of England senior economist, Federico Di Pace, who spoke on inflation, amongst other topical issues.

Applied Psychology students had consultant clinical psychologist, Dr Jamie who specialises in offender personality disorder, give a talk to on the causes thereof and how to apply a theoretical model to case studies.

A further Spotlight Event was also held in February for Year 1 Business and BTEC students. A three-hour workshop focussed on aspects of marketing and team work which incorporated the necessary skills to assist students to develop their future careers. Students were also exposed to how current world events impact business daily by University of Surrey guest speakers. Jayne Hems, Assistant Head of School Business and Economics, said: "the event was crucial for students as it gave them exposure to industry topics and how studying the business course integrates with real life and any future career paths they may consider". Scheduled afternoon talks were hosted by the Brighton Film School unpacking the

various routes on offer for Film and Creative Media ranging from sponsorship to director roles, from photography for shoot locations to sound engineering options.

Aside from the Spotlight events, Varndean regularly hosts subject talks to enhance students' view of career options. Recently students studying Games Development listened to an Epic Games director explore the options in the game development career sphere. This interesting talk captured students' attention as Epic Games was responsible for the hugely popular Fortnite series. Additional talks were on Cybersecurity and Website Development.

American Express also addressed students about their Level 4 Software Developer Apprenticeship. The presentation was followed by a panel of 4 apprentices fielding questions, three of whom were former Varndean College students. (Josh Banks, Michael William and Morgan Mars) who has taken Computer Science A Level.



VARNDEAN COLLEGE HOSTS EMPOWERMENT DAY

In February, Varndean College hosted a series of speakers as part of its Level 2 Empowerment Day. The day was geared towards "giving students the confidence and added skills set to tackle their careers going forward beyond college", said Careers Manager Cordelia Dobbie.

The Level 2 Careers Empowerment Day saw a full house of students who strongly agreed that the event was beneficial to them understanding what companies expect when applying for apprenticeships. The students were also informed on how to use social media and how they should hone their CVs to the needs of companies, amongst other things.

Director of Student Engagement, George Marshall added "additional skills are important when students enter the job market."

Jo Hambleton, Assistant Principal, added "that the networking skills and the added knowledge from the diverse selection of speakers, empowered students and could only enhance their ability to forge ahead."

Our satisfied students walked away with certificates to mark their participation.



VARNDEAN COLLEGE IN PARTNERSHIP WITH FE SUSSEX WINS PRESTIGIOUS AOC BEACON EDGE AWARD

Varndean College, as part of the FE Sussex Partnership, has won the prestigious Beacon Edge Award in The Nouns Group Award for Education for Sustainable Development (ESD).

FE Sussex is an innovative and collaborative consortium of seven sixth form colleges - Varndean College, BHASVIC, Bexhill College, The College of Richard Collyer, Plumpton College, Chichester College Group and the East Sussex College Group. In 2021/22, they collaborated on a DfE Skills Accelerator project to improve the green industry, technology and skills locally. This was in response to BEIS, a complement to the Local Skills Improvement Partnership and an opportunity to enrich collaboration and develop new and interesting practice. The project invested more than £7M into new learning resources, staff training, employer updating and student awareness; comprising of five work-strands: Carbon Literacy, Electric Vehicles, Decarbonisation,

Zero-Carbon Land Management and Hydrogen Technologies.

The Association of Colleges' Beacon Awards celebrate the best and most innovative practice among UK colleges each year. The award supported by The Nouns Group is to recognise examples of practical teaching and learning that equips young people with the skills needed in today's global and digital economy, through a broad and balanced curriculum, high quality training, engaging real world learning and relationships between education and employers. The judging panel met a range of staff, students and governors from colleges within the partnership committed to the sustainability ethos.

Varndean College has been leading the way nationally with our Environmental Sustainability through the development of carbon literacy across our community, our local ecological partnerships and the unique areas

of biodiversity on our beautiful site. We are a thriving and successful sixth form college with an excellent reputation for high outcomes, providing an inspirational student experience and adding value to all of our community. Varndean College transforms lives through exceptional education and we are proud of our dynamic culture, inclusivity and reputation as trailblazers.

Jeremy Kerswell, Chair of FE Sussex and Principal of Plumpton College said; "FE Sussex colleges have a track record of successful collaboration but this project and our work since has been about so much more. In identifying sustainability and the green agenda as the common thread across everything we did, we effectively made a commitment to each other, to our own colleges and most importantly to our learners. I'm delighted this has been recognised and even more so, that this work is very much continuing across Sussex."



COURSES FOR ADULT LEARNERS

Did you know that Varndean College offers a wide range of courses for adult learners, both onsite and offsite at our community outreach venues?

Whether you wish to learn new skills or simply take part in an activity that appeals to you, Varndean College has a course for you and is currently taking enrolments for its summer programme and in due course the new exciting programme from September.

Our popular qualification courses can provide a pathway to becoming a qualified counsellor or working in the childcare and education sector. We also offer a range of GCSEs, as well as other courses to enhance employment skills.

There are a wide variety of leisure courses for those looking to learn a new hobby, such as painting, flower arranging, photography, or Bridge; you can get fit with one of our many health and fitness classes, such as yoga, Pilates or Tai Chi; or why not learn a new language or musical instrument?

Courses take place at our main Varndean College site in Surrenden Road, or as part of our Community Learning programme in Bevendean, Hollingdean, Moulsecomb, Whitehawk & Woodingdean.

To find out more or enrol, go to the Varndean College website www.varndean.ac.uk/adult

Learning changes lives and it is never too late to upskill or take up a new hobby.

RE-OPENING OF THE LIZ WILLIAMS BUTTERFLY HAVEN NATURE RESERVE

On 3 November, all Surrenden Campus Heads and Environmental leads were invited to the re-opening of the Liz Williams Butterfly Haven Nature Reserve.

It was an opportunity to celebrate that, after a long absence, sheep were finally returning to the nature reserve and to showcase this wonderful resource that all users are able to share in the heart of our campus. Since 2008, the site has been grazed for one week during every winter with sheep owned by the Sussex Wildlife Trust.

The Mayor of Brighton & Hove Councillor Lizzie Deane, Varndean College Principal Donna-Marie Janson, as well as representatives from local wildlife organisations, were present to celebrate this momentous occasion. Dorothy Stringer High School shares the 28-hectare Surrenden Campus with six other educational institutions including Varndean College.

A list of twenty butterfly species has been recorded in the Butterfly Haven between 2006 and 2010 and this represents a dramatic increase in species richness. In 2011, the Butterfly Haven was named after the late botanist, Liz Williams, as a tribute to her work and who had by 2008 recorded 97 wildflower species and 10 species of grass.

LOCAL MPS VISIT VARNDEAN'S POLITICS SOCIETY



For the first time since the pandemic, Varndean College is excited to welcome back a host of speakers to its weekly Politics Society schedule, from local MPs, to journalists and activists.

On 11 November, we were delighted to receive a visit from local Labour MP for Hove and Portslade, Peter Kyle, who spoke to students about his career in politics, followed by a Q&A session in which students asked about Northern Ireland, tactical voting and the

challenges he has faced in his political career whilst suffering with severe Dyslexia.

On 18 November, the college played host to Green Party MP, Caroline Lucas, at which our Politics Society had the opportunity to engage in topics such as Brexit, COP27, windfall tax & the autumn statement.

Then the following week, we welcomed Tim Loughton, Conservative MP for East Worthing and Shoreham, who addressed our students on many issues such as the importance of renewable energy and close shore trawling.

