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Shrewsbury School

The Schools
Shrewsbury
SY3 7BA

19th September 2013

Dear Parents,

I am delighted to write so soon after my last missive to bring you up to date with events here at school.

As usual, the beginning of the academic year opened with a series of Governors' meetings. One such focused on the school's 2020 Development Plan which, as you know, involves a commitment to maintain and improve our facilities so that we can be true to the claim that we offer some of the very best facilities in the country. After a decade of significant investment in our Houses, including the construction of Mary Sidney and Emma Darwin Halls, and having significantly improved the facilities available for sport – the swimming pool (2007), a new state-of-the-art cricket centre (2006), a new Boat House (2012) – we have turned our attention to our stock of teaching rooms.

Specifically in support of the encouragement of independent learning and intellectual curiosity, we have been working on a proposal to build a new Humanities block housing no fewer than five disciplines, Business Studies, Economics, Geography, History and Philosophy & Theology (formerly Religious Studies). The Humanities block will incorporate the latest technology and the highest environmental credentials. It is planned that this will be built on the slope to the west of Oldham's Hall, with a south front that looks out over Lower Common. We hope that this new, iconic building will tie in the site's architecture with the Main School Building which, as many of you will be aware, defines most people's impression of Shrewsbury School.

Obviously, a building of this size and quality requires significant investment, in the region of approximately £4.3 million. Since the adoption of the 2020 Plan, our Foundation Office, under the energetic leadership of the Director, John Rolfe, and its Chairman, Peter Worth, continue to do a magnificent job in sharing the vision with potential lead donors. The response and subsequent financial commitment in the early stages has been so overwhelmingly positive that we now feel we have the confidence to move the project to the next stage with the submission of an application for planning permission. The request for planning permission is in the public domain, hence my letter to you at this stage.

Peter Worth, School Governor and Campaign Chairman, when asked for an appraisal of our progress at our most recent Campaign Cabinet meeting, said "after initial meetings to discuss potential lead support, the Foundation is buoyed by the responses to date. Whilst there are many more conversations that need to take place, those persons visited thus far have almost unanimously pledged significant support for the prioritised building plans. We are very grateful to Old Salopians and parents alike for their confidence in the Headmaster's 2020 plans and their early financial support".

The construction of the new Humanities block will, we hope, be the first stage of a phased construction programme that will have a 'cascade' benefit throughout the school. Rest assured we at Shrewsbury School are very aware that good learning is about much more than fine facilities. Nevertheless, we hope that inspirational teaching and a strong work ethic, combined with the best possible facilities, will encourage our pupils to achieve at a level equal to, or even above, their true potential.

I should emphasise at this stage that the application for planning permission is simply a first step. A series of projects on this scale requires detailed planning and sound financing. We will keep you up to date as we make progress towards the realisation of this vision.

Best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to be 'M. S.', written over a horizontal line.