

# Newsletter



March 2026  
Edition



## SIX OXBRIDGE OFFERS IN 2026

Six students are celebrating receiving offers from the prestigious Universities of Oxford and Cambridge this year.

Four of the learners are currently completing their final year of A levels at the College, while two are former students. Gab Galletes, Molly Leatherbarrow Morcillo and Sarah Yousafzai have all secured offers from Oxford, and Faye Woodcock has received an offer from Cambridge. Ex-students Jawariyah Yaqub and Sophie da Silva have also been offered places at Cambridge.

Gab Galletes, a former Lode Heath School pupil, has been offered a place to study Human Sciences at Hertford College, Oxford. To take up her place, she will need to achieve strong grades in her A level subjects: French, Music and Sociology.

Also hoping to go to Oxford is Molly Leatherbarrow Morcillo, who is hoping to read French and Beginners' Russian at St John's College. She is currently studying A levels in Spanish, French and Politics.

The third student with an offer from the University of Oxford is Sarah Yousafzai. The former Queensbridge School learner is hoping to study Biochemistry (Molecular and Cellular) at Oriol College, after she finishes her studies in A level Biology, Chemistry and Geography.

Hoping to progress to Gonville and Caius College at the University of Cambridge is Faye Woodcock. Her offer is to study Psychological and Behavioural Sciences and she is hoping for high grades in A level Biology, Mathematics and

Psychology in order to take up that place.

Jawariyah Yaqub is also hoping to go to Cambridge. She completed her two years at the College last year and achieved all A\* grades in Criminology, History and Psychology. She is currently studying A level Sociology in her Gap-year and hoping to take up a place at Gonville and Caius College to study History.

Sophie da Silva left the College in 2023 and after working as a Student Development intern for 6 months she moved to America to study at Christ For The Nations Institute in Dallas. She has since applied to Cambridge and now has an unconditional offer to study Modern and Medieval Languages.



# YEAR 12 & 13 DRAMA SHOWCASES

Both Year 12 and Year 13 Drama students have been showcasing their assessed practical performances in front of audiences of friends and family this term.

Year 12 learners brought to life extracts from Steven Berkoff's renowned *Metamorphosis*. These performances formed part of the A level Drama course (Component 3), in which learners explored three contrasting plays, each in a unique social, cultural and historical context.

This half-term, Year 12 students have been learning about Berkoff's surrealist style of theatre and exploring ways to communicate meaning through the actor's voice and body. They have been inspired by Berkoff's use of choral work, heightened characterisation and physical theatre.

Not only were students' acting skills tested, they also made excellent use of costume, make-up, set, props and lighting to tell the tale of

salesman Gregor, who turns into a giant insect!

Drama teacher Nadia Kouhi commented: "The selected scripts have not only enabled students to widen their repertoire of theatre, but it has challenged them to develop and refine their practical skills. I'm proud of the hard work that our young people have put into these extracts and delighted with the resulting performances."



## SPRING COMPOSITION EXHIBITION

Talented musicians at Solihull Sixth Form College performed at the Spring Composition Exhibition at the end of the Spring Term, showcasing music they had composed themselves.

The exhibition provided a platform for A level Music learners to present their own compositions to a live audience. Learners who take part in musical activities as an enrichment were also present to entertain the audience with performances from their bands. Some of the bands performed their own songs, while others did cover versions of songs by artists like Green Day, Slipknot and Metallica.

Composing represents 30% of the marks on the A level Music course. The musicians must produce a composition of at least three minutes in length either to a brief or a free composition, as well as producing a chorale harmonisation in the style of J.S.Bach.

Music teacher Nina Wertz commented, "Composition is an important part of the A level Music course and requires both complex skills and creativity. I'm proud with the hard work that our young people have put into their creations and delighted that their compositions were so well received."



# BLETHCLEY PARK FIELDTRIP

IT and Computer Science learners recently visited the National Museum of Computing at Bletchley Park to deepen their understanding of the history of computing.

A group of 26 students from the A level Computer Science and BTEC IT courses took part in the trip. During their visit, they had the opportunity to see the world's first

computer and explore how servers have stored and processed data over time, gaining insight into the evolution of technology.

Bletchley Park, renowned for its pivotal role during World War II as the centre where Enigma codes were deciphered, offered students the chance to engage in hands on activities related to

the Enigma machines. They also explored different types of data storage, learned how the Von Neumann architecture functions through the Harwell Dekatron computer, practised coding in BBC Basic and created a snake game, all of which strengthened their algorithmic thinking through practical application.

Computer Science and IT teacher Shaan Bushra commented: "Our students had the chance to apply their theoretical learning in practical ways, with activities that directly supported the skills and knowledge needed for the A level Computer Science and BTEC IT courses. They also took part in quizzes on the history of computing and robotics, boosting their general knowledge while developing teamwork and communication skills. It was an amazing day!"



# FINE ART FEEDBACK FROM BCU

Year 12 Fine Art students met with Ian Dodds, professional illustrator and Course Leader of BA (Hons) Illustration course at Birmingham City University before half-term.

Students discussed their handmade concertina books, based upon a piece of text, with Ian and received individual feedback.

Ian returned to College in March to see the work students had done for their Live Brief project and to select winners. He also provided further feedback to students on their work, which they can take forward to influence their future work.



# OXBRIDGE FOUNDATION YEAR TALK

Ambitious learners heard from an ex-student in January, who spoke about an alternative route into Oxbridge.

Malikah Khan, who came to the College from Lyndon School, is undertaking a Foundation Year course in Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences at the University of Cambridge. She returned to College to share her experience of this exciting, fully-funded route into Higher Education.

Unlike traditional undergraduate courses, the Foundation Year has lower entry requirements – typically three B grades at A level or equivalent – and offers a broad curriculum spanning multiple disciplines.

Malikah commented: “Cambridge is a great place to study. There is so much history and reminders of famous people who have studied

there in the past. You feel like you are walking in the footsteps of inspirational people. The Foundation Year is a really great programme to give you an idea of what to expect from studying at Cambridge and it gives you time to decide what course you might want to go onto.”

There are a range of courses at undergraduate level that students can go onto if they get at least 65% in their Foundation Year, but students can also apply to lots of other universities they can apply to as well.

Jane McCard is English and Modern Languages Curriculum Leader and heads up the Stretch & Challenge programme at the College. She said: “I taught Malikah and I know what a great young person she is. I’m delighted to see how well she is doing and grateful she agreed to come back into College to tell this

year’s Year 12 learners about this exciting opportunity. She delivered a valuable insight into the course and the application process and I hope it has inspired some of the current students, who are considering progression to Oxford or Cambridge after their studies with us.”



# GRENADE TALK FOR BTEC BUSINESS

Applied Business learners gained insight into a local business success story this term during a guest talk from leading nutrition brand Grenade.



Hope Hadley and Dave McDowell from Grenade’s People Experience team visited campus to speak with students on the BTEC Business course. They shared the company’s journey, originally founded by former student Juliet Barratt before its sale to Mondelez, owners of Cadbury. Hope and Dave outlined how joining Mondelez has supported the brand’s growth, including the launch of new flavours such as Oreo and the limited edition Creme Egg bar.

Students took part in a taste testing session, offering feedback on both the product range and Grenade’s wider marketing and promotional strategies. The session highlighted the brand’s diverse promotional activity, including events, partnerships, stunts and online

advertising.

The interactive presentation additionally provided valuable employability advice. Learners were introduced to Grenade’s recruitment and selection process and received tips on how to enhance their prospects in the sector, such as building a professional presence on LinkedIn to showcase their skills to potential employers.

Applied Business teacher Philip Rafferty commented: “We are grateful to Hope and Dave for giving up their time to talk to our young people. Their insights into what makes a successful business and advice for our students’ future careers were invaluable.”

# VISUAL ARTS TRIP TO OXFORD

Visual Arts learners visited museums and galleries in Oxford this term to begin their research and visual recording for their examination projects.

Students on the A level Fine Art, Graphics & 3D Design and Photography courses, as well as those learners studying BTEC Art & Design Practice were offered the opportunity to go on the field trip, which saw them visit the Pitt Rivers, Natural History and Ashmolean Museums, as well as the Modern Art Oxford Gallery.

The Pitt Rivers Museum displays archaeological and ethnographic objects from around the world, while the Natural History Museum's collection includes the world's first scientifically described dinosaur (*Megalosaurus bucklandii*) and the world-famous Oxford Dodo, the only soft tissue remains of the extinct Dodo. Meanwhile, the Ashmolean's world-famous collections range from

Egyptian mummies and classical sculpture to Pre-Raphaelite paintings and contemporary art. The Modern Art Oxford Gallery not only houses modern art of note, but also hosts creative workshops.

Creative Arts Curriculum Leader Zoe Maksymiwiw commented: "Getting out of the classroom and into museums

and galleries provides first hand research opportunities and inspires our young people with their own artwork. This trip enabled us to cram a lot into one day, exposing learners to a wide variety of art genres. I am looking forward to seeing how they take what they saw and incorporate it into their own pieces."



# INTERNATIONAL WOMEN'S DAY

International Women's Day took place in March and the theme this year has been 'Give to Gain'. The College marked the day by inviting in two inspiring local women.

Keeley and Sasha from Solihull Women's Stride Squad came onto campus today to deliver an inspiring speech on the work they do and the power of women coming together and making a meaningful impact in the community. They lead group walks in Solihull, giving women the opportunity to come together, get some exercise and meet with other women to boost their physical and mental wellbeing.



# 2026 COMMUNITY IFTAR

Learners, families and staff members from Solihull Sixth Form College came together for a celebration of Ramadan in March, as the fourth annual Community Iftar took place on campus, raising £601 for Human Appeal.

The event provided an opportunity for those celebrating Ramadan to break their fast, while also offering members of the College community of all faiths or no faith to come together and get a better awareness of Ramadan. Among the special guests in attendance was Mayor of Solihull Councillor Annette MacKenzie and members of the Solihull Faith Forum.

Iftar began with speeches in the College lecture theatre as College learners spoke about what Ramadan means to them, providing an opportunity for non-Muslims to gain a great understanding of their faith and the real meaning of Ramadan. Following presentations from students, guests heard the Call for Prayer and then fast was broken with food in the form of chicken and vegetarian dishes, samosas, cakes, dates and other fruits.

The Islamic Society chose the charity Human Appeal, which works in 16 countries across Africa, Asia, Europe and the Middle East and aims to improve the long-term resilience of countries in crisis.

Anisa Lokat-Fanning, Associate Assistant Principal, commented: "This is the fourth year we have held a Community Iftar in College and the event was again very well supported. It's fantastic to see our community coming together for a beautiful celebration for Ramadan. Attendance at this event demonstrated our multi-cultural community and was a reflection of the College's commitment to promoting diversity, equity and inclusion. Huge congratulations must go to the team in our Student Development Office, who worked incredibly hard, together with learners from the Iftar committee and Student Council, to organise such a brilliant event."



## AMERICAN FOOTBALL DREAM

An aspiring American Football player, has recently returned from Sweden, where he was representing Great Britain.

Joel Stokes has been playing American Football for the last three years, having started it at school. He also shared an interest in the sport from watching NFL matches with his father. He now plays for Birmingham Lions at tight end, running-back and receiver positions, as well as being a part of the South Coast Crusaders Academy in Farnborough.

Joel was selected to play for Great Britain through trials and travelled to

Sweden in January for his second GB match, having already played a match against an All-American side. The team established a comprehensive first half lead over Sweden before the game was forfeited, but it was a good first experience for Joel.

He commented: "My ambitions with American Football have always been to get into the NFL Academy in Loughborough. I was delighted to attend trials for the Academy in February and I'm hoping I will be successful."

Joel is currently studying A levels

in English Language, Politics and Psychology and hopes to forge a career as a solicitor or a barrister in the future.



# CAREERS TALKS HIGHLIGHT OPTIONS

College students attended an Apprenticeship Round Table event with parents and carers on campus in February, as well as a presentation from British Airways in January about career opportunities.

Higher Apprenticeships are one of the alternative progression routes to university for our students after they finish their A level, BTEC or T level studies. As such, the opportunity to hear from three employers about apprenticeships at the Apprenticeship Round Table was very welcome. Representatives from the Army (discussing all sectors), Rolls-Royce (focussing on Engineering), and Bevan Brittan (offering Legal apprenticeships) were in attendance.

Elpida Baka, Careers Advisor at the College, commented: "It was great to have employers on campus to talk to our young people and their families about some of the options open to them after college. University is a very popular route for our students, but apprenticeships are also highly sought-after, and it is important that learners know what these opportunities entail and how to apply."

This event was preceded by an event for students with ambitions to work in the aviation industry, who were given valuable insight into the career pathways available at British Airways.

Sam Jackson from British Airways visited campus to speak with students, delivering inspiring sessions to both Year 12 and Year 13 groups. Her talks focused on the wide range of aviation apprenticeships on offer, including Cabin Crew, Piloting, Engineering and Ground Operations.

An Inflight Manager and Inspire Ambassador for British Airways, Sam also volunteers as a Warwickshire Police Special

Constable, a Community First Responder with West Midlands Ambulance Service, and a Taekwondo Instructor. She shared practical advice on preparing for the British Airways apprenticeship application process, encouraging students to use the Speedbird Z platform for live mentor chats, events access and employability boosting learning modules.

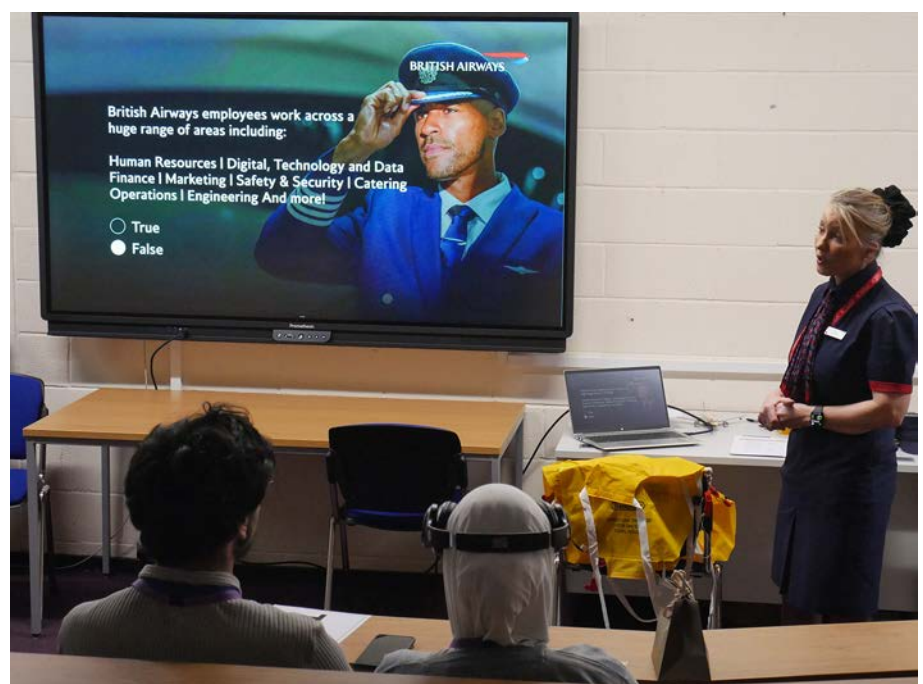
The talks were arranged by the College's Careers department to help students who are looking for an alternative to university after they finish their College studies.

Careers Adviser Mary Cunningham commented: "It's important that our young people know all the options open to them after they finish their A level, BTEC or T level studies with us. While most of our students go onto Higher Education, British Airways offers fantastic apprenticeship routes into exciting careers in aviation. Sam spoke enthusiastically about these opportunities, and the students were very excited about the opportunities she described. We are grateful to Sam for her time and expertise."

Careers guidance starts before



learners have even enrolled at the College, with expert advice available for prospective students at open events and when they are interviewed. Following enrolment, learners can continue to access expert advice, as well as a range of useful careers resources and events like this are also helpful. Year 12 students will get the opportunity to meet a large range of Higher Education providers and employers at the annual Careers & Higher Education Fair, which will take place on campus on Wednesday 24 June.



# STEM ROCKET COMPETITION

Students on the STEM enrichment have been getting competitive with a rocket competition. Split into groups, the learners were tasked with designing and building water-propelled rockets.

Their designs were put to the test with a competition on the tennis courts to see which rocket would travel the furthest. The winning team managed a flight of more than 60 metres and cleared the tennis courts.



# TACKLING SEXUAL HARASSMENT

The College was the venue for Summit Learning Trust's Tackling Sexual Harassment event in January.

The event saw guest speakers Natalie Queiroz MBE (Victims Advocate, West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner) and Jess Phillips (Labour MP and Minister for Safeguarding and Violence against Women and Girls) in attendance. Learners from Cockshut Hill School, Lyndon School, Ninestiles an Academy and the College were present to talk about the work they have been doing to tackle sexual harassment and safety on public transport.

The event was also an opportunity to showcase a video that the Trust have produced that highlights the commitment to ensuring all women and girls in our community feel safe and valued.



# HIPPODROME PERFORMANCE

Drama learners were invited to a special performance of 'The Lightning Thief' at the Hippodrome in Birmingham this term.

Seeing live professional theatre is an essential part of the A level Drama & Theatre course, and this visit offered students a valuable opportunity to watch the Percy Jackson musical brought to life by a professional cast. The experience supported the development of their analytical skills ahead of their Component 1 examination.

The production also enriched learners' understanding of Greek mythology, which is particularly beneficial for their study of 'Antigone', a set text for their written exam. 'The Lightning Thief' tells the story of 16 year old Percy Jackson, who discovers he is the half blood son of

the Greek god Poseidon, a revelation that dramatically changes the course of his life.

Drama teacher Nadia Kouhi commented: "There is nothing like live professional theatre to inspire our young people. Not only will this help them with their written exam, but they also picked up on some professional practice related to acting, set, props, costume, lighting and sound and it will give learners ideas for their own live performances."

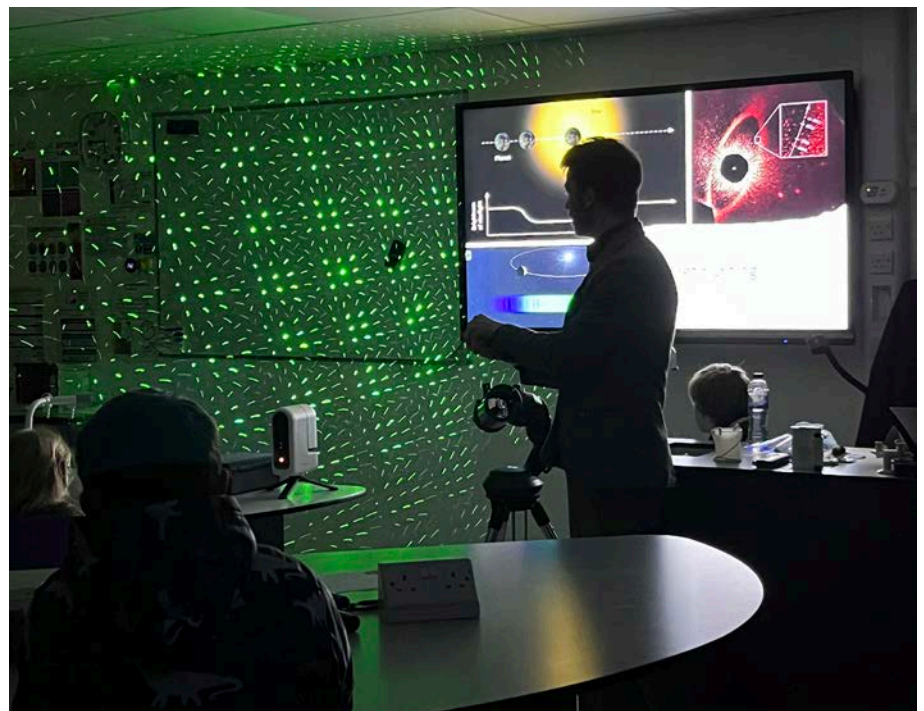


# SUMMIT STARGAZING EVENT

Solihull Sixth Form College hosted a Summit Learning Trust stargazing event with the support of the Ogden Trust in February.

Learners from across the Summit family (primary, secondary and sixth form) attended with parents and carers to get an introduction to astronomy and a talk on whether there is more life out in the universe.

There was an opportunity to look at some astrophotography and see the latest digital telescopes, as well as look through a large telescope at what was visible in the night sky.



# CORE CREATIVE CONFERENCE

Creative Arts students attended the Creative Careers Conference at The Core Theatre in Solihull in February.

It was Solihull CEP's third annual Creative Careers Conference, designed to inspire young people

and emerging professionals who are passionate about exploring careers in the creative sector. During the conference, learners saw behind the scenes and got an insight into creative careers from a range of panellists.

The speakers at the conference included Louise Katerega (Creative Producer & Consultant), Ruth Millington (Art Historian, Curator & Author), Anthony Ekundayo-Lennon (Theatre Director & Dramaturg), Kamaljit Suman (Director of Art At The Heart CIC), Caroline Officer (TV Executive & Educator), Sophie Humphries (Engagement Producer at FABRIC) and Kris Chase-Byrne (Freelance Musician).

The conference offered an insight into careers in film, TV, music, performance, literature, visual arts, and arts management and the industry experts, discussions and live performances gave students invaluable insights into the diverse pathways available within the creative industries.



# VALENTINES FUNDRAISER

We marked Valentine's Day on campus with a fundraising event in the Refectory that raised £445.40 for S.N.A.P, a special needs outdoor adventure playground charity.

There was a spin the wheel prize draw and a name the bear competition, as well as tasty treats and roses for students to purchase.

Huge thanks to everyone who supported the event. The money will make a big difference to children with special needs that the charity supports.



# PRIMA FACIE DRAMA WORKSHOP

Drama students visited the Birmingham REP Theatre this term to take part in a practical workshop based on the play 'Prima Facie' by Suzie Miller.

Students on the A level Drama & Theatre course must study a range of live theatre productions and 'Prima Facie' is one of these. It is a powerful one-woman drama about a working-class criminal defence barrister, who defends men accused of sexual assault, until her belief in the legal

system is shattered when she is sexually assaulted by a colleague.

The trip gave students the opportunity to develop a wider understanding of this production thanks to a Question & Answer session with the Stage Manager of 'Prima Facie' and what they learned will support their exam preparation for Component 1.

Students also participated in two workshops led by The Schools Consent Project and Everyone's

Invited. The first workshop was led by a barrister and it explored the topic of consent from a legal perspective. The second workshop looked at rape culture and what can be done to combat this.

Drama teacher Nadia Kouhi commented: "Students were challenged to discuss the difficult topic of rape and sexual assault and see how this hard-hitting subject matter is tackled in the play 'Prima Facie' and how it is dealt with in real life."



## FARE SHARE MONDAYS

Solihull Sixth Form College has teamed up with Fare Share to do our bit to reduce food waste.

Every Monday there is fresh produce in the Refectory for students to help themselves to. This includes fresh fruit and vegetables, bread, milk and other dairy items.

Added to the regular donations we receive from Sewa Day West Midlands, we have a healthy food pantry, ensuring that surplus food is not wasted and students are not going hungry.



# BTEC BUSINESS CHARITY EVENTS

Aspiring entrepreneurs have been raising money for charity, while simultaneously being assessed on their event management skills for the BTEC Business course.

Learners have been responsible for planning and delivering charity events at the end of the Spring term and have been encouraged to get creative as they raise money for Kids' Village, a charity which provides critically ill children and their families with the opportunity to experience free, magical breaks away from the stresses of hospital life.

Among the charity events to have taken place are tennis table tournaments, a Challenge Carnival, reflex and strength challenges, football skills tests, slushie, milkshake and donut sales and more. Learners got involved in the activities across break and lunchtimes to support their peers and help a good cause.

As well as considering the financial aspect of running an event, students have also been tasked with promoting it and completing risk assessments to ensure they have considered health and safety implications.

Applied Business Curriculum Leader Sandra Rowland commented: "These are the

businessmen and women of the future and this unit has got them thinking like that. They have realised just how much there is to think about when organising an event, including managing their costs to ensure it is profitable, considering health and safety and promoting the events. They have worked hard and their events have been a great success."



# MEDIA WORKSHOP WITH BBC DRAMA

Film and Media learners at Solihull Sixth Form College recently took part in an inspiring seminar at BBC Studios Drama Productions.

The workshop was led by Andy Richardson, Training Operations Manager, and Donna Stocks, Business & Resource Scheduling Coordinator at BBC Studios Drama Productions. The session saw students given a behind-the-scenes look at how drama is produced at the BBC and explored the wide variety of professional roles and career pathways within the organisation. As part of the visit, students were challenged to create their own scripts and storyboards for an original drama concept, an engaging, hands-

on task that allowed them to put their creative skills into practice and experience elements of professional pre-production.

Alongside the creative activity, Andy and Donna offered valuable advice on pursuing careers at the BBC, including information on apprenticeships, entry level roles, and development opportunities. They also shared practical tips on CV-writing, preparing for interviews, and making a strong impression when applying for positions in the media industry. Learners described the workshop as informative, motivating, and thoroughly enjoyable.



# SDO EVENTS ROUND-UP

The SDO team have been working with the Student Council and Student Societies on a variety of awareness and fundraising events this term.

The Spring Term started with Brew Monday, when tea and biscuits were offered to help alleviate the January blues.

Events were also held to mark Holocaust Memorial Day, LGBTQ History Month, Easter and International Women's Day.

Chinese New Year and the Hindu Holi Festival were also celebrated. The latter included handprints and rangoli art.



## SPORTS UPDATE

The College's Sports teams have been travelling the region this term to play competitive matches against other college teams.

The Netball team have been enjoying a fantastic season, which has seen them top their league table. Although they recently lost their 100% record, they have had impressive victories this term over Hereford Sixth Form College (40-14) and Newcastle Stafford College (46-31).

The Men's Football teams see the First team 5th in their league and the Second team 4th in

theirs. The First team have had recent wins over Dudley College (4-1) and Cirencester College (3-2), while the Second team beat Warwickshire College 4-0 in the latest match.

The Girls Football Team are third in their league with a record of four wins and four defeats this season. Among their best results so far this season was a 6-1 win over Tamworth FC.

Meanwhile, the Basketball Academy, run in association with the City of Birmingham Rockets, have had a more challenging

season. They are currently sixth in the table. Their best results this term were a 57-43 win over Broadway Academy.



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