

# ROBERT CLACK ALUMNI ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

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## Welcome to the Robert Clack Alumni Association newsletter

Welcome to the summer edition of the Robert Clack Alumni Association newsletter. In this bumper crop of news, we bring a very exciting addition to our primary school - a decommissioned bus generously donated by Stagecoach London to be transformed into a wonderful cafe and library. Read on for how you can contribute a lasting legacy to this lovely space. We also share updates from our most recent Entrepreneur Academy and Brilliant Club 'graduates', and alumni back in school for presentation evenings, sports awards, Year 10 Interview Day, and to inspire future Robert Clack medics.

This edition of our newsletter also has a distinctly royal feel with members of the Robert Clack team at palace garden parties and the Tower of London to receive honours for services to sport and community development.

We hope you enjoy this newsletter - and a wonderful summer ahead.

## **Stagecoach London donates bus to Robert Clack School for library project**

Robert Clack School has received a generous donation from Stagecoach London in the form of a decommissioned bus, which is set to be transformed into a magical cafe and vibrant new library for primary school students.

The idea for the mobile library originated with the school's Business Manager, Emily Lines. It all started after a conversation with staff member and Alumni Trustee, Teri Webster, who contacted Stagecoach where her daughter, Georgia Webster, also an alumna, works as Communications Manager for London, about the possibility of acquiring a bus to convert into a dedicated reading space. Stagecoach responded favourably and donated one of their retired buses just before the Easter break.

The bus generated lots of excitement among staff and students alike. With the vehicle now on-site, the next phase begins—fundraising and planning the transformation of the bus into a fully equipped, engaging learning environment. In a thoughtful gesture, Stagecoach also provided a personalised destination blind, proudly reading "Robert Clack School" along with the bus number, "21" reflecting the year the primary school first opened, 2021.

On Wednesday 25 June, the Engineering Director of Stagecoach, Mark Wallis and Georgia Webster attended an official handover of the bus at the school's primary site on Lymington Fields. They were joined by Executive Head Teacher and Alumni Trustee Russell Taylor, alongside Emily Lines and Teri Webster. Emily shared her ideas and plans, explaining how she aimed to create a welcoming and inspiring space where the youngest students can fall in love with reading. Her vision is to transform the bus into a mobile café and library, giving children a cosy place right on school grounds to enjoy stories with friends, spark their imaginations, and develop a lifelong love of books.

*"I was honoured when Mr. Russell Taylor asked me to lead the primary phase of our school in 2021 and I am fortunate enough to lead a team whose shared belief in our school's core values, knowledge, and care, drive everything we do, said Emily. Balancing this additional leadership responsibility with my role as School Business Manager has been a challenging but truly rewarding experience.*

With school budgets under constant pressure, resources are limited, so we're incredibly grateful to Stagecoach for their generous donation of the bus and the ongoing support we have received from them especially Georgia and Mark. It's allowed us to turn a vision into something real and meaningful that our children can benefit from.

## **Stagecoach bus donation (cont.)**

*This library isn't just a creative idea it's a response to a real need. In Barking and Dagenham, only 69% of pupils meet the expected reading standard at Key Stage 2 (Age 11). And with so many children growing up behind iPad screens, we want to give them something real: the joy of stories, a spark of imagination, and the confidence that comes from reading. Again, without this generous donation from Stagecoach this vision would not be becoming a reality. We are truly thankful to everyone that supports our project."*

Russell Taylor extended his thanks and gratitude to Stagecoach saying, "At Robert Clack School, we believe in creating opportunities that inspire a lifelong love of learning. This generous donation from Stagecoach London is more than just a bus, it's a symbol of community spirit and innovation. By transforming it into a library and café, we're giving our youngest children a space where imagination can flourish and stories come to life. We are deeply grateful to Stagecoach and all those supporting this project, which will leave a lasting legacy for generations of pupils to come."

Mark Wallis added, "This bus donation is a great example of our community-focused work with Robert Clack School, and we're proud to support something that sparks curiosity and creativity in young minds. It's a school that holds real meaning for us - many of our employees attended Robert Clack themselves - so being able to give something back is especially rewarding. Whether it's through encouraging apprenticeships, giving career talks, or repurposing a bus into a reading hub for primary students, we want to show children that learning and opportunity take many forms. It's all about helping them see what's possible, no matter where they start."

*If you would like to support this project, you can contribute through the GoFundMe link below. Money raised could help:*

- *Renovate the interior into a safe, inviting space*
- *Add comfy seating, bookshelves, and creative décor*
- *Stock it with age-appropriate books and learning materials*
- *Create a café-style setting perfect for reading and quiet time*

<https://www.gofundme.com/f/robert-clack-primary-bus>

## **Stagecoach bus donation (cont.)**

Or, if you'd like to leave a lasting legacy, a donation of £20 allows you to have your name, year of leaving, current occupation and workplace, along with a few inspirational words or your favourite reading quote, displayed inside the bus. For this option, please donate at [www.justgiving.com/rcdt](http://www.justgiving.com/rcdt) by texting RCDT08 to 70070 or by contacting our Development Officer, [emonk@robertclack.co.uk](mailto:emonk@robertclack.co.uk)

Imagine how meaningful it will be for our primary students to see just how many former Clack students have gone on to do amazing things and are now giving back as role models.

Every donation, no matter the size, brings us closer to making this dream a reality. Thank you for supporting our children and helping to shape a brighter future through the power of reading!

**We're incredibly grateful to Stagecoach for supporting our vision.**



## **A Royal Honour: Alumni representatives attend the King's Garden Party**

On Wednesday 14 May, Alumni Development Officer Ellen Monk and Alumni Trustee and Communications Lead Teri Webster had the extraordinary honour of attending the King's Garden Party at Buckingham Palace. This truly unforgettable occasion was made possible courtesy of Alumni Co-Chair and Trustee Ian Pittaway.

From the moment they arrived at the Palace gates, the atmosphere was electric with excitement. Guests, dressed in their finest attire, had gathered from across the United Kingdom—each with their own story and reason for being invited. It was a special privilege to be among them, walking the immaculate gravel paths and soaking in the grandeur of the Palace gardens—a hidden gem in the heart of London.

The event was a stunning showcase of British pageantry. Military bands played timeless tunes as attendees mingled and enjoyed a quintessentially British afternoon tea, complete with dainty sandwiches and exquisite pastries. The beautifully kept lawns, stately trees, and vibrant flowerbeds created a picturesque setting for a truly memorable day.



## King's Garden Party (cont.)

The presence of Their Majesties King Charles and Queen Camilla added a sense of occasion and delight. Their entrance was marked by a formal procession of Beefeaters and the playing of the National Anthem as they appeared on the steps overlooking the thousands of guests. Excitement rippled through the crowd as the royal couple made their way down to greet attendees.

To everyone's delight, His Majesty made his way toward Ellen and Teri, warmly engaging with those nearby. Teri even had the honour of shaking the King's hand—a moment she described as both humbling and exhilarating and a memory she will treasure forever.

This particular Garden Party held special significance, celebrating individuals who have made notable contributions to the fields of education and skills. Both Ellen and Teri said they were deeply inspired by the many fellow guests they met — individuals from all walks of life who had been recognised for their dedication, service, and positive impact on society. As they left the Palace grounds, still glowing from the day's experiences, Ellen and Teri expressed immense gratitude for the opportunity to represent the alumni community at such a prestigious event. It was, without question, a day they will never forget.



## Robert Clack Alumni Entrepreneur Academy: Celebrating young talent and innovation

Robert Clack's budding entrepreneurs were thrilled to participate in this year's Entrepreneur Academy, a unique initiative launched by the Development Trust Trustees back in 2017. Designed to help students realise their entrepreneurial potential, the academy is supported by the school's Business Department and real-life entrepreneurs from the Alumni Association.

## Entrepreneur Academy (cont.)

These experienced mentors deliver a series of workshops, before students embark on their own ideas, to equip them with the skills necessary to create successful, profitable businesses.

The students were tasked with a challenge from the Business Department: create a product or service suitable for 16-21-year-olds. The brief was clear but open-ended: the product could target either male, female, or both genders and could be an invention or innovation. The students were not given a specific budget but were asked to research and record costs. The products needed to be applicable to individuals' attending college or university.

With this brief in mind, our alumni volunteers led a series of workshops to guide the students through the key concepts of entrepreneurship, from idea generation to product development. The workshops covered crucial skills that would help transform their ideas into a successful business venture.

One of the academy's regular supporters, Tina Dulieu (Class of 1975), an award-winning business coach, spoke to the students about evaluating their business ideas, the tools needed to start a business, and how to make it a success.

Another frequent supporter, Jamie Mason (Class of 2008), who now works as an Agency Account Director at Clear Channel UK and is involved with The Brixton Finishing School, also contributed his expertise. Jamie, alongside his colleague Jordan Smith, also an Accounts Director, provided an exciting opportunity earlier in the year for the students to visit the offices of Clear Channel UK. The visit offered a deep dive into digital advertising, as well as a session on the art of presentations, encouraging students to step out of their comfort zones and engage actively.

Students also had the opportunity to hear from other alumni entrepreneurs:

- **Azmir Khan** (Year 13) spoke about his involvement in his brother's online tutoring business and how he promotes it.
- **Anish Vara** (Class of 2020) shared his career journey from running a trainer sourcing business to becoming an underwriter at RSA.
- **Jamie Coughlan** (Class of 2009), now a firefighter and business owner in the supplements market, spoke about staying on trend in the business world.
- **Daniel Perry** (Class of 1996) discussed the challenges of transitioning from corporate life to entrepreneurship.
- **Rob Gilbert** (Class of 1996), MD at Totalmobile, shared insights on the future of field service.

## Entrepreneur Academy (cont.)

Following these sessions, the students were divided into seven teams and set off to create their own business ideas. After brainstorming, designing, and researching costs, they were ready to present their concepts to a panel of judges made up of alumni, industry experts, staff, and even a celebrity! The panel included Tina Dulieu, Jamie Mason, Jordan Smith, Dean Franklin, owner of ADL Air Conditioning and candidate on this year's Apprentice, Farren Joseph, former student and Head of Sixth Form, Zara Azad, Head of Business, Kate Graves, Business Teacher, Ellen Monk, Alumni Development Officer, and Teri Webster, former student and Alumni Trustee and Communications Lead.

The atmosphere during the presentations was electric as students showcased their ideas. Each group demonstrated impressive professionalism and creativity, presenting solutions for a variety of needs. The ideas included:

- **Pitchmate:** An app helping users find nearby football pitches, including details on availability and pricing. The team showed great preparation, providing handouts to judges and confidently answering questions.
- **Textbook:** A platform for buying, selling, or swapping school supplies, textbooks, and revision resources, reducing waste and giving old materials a second life. Students answered questions about pricing and advertising with ease.
- **Skill Swap +:** A concept for skill-sharing and swapping services, depending on membership, the more access to more skill sets. Students handed out leaflets and gave judges a QR code for more information. The presentation was energetic and well delivered.
- **Project Red:** Wearable devices designed to help individuals in dangerous situations, discreetly collecting evidence such as audio, video, or GPS data. The team's visual presentation and advert demonstrated the product's potential in emergency situations.
- **Elev8:** A natural energy drink aimed at improving cognitive performance, with ingredients that help students perform better in exams. The team presented a well-researched idea, offering QR codes for more product information.
- **Elevate London:** A service providing aspiring young athletes from deprived backgrounds access to high-quality sports equipment. The team's presentation was confident, with a thoughtful response to questions.
- **Sipsure:** A life-saving device disguised as a straw that detects harmful substances in drinks. Students presented a demo and handled tough questions, including some from Headteacher Mr. Russell Taylor, showing impressive research and confidence.

## Entrepreneur Academy (cont.)

After all teams presented, the panel faced a tough decision. Following deliberation, the judges unanimously decided that Sipsure should take first place, with Pitchmate as the runner-up.

As always, our students didn't disappoint. The level of creativity and professionalism in the presentations was truly outstanding and we saw some groundbreaking ideas. The future of entrepreneurship is undoubtedly in good hands.

We extend our heartfelt gratitude to our panel of judges for their time and invaluable feedback. The Entrepreneur Academy would not be possible without your support, expertise, and wealth of knowledge.

Special congratulations to Dean Franklin (Class of 2008), winner of this year's, The Apprentice! Your success is truly inspiring, and we couldn't be prouder. We wish you every success in your new business venture with Lord Alan Sugar and look forward to welcoming you back to school soon.

The Entrepreneur Academy continues to grow in strength each year, thanks to the dedication and hard work of both students and staff. We already look forward to seeing the innovative ideas of next year's participants.

**The future is bright for Robert Clack's entrepreneurs!**



## Robert Clack's own Paul Cook awarded the British Empire Medal

We are incredibly proud to share that PE teacher Paul Cook, a long-standing and much-loved member of the Robert Clack School community, has been awarded the British Empire Medal (BEM) in recognition of his exceptional service to local sport and community development. This prestigious recognition is testament to his hard work and commitment.

Paul has been a pillar of our school's sporting life since joining Robert Clack in 2002.



**Paul Cook (cont.)**

Starting out in part-time coaching roles, he quickly became a familiar and inspiring presence across our sporting community. In 2013, he joined the staff full-time—and hasn't looked back since. His passion for sport extends beyond the school gates, as Paul also dedicates his weekends to umpiring, coaching at Dagenham Rugby Club, and organising cricket sessions on Friday evenings, ensuring all who participate have every opportunity to thrive.

Paul's tireless efforts over the years have not gone unnoticed. He was honoured with a 'Chance to Shine' special recognition award in 2016 for his contributions to cricket, followed by the Essex RFU Unsung Hero award in 2022. Now, his impact has been recognised at the highest level with the prestigious British Empire Medal.

On Friday 4th April, Paul and his wife Maggie attended a formal presentation ceremony at the Tower of London, where he received the medal from Dr. Kenneth Olisa OBE, Lord Lieutenant of London. During the ceremony, Dr Olisa shared fond memories of his own visit to Robert Clack—a special moment for both men. The celebration continued with a well-deserved lunch at the Dickens Inn, overlooking St Katharine's Dock.

Paul's legacy is more than trophies or titles—it's the hundreds of students he's inspired, the teams he's led, and the community he's helped strengthen through sport and selfless service.

Please join us in congratulating Paul on this incredible achievement. We are proud to call him one of our own!

**A heartfelt thank you to our generous alumni**

In our December newsletter we shared with you an exciting opportunity for 25 of our students to participate in the prestigious 2025 Chinese and Foreign Youth 'New Circle of Friends' activity and International Youth Traditional Culture tour in Tianjin, China. We were committed to ensuring that every eligible student could experience this remarkable event, regardless of their financial circumstances.

While subsidies from our sister school in China and fundraising activities supported by our PTA helped reduce the cost, we were still concerned that the remaining fees could prevent some students from being able to attend.

### **A heartfelt thank you (cont.)**

But as always our incredible alumni community has stepped up in a big way. Your generous donations have boosted the trip's fund by £1,300, reducing the costs even further helping to ensure that every selected student can participate in this life-changing experience.

On behalf of all the students, staff, and the entire school community, we extend a heartfelt thank you to each and every one of you who contributed. Your support is truly making a difference in the lives of our students, and we cannot express our gratitude enough.

**Thank you once again for your kindness and generosity!**

### **Alumni inspire Year 12 students with medicine and dentistry workshop**

We were thrilled to welcome back two of our alumni on Thursday 1 May for an engaging careers and higher education workshop. Tendayi Hove, currently studying medicine, and Laiba Tanveer, a dentistry student, returned to Robert Clack to share their journeys and inspire our Year 12 students.

Tendayi and Laiba began the session by reflecting on their own paths from Robert Clack to university, offering a relatable and motivational introduction. They provided an honest and informative overview of the application process, including:

- Preparing for entrance exams (UCAT/BMAT)
- Navigating the application timeline
- Succeeding at interviews and assessment days
- Gaining work experience and writing strong personal statements

Their first-hand insights and practical advice gave students a clearer understanding of what to expect and how to prepare for these competitive courses.

Both speakers are passionate advocates for widening participation in higher education. They spoke powerfully about the importance of representation in healthcare and the significance of giving back to their former school community. Their words left a lasting impression on students and staff alike. To end the session, students engaged in a hands-on activity, role-playing mock consultations between doctors and patients. These interactive case studies brought medical history-taking and diagnostic skills to life and encouraged enthusiastic participation.

The workshop was a fantastic opportunity for students to gain relevant knowledge, build confidence, and feel inspired.

We are deeply grateful to Tendayi and Laiba for their time, generosity, and dedication. We look forward to welcoming them back again soon.

**Medicine and dentistry workshops (cont.)****Year 10 Interview Day 2025: A resounding success across all three sites**

On Thursday 10 July our Year 10 students took part in the highly anticipated annual Interview Day - an event held simultaneously across all three school sites and designed to give students a realistic and valuable introduction to the world of professional interviews.

We were proud to welcome an incredible group of alumni and employers from a diverse range of industries including Savills Property International, Senior Livery Company, a Captain and Master Aviator from British Airways, USA Fisher Investments, a CEO from the Savoy and Claridges Hotels, the Educational Trust and Head of Hospitality from Chelsea FC - who has offered one of our students a ball boy job! - to name but a few.

These professionals generously volunteered their time to put students through mock interviews that mirrored real-world scenarios, offering immediate feedback and a performance score out of 25.

Among our dedicated alumni volunteers were Richard Harrington, Melissa Pepper, Jeff Stafford, Chris Marshall, Jo Reeves, Divine Joseph, Ashmeet Viridi, Rhyanna Williams and Noor Rahim who returned to support the next generation of professionals and inspire them with insights from their own career journeys. The sessions not only tested the students' communication and interpersonal skills but also encouraged them to reflect on their future ambitions.

Over the course of the day around 540 students took part in the interviews. The results were outstanding, with a majority achieving performance scores of 25/25.

All students who received full marks were recognised in assembly with a special Outstanding PSHE/Careers Achievement Certificate, a well-earned accolade for their exceptional performance.



**Year 10 Interview Day (cont.)**

Feedback from interviewers on the day was very positive:

*"I was very impressed by the students; most of them seemed so much more confident and assured of themselves from what I remember when I was their age! Strong interpersonal skills, breadth of knowledge, and a lot of clear awareness and direction of their interests and what they'd like to do. Overall, very impressed with the performance of the school. Looks like you all are taking the mission of nurturing the next generation of leaders very seriously!"*

*"I wanted to drop you a note to say how much my colleagues and I enjoyed the careers event yesterday and to thank you for hosting us with such warmth. The students we met were impressive. They were articulate, considered and motivated to gain insight. I personally saw several instances of where students listened so hard to advice, really took it on board and immediately put it into practice. As well as being impressive, the students seemed happy, thoughtful, curious and resilient - which I feel are the key to success in any career."*

*"It was such a pleasure to meet another incredible group of Year 10 students at the Interview Day this year. They were engaged, motivated, and focused on their futures - which I'm sure will be very bright indeed".*

*"As always Robert Clack School and the teaching faculty put on a great day, and your students were stars. Thank you all!"*

We look forward to building on this success next year!





## **KS3 Sports Awards Evening – A Celebration of Excellence**

On Wednesday 9 July, the PE Department proudly hosted the annual KS3 Sports Awards Evening, honouring the outstanding achievements of students in Years 7, 8, and 9 across sport and dance.

The event began with a warm welcome from Pete Goyette, Director of Sport, who introduced this year's distinguished guests. Pete expressed sincere appreciation for the dedicated PE staff, who generously volunteer their time to lead extra-curricular clubs and support students during fixtures, as well as gratitude to the students for their commitment, and parents for their ongoing support.

He also acknowledged the vital backing from the Senior Leadership Team, emphasising.

"Without their support, the opportunities your children receive simply wouldn't be possible. It takes a committed team of PE teachers alongside a leadership team that truly values sport and dance for us to gather tonight to celebrate your children's successes."

Joining the evening were Executive Headteacher, Russell Taylor, Steve O'Brien, Head of Gosfield Road, Dr Richard Spandl, Head of Lymington Fields, Steve Richardson, Head of Green Lane, and special guest former Director of Sport, Barry Taylor. Barry worked at the school for over 35 years and laid the foundations that we continue to build upon today.

He is still a huge supporter of the school; he regularly attends fixtures and offers advice to staff and students alike.

We were also delighted to welcome former student Billy Driver. Billy initially came to Robert Clack in Year 7 as a footballer, but it wasn't long before Mr Cook spotted his quick feet, strong spatial awareness, and mental toughness, marking the start of his rugby journey. Throughout his time at the school, Billy won multiple Essex titles, earned county representation, and played for Clack with great honour and distinction. He was also selected for Harlequins, where he played for seven years. Billy then joined Barking, then spent two years at Southend before returning to his hometown club, Dagenham, at age 28. There he played a key role in leading the club through its most successful five-year period in history.

Billy's impact went beyond his sporting achievements. He remained at Clack for sixth form, earning high grades that secured his place at St Mary's Sports University. Today he co-owns and runs one of the largest sports coaching companies in the area. Billy is not only a shining example of a Dagenham lad who made the most of the opportunities provided by Robert Clack and sport, but he is also an outstanding role model. Our young athletes could certainly learn a lot from his journey!

**KS3 Sports Award Evening (cont.)**

The ceremony began with the prestigious presentation of colours, awarded to the top-performing athletes across each year group. Year 7 students received socks, Year 8 shorts, and Year 9 rugby shirts, each symbolising exceptional commitment and achievement among a cohort of over 540 students per year group. The pride on the recipients' faces was a joy to see.

Individual awards followed, recognising talent in cricket, football, netball, dance, athletics, and rugby. Students were celebrated as Players, Dancers, Athletes, and Most Improved Players of the Year. The highlight was the presentation of the overall Sports Person and runners-up, acknowledging all those who excelled across all sports.

The evening was also a celebration of an extraordinary year of sporting success across a wide range of sport, highlighting the dedication and determination shown by students in everything they took part in. The event concluded with two inspiring speeches.

Firstly, Billy Driver expressed his gratitude to the PE department for inviting him back to be part of such a prestigious occasion. He shared, "If I hadn't come to Robert Clack School, I wouldn't be where I am today. The support I received from all my teachers was incredible—especially from the PE staff. I'll never forget when Mr Cook drove all the way to Norwich to pick me up while I was on holiday, just so I could play in a rugby match—and then took me back!

That's real dedication. I feel truly privileged to have been a student here. You're all lucky to be part of this school. Cherish these memories they'll stay with you forever. Thank you again!"

Finally, Russell Taylor brought the evening to a close by commending the dedication of the PE department. He noted that the story of Mr Cook going above and beyond to drive to Norwich was no surprise to him. Mr Cook has devoted his life not only to the school's rugby program but also to his work throughout the borough. We were proud to see this dedication recognised earlier this year when he was awarded the British Empire Medal—an honour well deserved.

Russell also reflected on memorable sporting moments, recalling a rugby match involving Billy against a school famous for its rugby excellence. Despite a tough 50-0 loss, the determination and resilience shown by the boys was remarkable. They never gave up, held their heads high, and came back even stronger in the following game. Our students embody our school motto, 'Forti Difficile Nihil,' "For the Brave, Nothing is Difficult." Always strive to be a winner and never give up!

## KS3 Sports Award Evening (cont.)

Such inspiring words were the perfect way to end an evening dedicated to celebrating our incredibly talented students.

**A huge congratulations to everyone involved!**



## Celebrating student success at presentation evenings

As another academic year draws to a close, Robert Clack School recently held a series of presentation evenings across its three sites to honour the outstanding achievements, hard work, and dedication of its students.

These special events, which took place on Wednesday 2 April, Thursday 24 April, and Thursday 12 June, recognised the incredible successes of students from Year 13, Year 11, and Year 9, respectively, with each evening celebrating their excellence in and out of the classroom.

All three evenings celebrated students being presented with an array of prizes, trophies and certificates, in front of friends and family who came along to join in the celebrations.

The evenings began with welcoming speeches from the Heads of Sites—Steve Richardson, Steve O'Brien, and Dr Richard Spandl—as well as Head of Sixth Form Sam Butler. They were joined by Executive Head Teacher Russell Taylor and special guests from the Alumni Association and the Governing Body, who were invited to help present the awards to the well-deserved winners.

Distinguished guests for all three evenings included; retired teacher Cliff Carder and Roger Driscoll, a school governor for over 30 years. Alumni Trustee and former Deputy Head, Business Manager, and maths teacher, Mick Fox MBE, regular supporter of the school and former teacher, Tina Dulieu (class of 1975), former student Jovan Shand-Alridge (class of 2020), school governor, Ibrahim Heimada, staff governors Lisa Newton and Jane Meaden, Chair of the Governing Body Carley Monk, governor and former student Hassan Habtoune, former student (class of 2017) Bradley Stokes, and Alumni Association Co-Chair Dr Melissa Pepper.

**Presentation evenings (cont.)**

The presentations began with opening speeches from Assistant Heads and Heads of Year saying how wonderful it was to see so many very proud staff members, students, friends, and family attending to celebrate the outstanding achievements of so many students.

Throughout the evenings, a range of prizes and certificates were awarded to students for their exceptional achievements. Each student received a completion of year certificate, and special awards were given to those who maintained perfect attendance across Key Stage 3, 4, and 5.

One of the highlights of the evening was the presentation of Specialist Alumni Awards, sponsored by Robert Clack's Alumni Association. These awards, given to students who have gone above and beyond in their commitment to school life, included:

**Citizenship Award:**

Recognising students who embody the values of the school community, winners of this award received a £25 prize.

- Year 13 - Maria C
- Year 11 (GL) - Newin N
- Year 11 (LF) - Sindy M
- Year 11 (GR) - Maxwell O
- Year 9 (GL) - Ella J
- Year 9 (LF) - Elijah G
- Year 9 (GR) - Emtiyaj A

**Ethos Alumni Award:**

Awarded to students who exemplify the Robert Clack ethos, this award celebrates those who demonstrate potential for making a valuable contribution to society. Winners received a £25 prize.

- Year 13 - Brian M
- Year 11 (GL) - Jaden Y
- Year 11 (LF) - Sephiroth M
- Year 11 (GR) - Imogen S
- Year 9 (GL) - Davina A
- Year 9 (LF) - Mais H
- Year 9 (GR) - Natasha F

**Schools Values Award:**

Recognising students who consistently demonstrate respect, compassion, discipline, hard work, and high aspirations, this award also carried a £25 prize.

- Year 13 - Alex S
- Year 11 (GL) - Leon A
- Year 11 (LF) - Emily D
- Year 11 (GR) - Ruby H
- Year 9 (GL) - Fahad E
- Year 9 (LF) - Sophie G
- Year 9 (GR) - Zachary J



## Presentation evenings (cont.)

### The Pittaway Prize:

This prestigious award, sponsored by Ian Pittaway, Development Trust co-chair and Alumni Association member, celebrates students who overcome significant barriers to learning. The winners of this award each received £80.

- Year 11 (GL) - Daisy J
- Year 11 (LF) - Amy D
- Year 11 (GR) - Franca L
- Year 9 (GL) - John F
- Year 9 (LF) - Bhoomi D
- Year 9 (GR) - Leah A

This award was also presented to the Year 7 students, in their end of year assemblies on all 3 sites. The well-deserved winners were proud to accept their awards in front of a packed hall of teachers and their peers.

- Year 7 (GL) - Clare-Ann A-Q
- Year 7 (GR) - Ryan S
- Year 7 (LF) - Maburur C

In addition to the awards, students entertained the audiences with performances showcasing their talents. Musical numbers, dance performances, and heartfelt readings about their experiences at Robert Clack School added a special touch to the evening. These moments underscored the vibrant spirit of the school community and the wide range of talents nurtured at the school.

The Year 11 cohort at Lymington Fields had a particularly emotional evening, as they celebrated not just their academic achievements, but also their role in shaping the very foundation of the school, as the first group to join the site when it opened in 2020.

Head of Site, Dr Richard Spandl, spoke passionately about the shared milestones between him and the students, reflecting on how far they had come together in the past few years. He highlighted the significant role the Year 11 students played in establishing the school's unique identity, noting that their contributions will be remembered for years to come.

The evening was made even more poignant by the words of Head of Year, Emily Webster, who expressed her deep gratitude for the Year 11s, calling them a truly wonderful year group. She thanked the students for their contributions to the heartfelt goodbye video that was shown during the evening—a fitting tribute to the end of their school journey. Emily left the evening feeling immensely proud and emotional about the lasting impact this group has had on Lymington Fields.

Reflecting on the evening, students also shared their appreciation for the chance to come together and celebrate each other's successes. Many remarked that the event was the perfect way to end their time at school.

## Presentation evenings (cont.)

Closing speeches reflected on the students' dedication and resilience, acknowledging their perseverance and hard work throughout the year. Special thanks were also given to the parents, families, and staff members who have supported the students every step of the way.

These presentation evenings truly highlighted the amazing talents and successes of the Robert Clack community. They serve as an opportunity to celebrate and reflect on the many achievements that have been made throughout the year. The joyous atmosphere, made even more special by the attendance of our alumni and governing body members, is a testament to the school's commitment to fostering success both in and out of the classroom. Congratulations to all our students - your hard work and dedication are truly inspiring!



## Celebrating our 2024/25 Brilliant Club graduates

We are delighted to celebrate the achievements of our 2024/25 Brilliant Club graduates. Twenty-eight outstanding Year 12 students participated in this year's programme, showing exceptional commitment, curiosity, and academic ambition.

The Brilliant Club is an award-winning charity that aims to widen access to highly selective universities for students from underrepresented backgrounds. By training and placing doctoral/postdoctoral researchers into non-selective state schools, the programme delivers university-style tutorials that equip students with the skills and confidence to aspire to and succeed in higher education.

**Brilliant Club (cont.)**

Thanks to the ongoing support of the Robert Clack Alumni Association, who generously helped fund places for our students, we were able to run two tutorial groups during the spring term. These sessions were led by two inspiring PhD tutors: Dr Rolf Hellebust and Dr Rebecca Wells. Students explored complex, thought-provoking topics including "Can a novel save the world?" and "Hacking the genetic code"—a true taste of university-level study.

All participants completed rigorous final assignments, many of which were graded at 1st class or 2:1 classification—an incredible achievement that speaks to the hard work and high standards maintained by our students.

One student reflected on her experience with pride, saying:

*"Our tutor, Mr Rolf Hellebust. Wow—what an honour to be taught by him, with his comparative literature, eccentric teaching, and insightful lessons. At first, I think we were all slightly anxious hearing the words 'university level,' 'PhD tutor,' and 'final essay.' But as soon as I walked into that first session in January, I knew that I had been blessed. Whoever has the privilege of being taught by him next is in for a good run."*

*When I look back at my sixth form time, when I'm old, hunched, and grey, this experience will stand out as one of the best in Year 12."*

This programme continues to be a transformative experience for all involved, giving students a glimpse into academic life at top universities and strengthening their university applications through both skills development and confidence building.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to the Robert Clack Alumni Association for their ongoing support in funding this opportunity. It is making a real and lasting impact.

**Congratulations to all our Brilliant Club graduates. Your hard work, enthusiasm, and achievement are an inspiration to us all!**



**WISHING YOU ALL A FANTASTIC SUMMER**

**LOOK OUT FOR OUR NEXT NEWSLETTER IN THE  
NEW SCHOOL YEAR**

### **Find out more about our work**

If you would like to find out more about events to support the school that you can take part in, or want to tell us what you've been up to since leaving school, please drop Ellen Monk a line ([emonk@robertclack.co.uk](mailto:emonk@robertclack.co.uk)).

There's always something going on and always opportunities for you to get involved. We'd love to hear from you and welcome you back to school!

### **Support our work**

**Join us** Sign up to the Alumni Association at:  
<https://networks.futurefirst.org.uk/register/robertclack>

**Volunteer** Come back to school as part of one of the many exciting events we run with current pupils throughout the year. Contact [emonk@robertclack.co.uk](mailto:emonk@robertclack.co.uk)

**Donate** Alumni can make a real difference to current pupils' lives. You can donate at [www.justgiving.com/rcdt](http://www.justgiving.com/rcdt) by texting RCDT08 to 70070 or contacting [emonk@robertclack.co.uk](mailto:emonk@robertclack.co.uk)