



BALCARRAS
From strength to strength

NEWSLETTER

Welcome from the Headteacher

Dear Parents,

At last we reach the sanctuary of Easter! It has been quite a half term! For the first time in 11 years the school underwent a full OFSTED inspection. I can't tell you how pleased we are as a staff, firstly that it is over, and secondly that the report captures something of the special culture and ethos that the school enjoys. The report states that pupils '*make exceptional progress*' at the school. High praise indeed, but in fact I was most pleased by the comment which said that Balcarras '*has the highest expectations for all pupils, both for their academic achievement and to be part of a positive and inclusive school community.*' Linked to this I was also delighted that the inspectors felt that the pastoral care that the school offers is '*exemplary*'. The report is available on the school website.

Once again I'd like to thank all of our parents for your superb support. I genuinely hope you all have a lovely Easter.

Dominic Burke

SCHOOL FUNDING

DOMINIC BURKE

I started the newsletter with good news, now for the bad.

Our core per pupil funding is increasing for next year by 0.5%.

But our costs are likely to increase as follows:

Teaching staff	2.8%
Support Staff	5.0%
The costs of everything else	3.0% (current rate of inflation)

The difference for a school like Balcarras will be counted in the hundreds of thousands. Unless the government act, we will have to make some significant cuts to our current staffing and provision.

I have explained the situation to our MP, Max Wilkinson. He has promised to raise the issues in parliament, and I am grateful to him for that. We have been making cuts in education for over 10 years. The government need to realise that we can no longer afford to keep making cuts or what they call 'efficiencies'. I am all for proper increases to salaries, in line with inflation, but they **HAVE** to be funded. Increasing the income by 0.5%, whilst costs are rising by well over 3%, is a recipe for serious trouble.

YEAR 12 VISIT TO OXFORD

JEREMY NIBLETT



On March 11th, Year 12 students, including myself, visited Oxford's Lady Margaret Hall and St. Hilda's. We were shown around both colleges and learned about Oxford's academic and social life. A highlight was hearing about the unique tutorial system, providing small-group learning - and the cat called Issy in LMH's library! At St. Hilda's, we had lunch and an insightful Q&A with Balcarras alumni. The day ended with inspiring speeches from students on personal growth, ambition, and who they admire. Overall, I would say the trip was incredibly valuable, offering insight into life at one of the world's most prestigious universities.

(Words by Luana)

We met Issy, the LMH cat. (Photo by Ruby)

SUMMER UNIFORM

NEIL BAXTER, DEPUTY HEADTEACHER

During the summer term, pupils may choose to wear the summer uniform if they wish. Pupils may wear the summer uniform after the easter holidays.

If a pupil chooses to continue to wear the winter uniform it must be worn in full.

For summer uniform the following additional rules apply:

- School white polo tops (house colours piped on the collar and sleeves) can be worn instead of the standard shirt and tie
- The polo tops do not need to be tucked in.
- Ties do not need to worn
- **Blazers must be worn** with the polo tops, until the Headteacher gives permission for blazers not to be worn. Blazers must be worn in the corridors and to assembly.
- Shorts can be worn. They must be the official Balcarras shorts from Monkhouse, with the school badge embroidered on them. Socks must be black or grey, ankle length.
- **No cardigans or jumpers** (for this reason, on cold days, pupils are advised to wear winter uniform)
- No long sleeve tops or additional shirts to be worn under the polo tops
- Make up is not permitted

All other rules remain the same as for the rest of the year.

Blazers in the Summer

When it gets hot enough, Mr Burke will allow blazers not to be worn. Blazers must still be worn to and from school, and for assemblies, but they are no longer compulsory at other times.





Free delivery!

For a limited time, enjoy FREE delivery on all orders over £30—perfect for getting ahead on your back-to-school shopping without the added delivery costs.

Start Date: Monday 14th April

End Date: Midnight, Wednesday 16th April

monkhouse[®]
schoolwear specialists

Message from Monkhouse

We've got some exciting news from Monkhouse! For a limited time, enjoy FREE delivery on all orders over £30—perfect for getting ahead on your back-to-school shopping without the added delivery costs.

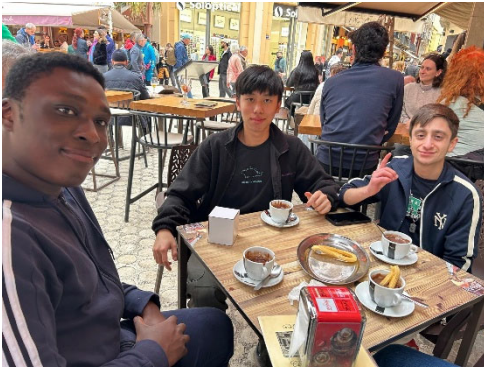
Offer Dates:

· Start Date: Monday 14th April

· End Date: Midnight, Wednesday 16th April

MÁLAGA TRIP

JANINE HOCKENHULL, TEACHER OF SPANISH



During February half term break we were lucky enough to participate in a homestay visit to Málaga, in Southern Spain. Myself and Miss Dodds took a mixture of A-level and Year 11 students for 5 days. We were accompanied by our tour guide, Ignacio. The students stayed with Spanish families and participated in language lessons on 2 of the mornings. We also had a day trip to Córdoba. Here is a report written by one of our students, Guilia Luca:



I loved the Malaga trip; Spain was not only sunny but a good way to practice my Spanish whilst always having new places to go. I loved the different museums and the history I learnt from Ignacio who was with us every day. I also made new friends across year groups that I still speak to. I think the best part was the freedom and weather, being surrounded by a different culture and shopping in the evenings was amazing, I also got the chance to go to the beach and listen to music and eat amazing food. I enjoyed it so so much 10/10.

WATER BOTTLES IN SCHOOL

Please can all parents/guardians make sure that their child has a named water bottle in school with them each day.

MUSIC NEWS

JANE WATTS, DAN ARMSTRONG AND MATTHEW HOWELL

Well, it's been another whirlwind period for the Music Department...

At the end of January, we took our Year 12 and Year 13 A-Level musicians to perform in a lunchtime recital at the Pittville Pump Room. This was a huge success, with many plaudits coming in from members of the public afterwards. The students really enjoyed the opportunity to perform in front of such an appreciative audience in this beautiful venue.

Back at the beginning of February, Chamber Choir and Cantabile appeared at the Cheltenham Festival of Singing, organised by the renowned tenor, James Gilchrist. Both choirs wowed the audience at Pip and Jim's Church and were exemplary ambassadors for Balcarras.

Our wonderful Viscount organ – generously donated by the Royal College of Organists – received its official opening concert a few days later. The recital included performances from several Balcarras students, Mrs Watts, Mr Burke, Mr Howell and Mr Howell's mum Alison (who is an accomplished professional organist!). We also welcomed guest organists from both Cirencester Parish Church and the RCO (which was represented by Mr Simon Williams, who is Director, RCO East, South and South-West England). It was a great occasion and we look forward to encouraging many more students to take up the "king of instruments"!

A number of our students had the fantastic experience of playing in the production orchestra over at The High School Leckhampton, under the musical direction of Mr Matt Bunting. This year, their show was the musical, 'Annie' and we were very proud of the professional way our musicians undertook their duties, as well as thoroughly enjoying the performances of the HSL cast and crew!

Our Spring Concert, in early March, was a great success and featured performances from our Year 11 and Year 13 musicians. It's always a lovely opportunity to perform 'at home' in the Hall with appreciative friends and family cheering them on.

Music For Youth at the Cheltenham Town Hall

Chamber Choir were delighted to take part in the Music For Youth Gloucestershire Festival (arranged by Gloucestershire Music). They were phenomenally good – and absolutely took the event by storm, gaining an amazingly complimentary adjudication from the MFY Mentors, the last paragraph of whose comments read: "What a classy choir, such polished and elegant singing – I hope your school know how good you are."

These young singers (and their male counterparts, Cantabile) have been working SO hard – and we are indeed very proud of them all!

Rachel Bourner joins the Music Team

We are delighted to welcome Rachel Bourner to our team of Visiting Music Teachers. She joins Tracey Vacher in teaching our piano students.

Coming Up:

Balcjazz will be appearing on the Free Stage of Cheltenham Jazz Festival's 'Jazz It Up!' event on Saturday 3rd May. Do please come along and support them!

The night before, there will be a concert at school featuring our orchestra, wind ensemble, Quirky Quintet and Balcjazz. This is a shared event to honour the guests we will be hosting that weekend... a group of young school-age Finnish music students, together with some of their parents and teachers. This very exciting initiative is part of an exchange project and has been masterminded by our flute teacher, Mrs Nicola Hopkins. The concert is at 5pm on Friday 2nd May.

Also appearing at the Cheltenham Jazz Festival that weekend is Balcarras alumnus, Ben Partridge (now a professional jazz tenor saxophonist). Look out for 'Ben Partridge's Sixways' in the Festival programme!

And of course:

Don't forget Midsummer Music this year is Friday 20th June. Do save the date!!!

Thank you for all your support of all things Balcarras Music.

Congratulations to the following students and their teachers:

Mrs Vicky Burge - Cello - Trinity Board

Wien Chiu (Y9) Grade 7 Distinction

Mr Nathan King - Trumpet – Trinity Board

Sam Heys (Y10) Grade 3 Pass

Will Heys (Y10) Grade 3 Pass

Mrs Karen Sykes – ABRSM Clarinet

Izzy Lansley (Y8) Grade 3 Pass

Mrs Nicola Hopkins – ABRSM Flute

Edward Wheeler (Y9) Grade 3 Pass

Laurel Chan (Y8) Grade 3 Pass

Tilly Hunton (Y8) Grade 1 Pass

Mrs Kate Skeet – MTB - Board

Martha Vacher (Y11) Grade 6 Viola Merit

Gabriella Soares (Y7) Grade 3 Violin Distinction

Mrs Tracey Vacher - MTB Board - Piano

Isaac Costa-Hall (Y11) Grade 6 Distinction

Vaaria Gateley (Y9) Grade 2 Distinction

James Vician (Y11) Grade 5 Merit

Mrs Tracey Vacher - MTB Board – Piano cont'd

Holly Engels (Y11) Grade 5 Pass

Mrs Tracey Vacher - Trinity Board - Piano

Ru Bridges (Y7) Grade 3 Merit

Anya Hunter (Y9) Grade 3 Distinction

Mr Steve Browning - LCME Acoustic Guitar

Rory Hargreaves (Y8) Grade 1 Distinction

Jacob Field (Y8) Grade 1 Merit

James Lawrence (Y9) Grade 2 Distinction

Eliza Carr (Y9) Grade 2 Distinction

James Robinson (Y9) Grade 2 Distinction

Amy Pallister (Y9) Grade 3 Merit

Lottie Pallister (Y11) Grade 5 Merit

Mr Steve Browning - Trinity Rock and Pop Guitar

Bertie Glendon (Y9) Grade 3 Distinction

Mrs Jo Haslam - ABRSM Violin

Lottie Atkin (Y9) Grade 5 Pass

Hazel Chan (Y11) Grade 4 Pass

Learning outside school:

Barney Vacher (Y13) Trinity Cello Grade 8 Pass

Note from Nicola Hopkins, Flute teacher



This term the flute department have been following the rainbow - our homework diaries are looking fabulous, each page in a different colour. We have learnt yellow tunes and recycled music for green week, composing our own tunes. We all got together on non-uniform day to take this photo and we have been playing *Somewhere Over the Rainbow* together this week.

We are heading towards our exchange with 20 Finnish Flautists at the beginning of May. There will be a joint

concert with Balcarras ensembles on Friday 2nd May at School, 5pm. We look forward to seeing everyone there.

YEAR 11 FOOTBALL

LUKE PERRY

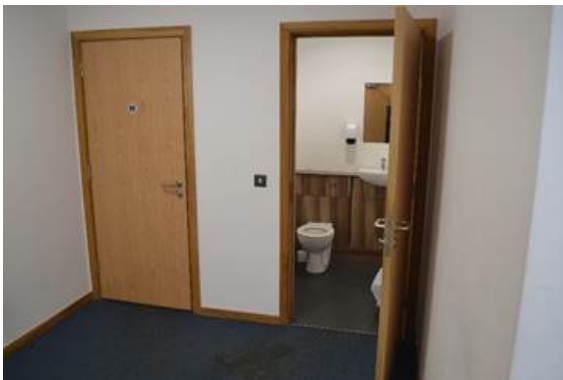
Congratulations to the Boys Year 11 Football team have won the district cup final on penalties. All the boys played well but a special mention for Leo Norton with a man of the match performance and two outstanding saves in the shootout. Balcarras will now play Rednock School in the County Cup Semi Final.



TOILETS

NEIL BAXTER, DEPUTY HEADTEACHER

Some students can find using the toilet facilities at school quite difficult. The school is a busy place, and the toilets are often crowded with other pupils at break and lunch time. However, the school does have some individual toilet spaces, located in the Davidson building.



These each have their own door, with a wash basin inside, and only one pupil at a time is allowed to use them. Any pupil can use these facilities. If your child finds the other toilets around the school too busy, please encourage them to make use of the toilets in the Davidson building.



STEM WEEK 2025

KRISTI PRAKI, STEM COORDINATOR

On 10th – 14th March, we celebrated STEM week at Balcarras. During this week, students attended a series of lunchtime talks from visitors who work in STEM fields, including University lecturers, a NASA scientist, a gemmologist, a midwife and an operations consultant.

The year 7 students took part in some hands-on science lessons that were developed and taught by our year 12 STEM ambassadors. This included making magnetic slime, creating colourful fire and dropping eggs from the top of the English block (hopefully without breaking them)! They also watched Dr Sharp's amazing science show, where they experienced some exciting and explosive chemistry experiments! The year 9 students took part in an engineering challenge with the DT department where they designed and built their own bridges. There were also competitions for students to get involved with, including a GCHQ-style puzzle challenge and a British Science week poster competition – well done to all our winners!



This year, Balcarras will be working with DataFace, a Cheltenham Science Festival project to boost the data literacy and essential data science skills of UK secondary school pupils. It aims to give them the skills and confidence to dive into an open dataset, find an issue that catches their interest, and tell a story with creative data visualisations.

Last month, our year 8 students were introduced to the project during an assembly by members of the Cheltenham Science Festival. They then took part in a skills enrichment day where they learnt the skills needed to

process and manipulate data. A small team of year 8 and 9 students were selected to continue this project and take part in the national Dataface competition. They have been working with the science and DT departments to create a 3-dimensional model which represents the data describing global sea-level rise. This team of students will participate in an exhibition and competition at Cheltenham Science Festival in the Summer.



BRITISH PHYSICS OLYMPIAD – ONLINE SENIOR CHALLENGE

KRISTI PRAKI, STEM COORDINATOR

Last month, eleven of our Year 12 A-level Physics students took part in the British Physics Olympiad's Senior Physics Online Challenge. They achieved an excellent set of results, with most students gaining Bronze or Silver awards.

The competition consists of two 30-minute sets of multiple-choice questions which are largely about physics ideas, but also encouraging some wider reading and interest in the subject. It is an opportunity for students to take part in a national physics competition and to develop their confidence in the subject.

Well done to all who took part, and a special congratulations to our highest scoring pupils – Olly Bevan-Langlois and Tom Wilkey who both scored over 50%. Next month, students from Years 7-10 will take part in the junior physics challenges.



YEAR 5 ROYAL INSTITUTION STEM MASTERCLASS SERIES

KRISTI PRAKI, STEM COORDINATOR

Year 5 students from local primary schools have been taking part in a STEM masterclass series hosted by Balcarras science department. During STEM week (10th- 14th March), the year 5s visited Balcarras afterschool for their first session which was presented by the Royal institution. The rest of the sessions will be designed and presented by our year 12 STEM ambassadors. The year 5's will develop their STEM knowledge and take part in hands-on activities, including a maths scavenger hunt, building and launching rockets and creating bracelets using computer code.



EASYFUNDRAISING

Balcarras School



Just letting you know that Balcarras School are now registered with easyfundraising, which means you can raise FREE donations for us every time you shop online. Over 7,000 brands will donate to us when you use easyfundraising to shop with them – at no extra cost to yourself! These donations really mount up and make a BIG difference to us, so we'd really appreciate it if you could take a moment to sign up and support us. It's completely FREE and only takes a moment. Scan the QR code to start fundraising!

Thank you so much!

ACTIVITIES WEEK

LYN MASSEY

After the Easter holidays you will be getting lots of information sent to you regarding Activities Week which takes place during the week of 7th and 11th July.

More information to follow on this fantastic week of trips and opportunities for your child to participate and have fun in.

Please do not worry if your child is on a residential trip, you do not need to fill out any forms.

Any queries, please email: ljm@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk

BOOK HUNT
 Take a photo of a Free
 Little Library or public
 library on your Easter Break
 adventures!

The further afield, the better – can you spot a Library in a different part of town, a different part of Britain, or even a different country?

Earn E points & sweets
 Send photos to Mrs Kelly
 by May 2nd Friday

PTFA

Our Model Club is incredibly grateful for the generous support from the PTFA. Your funding has allowed us to purchase essential equipment, paints, and model kits, which will be the focus of our projects throughout this academic year.



As you know, it's an expensive hobby, so your contribution makes a real difference — helping our students not only develop their skills but also build friendships along the way.

We're delighted to share that the club is now the largest it's ever been, with 15 enthusiastic members!

Thank you again for your continued support — it is truly appreciated by us all.

Mike Stoker, History Model Club

Many thanks from Careers the PTFA funded a speaker session for Year 12 students, their details are below:

Ceri Moyers

The Circle Partnership Director and Founder
of Clarity Consulting

ceri.moyers@thecirclepartnership.com

Ceri joined The Circle Partnership as a Director in 2022. She takes ownership for the ongoing development of The Circle Partnership's Academy programme as well as the advisory, training and coaching support offered through Mentoring Circle and Development Circle. Vanessa and Ceri take joint responsibility for The Circle Partnership's strategy and long-term growth, supported by their Advisory Board.

Ceri has spent all of her career in construction and real estate, and has experience and expertise in corporate communications, coaching and organisational development. From her lived experience, she is passionate about both the need and opportunity for change that exists via a more gender diverse workforce, and inspired by the role that The Circle Partnership is playing in enabling this.

Ceri qualified as a coach in 2014 with the internationally recognised Coaches Training Institute (CTI) and is accredited with the European Mentoring and Coaching Council (EMCC). Her coaching approach is strengths based and borrows from the principles of positive psychology and Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT). Her coaching clients range from management to C-Suite level and come from businesses including Grosvenor, Soho House, Laing O'Rourke, Multiplex, Westfield URW, Global Switch, Refugee Action and Berkeley Group.



The PTFA kindly donated £1,000 to the Duke of Edinburgh that school offer.

This has enabled us to buy some additional rucksacks, tents, Trangia's, and training materials for pupils doing the Bronze and Gold award at school. This has been partly to accommodate the increase in popularity of DofE. We have seen the largest numbers ever for both Bronze, where we are up to 114 pupils, and for gold where we have 42 pupils taking part. As a school we have a 66% completion rate for DofE which is well above the national average, this shows the hard work and dedication the students put into this award. This completion rate is well above the national average. We have calculated that the Balcarras pupils provide over 3,600 hours of volunteering time (one of the sections of DofE) over the course of a year, between the gold and bronze award. This is an outstanding contribution to our local community. Many thanks to the PTFA for all of their support with the DofE program.

Mr Pearce and Mr Butler

Upcoming events:

Looking ahead, please do add Midsummer Music to your diary – Friday 20th June 2025.

SIXTH FORM NEWS**DARREN LEATHERBARROW, HEAD OF SIXTH FORM****Sixth Form Dress Up Day**

The 2025 Sixth Form Dress Up Day on Friday 14th March was yet another triumph of ingenuity, imagination and incredible costumes. Everywhere one could look, there were quality outfits and so many clever collaborations it was hard to keep count. There was so much wonderful creativity - highlights included a Black Widow Spider, Steampunk Plague Doctors, Mike, Sully and Boo from Monsters Inc, Wallace and Gromit, Lego Batman, Joan of Arc, the Inbetweeners, the characters from Mario Kart, Mama Mia, Van Gogh and his Masterworks, the penguins from Surf's Up, Three Blind Mice, Spirited Away, Squid Game, Marty and Doc from Back to the Future, Margaret Thatcher and the Miners, Goldilocks and the Three Bears, Snow White and Seven Dwarfs, five tribute Mr Prophetts, a trio of Ed Sheerans, and a quartet of Timothee Chalomets - the list could go on and on. Thank you to all who participated!

Lessons from Auschwitz

On Thursday 20th March, seven students from Years 12 and 13 students were all fortunate enough to participate on the Holocaust Education Trust's 'Lessons from Auschwitz' programme. Antonia Brown, Harriet Foulkes, India Hung, Finn Johnson, Eleanor Nyathi and Joe Price all participated in a seminar the weekend before in Bristol, before all travelled to Bristol Airport, and on to Poland where they visited the town of Oswiecim (in German, Auschwitz) and visited the notorious Nazi concentration and extermination camps of Auschwitz and Auschwitz-Birkenau. The students then participated in a follow up on-line seminar and are now in the process of undertaking a 'reflections' project in school based on their experiences. Updates on the students' experiences and follow up project will appear on the website after the Easter break.

Sixth Form 2024-25 - Post -Application Consultations

The post-application consultations for all our Balcarras Year 11 applicants have now been completed. The Sixth Form team is busy working their way through the final waves of consultations with our applicants from other centres. Once this task is completed shortly after Easter, conditional offer letters and invitations to our Sixth Form Induction morning on Tuesday 1st July will be distributed. The team are working as fast as they can, but with Balcarras Sixth Form being so popular and over-subscribed - we received over 500 applications - this is taking time! Thank you in advance for your patience!

Year 13 Last Day

Our Year 13 cohort will have their final day at Balcarras on Friday 9th May. This will be a 2-lesson day, followed by a final assembly after breketime, and a leaver's BBQ. The first A-level examination will take place on Tuesday 13th May. We wish the whole cohort the very best with their examinations and hope all go on to attain the grades they have been striving for, and access to their preferred post-18 destinations!

Debate Final

If you were in the Main Hall at lunchtime on Tuesday 8th April you would have witnessed an absolute masterclass in debating. Both teams - 12C SGC's Amelie Paul and Emma Tricks and 13C JBH's Amber Forde and Georgie Robinson - were simply superb.

Whilst congratulations very much go to our new champions, 12C SGC, all involved deserve the richest praise. All were commanding, engaging, richly informed and incredibly persuasive. The 5-person adjudication panel had an agonising decision to make - and for the first time in debate history at Balcarras a dead-heat looked like it could be on the cards. Compiling feedback and comparing scores from the 5 judges showed that across 5 scorecards there was a split decision, and out of a possible 500 points apiece, the difference between the two teams was 3 points. It was that close. Not only that, both the defeated teams in the previous week's Semi-Finals, in which 12D JXW's James Pound and Jess Smith, and 12E LP's Jacob Austin and Alex Williams all gallantly bowed out of the competition, would have been very worthy finalists themselves.

The Grand Final, with the motion *'This House proposes that we are living in a totally dystopian society'* was a fitting end to what has been a brilliant season. My thanks go out to all students who have participated in the debates, and those who have attended and made the floor debates a highlight. The same goes to our student time-keepers, in particular Eva Lythgoe who has made the position her own! Ditto to all staff who have support -in organising, chairing, and those with the most unenviable of tasks, adjudicating. Without this whole team effort within the Sixth Form and wider school community, enrichment events like this just wouldn't be possible. Thank you. Here's to 2025-26 - will 12C - next year's 13C - be able to defend their crown?

UPCOMING EVENT

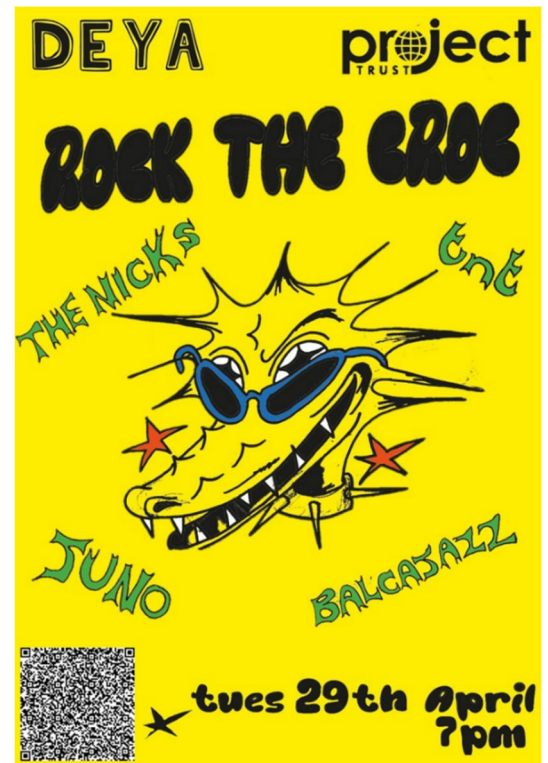
Please join us at Deya on 29th April for another event hosted by our very own Holly Cox and Robyn Millington. Tickets can be purchased [here](#):

<https://www.eventbrite.co.uk/e/rock-the-croc-tickets-1283995548249>

Join us for an evening of music from Charlton Kings' local bands. Some of Cheltenham's best young talent performing a series of covers as well as original songs. From jazz to rock, to indie pop: Balcajazz, Refuge, Juno, TNT and the Nicks will be ready to get you dancing the night away.

This event has been organised by two students in the Balcarras sixth form as a means of fundraising for Project Trust, a charity with over 50 years experience of providing ethical, international volunteering opportunities for young people. All proceeds from ticket sales will be donated to Project trust to fund Robyn Millington and Holly Cox's volunteering placements teaching young people in Honduras. Find out more at <https://projecttrust.org.uk/>

Come down to DEYA for a night to be remembered.



YOUNG ENTERPRISE

JACK GODDARD, HEAD OF ENTERPRISE

We are delighted to congratulate the two Balcarras School Young Enterprise teams for their exceptional achievements at the Young Enterprise Regional Final on Thursday 20th March.

We're proud to share that Balcarras students were crowned **Best Overall Company** at the final, held at The Swindon and Wiltshire Institute of Technology. Competing against eight teams from Gloucestershire and Wiltshire across six categories – Sustainability, Best Presentation, Technology, Customer Service, Creativity, and Best Overall Company – both of our teams performed brilliantly!

- **Team Mist** proudly won the **Technology** prize.
- **Team Pearl** secured awards for **Best Presentation** and the prestigious title of **Best Overall Company**.

As the **Best Overall Company** winners, Team Pearl will now represent Gloucestershire at the **South West Company of the Year Final** in Poole on **May 7th**. We wish them the very best of luck as they compete for the regional title!

Young Enterprise is a national charity that empowers young people with the skills, knowledge, and confidence to succeed in the world of work. This year, nearly 1,000 student-run companies have been launched across the country, with students making key business decisions – from product creation and business planning to financial management and sales.

If you'd like to support **Team Mist** and **Team Pearl** by purchasing their products, please check out their products through the links below:

- <https://mistfragrance.com/>
- <https://www.ye-tradingstation.org.uk/product/pearl-toothbrush>

Your support will be greatly appreciated as they continue their entrepreneurial journey!



WELSH CAKES FOOD TECH

Food Tech at Balcarras is always busy but this week it has been even more so, first we celebrated St David's day earlier in the month with Mrs Saunders and the Food team making hundreds of Welsh cakes for all the staff to enjoy on Monday break time. Dydd Gŵyl Dewi Hapus! Then, to mark Shrove Tuesday Mrs Denyer and the Year 7 cookery club had a great time making pancakes to take home for their families



CONSIDERATE PARKING

The school has received concerns that parking on Maple Drive, Peel Close and Willow Road has sometimes been blocking the road. We always like to stay on good terms with our neighbours, and so please could parents make sure they park considerately at drop-off time and pick-up time, and not block the road, so that local residents are not negatively impacted, living near to the school.

Driving on the school site:

Please can parents/guardians be considerate if they are collecting their child from school in a car. There is a great deal of traffic and congestion at 3.35pm every day in the car park on the Sixth Form side of the building, this leads to drivers overtaking stationary cars whilst children exit the school and walk in between the cars. Please can parents try to avoid collecting their child from the school site, blocking the exit from the Sixth Form steps or parking in the way of other cars and children exiting the building. Thank you.

ECO CHALLENGE

JON PEARCE, ECO CLUB

Congratulations to everyone that took part in the Eco challenge over the last couple of weeks.

There were over 200 extra green activities taken by different pupils throughout the school,

701 were the winners they have won a free breakfast roll from the canteen.

There is a news article on the website:

<https://www.balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk/news/?pid=3&nid=1&storyid=1217>

YEAR 12 ENVIRONMENTAL SCIENCE TRIP LAURA THOMSON, TEACHER OF SCIENCE



amongst the waste!

Students got a 'behind the scenes' tour of the facility- they even were allowed entry to the control room. They witnessed the waste being incinerated in temperatures over 850°C and viewed the technology used to 'clean' the gases produced by the process and how electricity is generated from the thermal energy emitted by the burning waste.

In March, Year 12 Environmental Science students attended Gloucestershire Energy from Waste facility. They listened to a presentation by the company about the history of the site and how the facility operates to dispose of 190,000 tonnes of waste each year.

It was interesting to see the trucks off loading their rubbish in the 'bunker' that holds 30 tonnes of waste. Many interesting questions were asked about the bunker, including how much recyclable material ends up being incinerated and how they would spot a body in



VACANCIES

All the information can be found on <https://www.thebaccarrastrust.co.uk>



Cleaner (Part-time) - 2 vacancies

To start as soon as possible

Salary: Point 1 £12.26 per hour

5 days per week (Mon-Fri, Term time only)

20 hours per week (2pm–6pm)

We are looking for an enthusiastic cleaner with an excellent work ethic to join our cleaning team. Previous cleaning experience would be an advantage, although training will be provided.

To apply, please complete the application form.

(Available from our website www.balcarras.glouchs.sch.uk)

and email to cleaners@balcarras.glouchs.sch.uk

Application

To apply, please send completed application forms (available from our website: www.thebaccarrastrust.co.uk to cleaners@balcarras.glouchs.sch.uk or postal applications can be sent to: The Cleaning Manager, Balcarras School, East End Road, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham, GL53 8QF.

Closing Date for applications: Tuesday 6th May 2025, 9am.

(This position may close earlier than stated above should a suitable applicant be appointed.

We therefore encourage interested candidates to apply as soon as possible).

Interviews will be on a rolling basis.

For further information about the post, please contact the school at the above e-mail address.

The Balcarras Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This role will involve regulated activity with children. We particularly welcome applications from underrepresented groups including ethnicity, gender, transgender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion. Please also read the Recruitment Selection and Disclosure Policy within "How to apply" which includes our policy on recruiting ex-offenders. All posts are subject to an enhanced DBS check and receipt of two satisfactory references.



Accounts Payable Supervisor

Required to start as soon as possible after successful interview.

30 hours per week, all year round. Term-time only working plus some weeks in the school holidays could be considered for the right candidate.

Salary scale: 11 to 14 - £25,979 - £27,334 FTE

(equivalent to £22,110 - £23,208.65 actual salary)

This is an ideal role for a positive, personable, energetic person with excellent organisational and administrative skills including the ability to work to deadlines and flexibility to take on new tasks as they arise.

Ofsted assessed Balcarras in 2005, 2009 and 2014 as 'Outstanding' in every category, the High School Leckhampton in 2024 as 'Outstanding' in every category and Winchcombe School 'Good' in every category in 2022.

Please see the Applicant Pack for further information including a Job Description on the Balcarras Trust website www.thebaccarrastrust.co.uk

Application

To apply, please send completed application forms to jobs@balcarras.glouchs.sch.uk

Closing Date for applications: Monday 28th April, 9am.

Interviews will be on a rolling basis as and when suitable candidates apply.

Interested applicants are advised to apply straight away.

For further information about the post, please contact the school at the above email address.

The Balcarras Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This role will involve regulated activity with children. We particularly welcome applications from underrepresented groups including ethnicity, gender, transgender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion. Please also read the Policy within "How to apply" which includes our policy on recruiting ex-offenders. All posts are subject to an enhanced DBS check and receipt of two satisfactory references.



Head Science Technician

To start as soon as possible after successful interview
5 days per week (Mon-Fri) 37 hours per week (term time only)
Point 15 - 18 £24,884.41 - £26,138.34 Actual salary
£29,093 - £30,559 FTE

We are looking to appoint an excellent Head Science Technician to work in our outstanding science department. The successful candidate will have excellent organisational skills and a good understanding of science practical work and related Health and Safety requirements. Previous experience of preparing practical resources and school administrative duties would be an advantage as would experience of leading a team. Ofsted assessed Balcarras in 2005, 2009 and 2014 as "Outstanding" in every category.

Application

Further information including a job description can be found in the Applicant Pack www.thebaccarrastrust.co.uk. To apply, please complete an application form and send completed application forms to jobs@balcarras.glouchs.sch.uk

Closing Date for applications: Wednesday 30th April, 9am.

Interviews will be on a rolling basis as and when suitable candidates apply.

Interested applicants are advised to apply straight away.

For further information about the post, please contact the school at the above e-mail address.

The Balcarras Trust is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults and expects all staff and volunteers to share this commitment. This role will involve regulated activity with children. We particularly welcome applications from underrepresented groups including ethnicity, gender, transgender, age, disability, sexual orientation or religion. Please also read the Recruitment Selection and Disclosure Policy within "How to apply" which includes our policy on recruiting ex-offenders. All posts are subject to an enhanced DBS check and receipt of two satisfactory references.

U13 NETBALL CHAMPIONS



On 5th March the U13 had their Cheltenham and District Netball tournament at CLC. They beat Cotswold, Cheltenham Prep, Winchcombe and Pates Grammar school but lost to Cleeve School in their Pool. The girls went through as runners up and played the winners of the opposite pool, which was Dean Close. It was a tough semi-final with both teams evenly matched. Ella Mason and Belle Moloney were solid defenders with an incredible turnover rate! Kiki Price and Annabelle Vaughan's shooting was unbelievable and converted every turnover which resulted in Balcarras winning a brilliant semi-final. Balcarras had to face Cleeve School again in the final! Balcarras had found their groove and beat Cleeve 10- 7 and became County Champions. The girls played amazing netball and it is the first time Balcarras have been country champions in over 20 years!

CAREERS

To celebrate International women's day four Year 12 students were nominated to attend a STEM event at Kohler Mira this included a talk by Anne-Maire Imafidon Anne-Marie social entrepreneur and computer scientist. She founded and became CEO of Stemettes in 2013, a social enterprise promoting women in STEM careers. In June 2022, she was announced as the 2022-2023 President of the British Science Association. She has worked for companies such as Hewlett-Packard and Deutsche Bank. At the age of 11 she was the youngest girl to pass A-level computing, She was only 20 years old when she obtained her undergraduate master's degree in mathematics and computer science from the University of Oxford. [

Students comments:

Women - Kohler Mira trip

On Monday 10th march, 4 of us took to the headquarters of Kohler Mira, to develop our understanding of what it means to be a woman in STEM. Throughout the day, we learnt all about how to rewrite the rules, and we unpicked the common stereotypes women face daily in their current work. As a group we learnt what negative impact these can have on women and most importantly we learnt how to face these. We heard personal stories, from workers of Kohler Mira, and how they felt so confident working in a place. The highlight of the day for me, was the food, I mean the empowering talk we had from Dr Anne-Marie Imafidon, at the end of the day, which was broadcast around the world to other Kohler Mira HQs. She started her talk, with the idea that women do not receive enough recognition for what they do. She used the examples of 4 women who had massive impacts, such as Katherine Johnson whose knowledge of orbital mechanics helped NASA to make its first crewed spaceflight, but unfortunately went hidden from history

like many others, to men who took the spotlight and fame. Overall, this day was so inspiring and empowering into what we can do as women to support women and to make everyone's life that little bit better.

Eimear Dobin Stacey - Year 12

Kohler Mira's Women in Stem Day was empowering and insightful into the inequalities that are faced by many women who work in male-dominated fields. Throughout the day, we worked as a group to "rewrite the rules" and face unhelpful stereotypes surrounding women in different sectors such as sport, media and STEM and address the negative effect this can have on women and young girls when considering job opportunities or subject choices. These stereotypes are often engrained in our minds as they are so common in everyday life, so it was really empowering to unpick why they are so apparent in modern society and how we can change that. Dr Anne-Marie Imafidon was an inspirational speaker, having got her computer science GCSE at 11 years old, and I was really interested as to what she said about this in her keynote and her other points about how women deserve more recognition for the work they do. The event really inspired me to empower other women and not shy away from opportunities that interest me just because I may be underrepresented. It also taught me a lot about what I want to do after sixth form, and that I should always consider the ethic of the companies that are offering jobs and not to leap at the first opportunity that may present itself.

Emma Boswell - Year 12

For further information on STEM careers please see the careers pages on VLE or contact the careers department careers@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk



CONTACTING A MEMBER OF STAFF GARY TOWERS, DEPUTY HEADTEACHER

If you would like to contact a specific member of staff by email, please send your message to the admin@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk email address stating which member of staff it is for, the name of your child and their tutor group.

Your message will then be forwarded to the relevant member staff and will have been logged arriving into school.

NEWSLETTER



The newsletter will now be distributed by email and available to view on our VLE (Firefly) as well as on the school website.

It is incredibly easy and will save the school a lot of paper and the planet a lot of trees!

If you would still prefer a hard copy, please contact Karen Adkins
ksa@balcarras.gloucs.sch.uk

Follow us on X (formerly Twitter) @balcarras and Facebook, Facebook.com/BalcarrasSchool for updates and news about school life and events.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads "Dominic Burke".


Headteacher



COMMUNITY NOTICES

ANNUAL PARISH & COMMUNITY OPEN MEETING

 **Date:** Wednesday 30th of April

 **Venue:** Sixth Form Common Room, Balcarras School, East End Rd, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham GL53 8QF

 **Time:** Doors open at 6.30pm. Event starts at 7pm prompt

Charlton Kings residents are invited to attend this year's **Annual Parish Meeting & Community Open Meeting**—a chance to learn about the Parish Council's work, ask questions, and share ideas.


This year's special focus: *Online Safety*  

Guest speaker **Ellen Roome** will address the realities of screen usage, online risks for children, and practical steps for parents to protect them.

This event is specifically aimed at parents and carers, providing guidance and information to help them protect young people online.

AGENDA:

- **6:30 PM** – Arrive & meet your Parish Councillors
- **7:00 PM** – Parish Council update by Chair Jan Honeywill & opportunity for residents to ask questions.
- **7:30 PM** – *Online Safety* talk by Ellen Roome
- **8:00 PM** – Open Q&A session

 The event is free, but booking is required and seats are limited. Secure your spot now [HERE!](#) *This is an open meeting, and all residents are welcome to attend. Ticketing is only to help us gauge numbers and ensure health & safety.*

For more information, please visit: [Annual Parish Meeting | Charlton Kings Parish Council](#)

Message from Morrisons:

From Monday 7th April for 3 weeks in all Morrisons Cafe's, we will be launching a Kellogg's Breakfast giveaway. Customers will be able to receive a free bowl of cereal & a piece of fresh fruit all day, no age restrictions.

Customers just need to mention "Kelloggs Breakfast" or "Kelloggs Breakfast Club" at the Cafe checkout.

We have set aside 50,000 breakfasts across the country & when they are gone, they are gone.

Coaching at CKTP

with Denisa Davis, LTA Level 3 Coach

Juniors

- * Fun & friendly courses
- * Weekly course for ages 6-16, starting in May
- * TOTS tennis for ages 3-5 year olds
- * Weekly Friday club for CKTP members
- * Summer camp
- * £10 discount per course for CKTP members

Adults

- * Rusty racquets & improves weekly course
- * Cardio tennis on Fridays
- * £10 discount per course for CKTP members

Book early to avoid disappointment!

Scan for more details and contact information

Charlton Kings Tennis Place
Located at Balcarras School
East End Rd, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham

Charlton Kings TENNIS PLACE!

Everyone welcome!

£25*

Junior Tennis Membership
(Full 2025 season only)

Includes:

- 3 visitor passes
- £10 off coaching courses
- Unlimited court booking
- Friday junior club

*Offer ends May 31st

SCAN ME

Charlton Kings Tennis Place
Located at Balcarras School
East End Rd, Charlton Kings, Cheltenham



PLACES WHERE KIDS EAT FREE (OR FOR £1) EASTER HOLIDAYS 2025

moneysavingcentral.co.uk/kids-eat-free



<p>BURGER KING From Monday 7th - Sunday 20th April 2025, Kids Eat Free with every adult meal, via the app.</p> <p>BILLS Kids eat free Mondays - Fridays, from Monday 7th - Friday 25th April 2025.</p> <p>FARMHOUSE INNS 2 kids eat FREE with one paying adult, Monday 7th - Friday 25th of April. Sign Up Required</p> <p>TGI FRIDAYS Kids Eat Free When 'Stripes Rewards Members' purchase any adult meal (Via App)</p> <p>ZIZZI Sunday 6th - Sunday 27th April 2025 kids eat free with every adult main. (excludes Saturdays)</p> <p>CAFE EIGHTY NINE @ THE RANGE Kids eat free Sat 5th April - Mon 21st April 2025</p> <p>YO! SUSHI Kids eat free all day (monday - friday) during all school holidays, when dining with an adult</p> <p>SIZZLING PUBS Every Monday to Friday, 3 - 7pm, kids eat for £1.</p> <p>ASDA Kids eat for £1 every, with no adult spend.</p> <p>TRAVELodge & PREMIER INN 2 kids eat for FREE with 1 adult breakfast</p> <p>GORDON RAMSEY RESTAURANTS Kids under 8 eat FREE all day, every day</p> <p>WHITBREAD INNS 2 kids eat for FREE with 1 adult breakfast</p> <p>BEEFEATER & BREWERS FAYRE 2 kids eat for FREE with 1 adult breakfast</p> <p>IKEA Kids get a meal from 95p daily from 11am</p>	<p>PREZZO Kids receive a free, 3 course kids meal, everyday at Prezzo between 31st March - 27th April 2025</p> <p>COCONUT TREE One child (under 10) eats free every day, 12pm - 6pm from Monday 7th - Sunday 27th April 2025</p> <p>PIZZA HUT Kids eat free buffet from Monday 7th - Sunday 27th April, until 3pm daily with a £10 spend</p> <p>PRETO Kids up to age 10 eat free all day, every day with paying adults at Preto in Half Terms</p> <p>SAINSBURYS CAFES Kids eat for £1 with the purchase of an adult hot main. From 11:30am every day.</p> <p>BELLA ITALIA Children eat for £1 with any adult main. The offer is valid 4-6pm Sun to Weds. All Day Thursdays</p> <p>MORRISONS Kids Eat FREE all day, every day with a £5 spend</p> <p>LAS IGUANAS Kids under 12 eat FREE with 'My Las Iguanas' App</p> <p>TABLE TABLE 2 Kids Eat free breakfast daily with 1 paying adult!</p> <p>PAUSA CAFE @ DUNELM Kids eat FREE with every £4 spend after 3pm</p> <p>HUNGRY HORSE Kids eat for £1 on Mondays</p> <p>THE REAL GREEK Kids under 12 eat FREE Sundays with £10 spend</p> <p>SA BRAINS PUBS Kids eat for £1 on Wednesdays</p> <p>FUTURE INNS Under 5s eat for free with any adult meal.</p>
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