Dear Parents/Carers,

Happy new year! Despite the gloom of midwinter and the disruption to our routines caused by the bad weather, we begin 2013 on an extremely positive note, given the great news regarding the 6th Form. We have now received formal confirmation that our bid to open a 6th Form at Commonweal in September 2014 has been approved by the Education Minister. As a result we are in the process of putting together a detailed plan which will address all aspects of the project. We are working closely with advisers from the Educational Funding Agency – the body with overall responsibility for funding the capital build project – and will soon be meeting with architects and contractors to discuss what our new 6th Form centre will look like.

I will update you in more detail once developments become more concrete, and we aim to open a special 6th Form section on our website for this purpose. In addition to the planned new build to accommodate a 6th Form we are working very hard to improve facilities throughout the school. Currently building work is underway to improve Science labs in the main building, whilst later in the year we will be undertaking
Swindon Youth Piano Festival
7 - 9.30 pm Thursday 18th April 2013
The Arts Centre, Devizes Rd, Swindon
In collaboration with
The Commonweal School, A Performing Arts Academy

Featuring internationally acclaimed pianist Paul Turner
All tickets £5.00
available from the Arts Centre Box Office tel: 01793 614837
For further info email josie@commonweal.co.uk

A showcase of talented young pianists from across Swindon

We are now on Facebook keeping you up to date with all the latest school news. Check us out
www.facebook.com/TheCommonwealSchool
a significant expansion to the PI Unit, to enable us to improve provision for an increasing number of students within the unit.

With all these projects there may well be some disruption to movement around the school and we would ask that students and visitors to the school pay particular attention to the works being carried out.

Whilst much of this year will be taken up with the developments outlined above, it is essential that we maintain a real focus on our core business, which remains teaching and learning. Whilst it was regrettable that we had to cancel the forthcoming Review Days, we are very committed to keeping you informed about the progress of students. We hope therefore to arrange a Review Evening before Easter when you will have the opportunity to meet with your child’s Tutor to discuss successes, progress to date and targets to support future success: watch this space for further details.

Lastly I would like formally to welcome David Oliver back into the Music fold. He joins us for the remainder of the academic year following Miss Zylinski’s departure at Christmas and we are extremely confident that he will make a significant and telling contribution to the continued well-being of the school.

Best wishes
Keith Defter

News from the Governing Body
It is excellent news from the Education Funding Agency, about our application for a Sixth Form. From September 2014 Commonweal will be opening a Sixth Form, with new dedicated facilities. This gives us our long-sought opportunity to support and develop our students through a critical stage in their education and prepare them for the next major step towards university. Since the news arrived just in time for Christmas there have been several discussions with the EFA and others and we are already making great progress in shaping our plans. It is, however, still a bit soon to set these out in detail; they will, of course, be the focus of the next meeting of the Governing Body, after which we should be able to say more. Meanwhile, there is a lot of work to be done and I know that everyone involved is excited to be taking this major project forward. Finally, I would like to underline that, while the development of the Sixth Form is a huge commitment, plans for this will not detract from our other responsibilities as governors, to oversee another successful year for all students at the school.

Mari Williams - Chair of Governors
News From The PTA

We hope that you had a happy Christmas and are easing gently into 2013!

Pre Prom Bash - Countdown to the 2013 Leavers Ball
A fun and fabulous evening for Year 11s (and their parents!) to get in to the mood for the Leaver’s Ball in June. There will be a fashion show of prom wear sponsored by Trousseaux and Youngs Hire, modelled by Year 11 students. There will also be a fun quiz all about Year 11 and some fantastic student performances including stand up comedy and some great singers. There will also be a bar (alcoholic drinks for parents only!) and a raffle.

Wednesday 6th February at 7pm, in the Main Hall, £4 a ticket, available from the Finance Office.

Unwanted Christmas presents?
Do you have any unwanted Christmas presents lurking in hallways and cupboards, waiting for a good home? The PTA are always looking for items which can be used as raffle prizes at the various events throughout the year, so these unwanted items would be most welcome. Good quality gifts, books, bottles of booze, novelty items, anything at all! If you would like to donate these items, please bring them into school to be left with Marion James, or let us know on manilb@virginmedia.com if you need anything to be collected.

Diary Dates
Friday 15th March:
Quiz Night, 7:30 pm start, bar available, £18 per team (of 6) or £3 per person. To reserve a place please email corina_o_keefe@hotmail.com

Sunday 12th May:
Commonweal 5 race
More details to follow, but if you’d like to help out with the race, either marshalling or generally, please let us know on manilb@virginmedia.com and we will forward your details to the organisers.

PTA Meeting Dates
All meetings start at 7pm and are held in the Staff Room.
Monday 4th March
Monday 15th April

If you’re like to get involved with the PTA, either by coming along to the meetings, or just helping at the occasional event, then please let us know on manilb@virginmedia.com. New members are always welcome!

Manil Brough, PTA Chair
On Wednesday 6th February the first edition of a new magazine will go on sale. It is called Swindon Heritage and is a local history magazine for Swindon and the surrounding villages. The first edition contains a variety of fascinating stories about Swindon’s past and Frankie Wood in Year 10 is one of the contributors. Frankie, along with 39 other Year 10 students, went on the First World Battlefields trip last October. When he returned he wrote an account of what he had seen and what he thought and felt about it all. Mark Sutton, the Editor-in-chief of Swindon Heritage, was so impressed with Frankie’s article that he asked permission to include it in the first edition of the magazine and Frankie said yes!

On Monday 21st January Frankie and his parents were invited to an event to launch the new magazine which was held at the Arkells Brewery as it is one of the oldest businesses in Swindon. At least I think that is the reason this venue was chosen! There were over 100 guests present as well as representatives from TV, radio and the press. As the only student present, Frankie was made quite a fuss of and enjoyed his 15 minutes of fame. Mark Sutton is very keen to publish articles about Swindon’s history written by Swindon school students so anyone who would like to get involved should come and talk it over with Mr. Kerslake in Room 205.

We are a FAIRTRADE school!

What does this mean? We have to show our commitment to the principles of what fairtrade stands for. We have to show we care about working conditions in countries less wealthy than our
own; we support workers in 3rd world countries getting paid a fair wage for their work, a fair price for what they produce and make.

To receive this status we have to make sure we reach certain standards. For example, we have a fairtrade group – the FAIRTRADE DIRECTORS - who meet on a regular basis to discuss how to do more for fairtrade to raise awareness within the school. We have a fairtrade stall which sells produce that is made in fairtrade countries. We learn about fairtrade, especially in Geography lessons, – what does it mean, what does it do? We use fairtrade goods. We do something ‘special’ during fairtrade fortnight and have related assemblies. In recent years we have been to the Old Town Co-op and campaigned there to increase awareness within the community.

So, now we have met these standards and have been awarded the status once more. Thank you for your support.

The next fairtrade stall will be held in March!

**Mrs Roberts and Mrs Pont**

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**PH Camps introduces...**

**Fantastic February holiday Sports and Activity Camps for 7-15 year olds.**

Exciting, mysterious and adventurous… is exactly what you get from PH camps so come along and experience the fun. From the energetic to the creative your child can expect the perfect atmosphere to experience something new and improve existing skills. From the moment you arrive to the moment you leave, your children will have the opportunity to have a fun-filled, action packed and thrilling week.

This February half term (11th-15th) PH Camps will be running our ever popular with exclusive early bird bookings you can make substantial savings, make sure you book before January 21st… it’s not to be missed.

We have morning activities of Extreme Science, Tag Rugby, Multi Sports or Power Kiting. Then to complete your days pick an afternoon activity with a choice of Football, Alternative Sports, Art Blast or Olympic and Paralympic Sports. The fun doesn’t stop there, our lunch times will be packed full of whole
group games and activities after you finish your lunch.

**How much does it cost?**
Just add your Morning Band + Afternoon Band together to get a price for the week.

**Prices when booking before 21st January.**

Band A - £30- Football, Olympic and Paralympic sports, Tag Rugby, Multi Sports.
Band B - £35- Alternative Sports, Art Blast.
Band C - £40- Extreme Science, Power Kiting.

**Where are the camps taking place?**
Kingdown School - Warminster
John Bentley School – Calne

**How can I book?**
•Log on to our website www.phcamps.co.uk and book online
•Call us on 01225 701830
•Fill out a booking form and post it back to us with payment
•Via our Facebook shop www.facebook.com/phcampsuk

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**Library News**

Thursday 7th March is World Book Day, and to mark it, the library has several activities going on for students during break and lunch time such as decorating book marks. The main activity, however, will be ongoing all day as students go about their normal lessons. Most staff will each be wearing a badge on which there will be a title of a book that in some way relates to their role in the school, their name or personality. Students will be given a list of these books during their tutor time in the morning, and if they wish to participate, their job will be to take just a few seconds to note down which staff member matches the book on the list. It’s just for fun and the idea is to get pupils thinking about books to read in the future – maybe something that they were not aware of or would not have chosen. We hope that everyone will join in and enjoy the day.

**Nestles Tokens** – please keep bringing in your Box Top For Books tokens from Nestle cereal packets in to the library. The deadline for this year is 31st March – thank you.

*Mrs Whatley*
Swindon SCITT

Discover Teaching Seminar

Tuesday 16 April 2013

Interested in becoming a secondary school teacher ...

Then come along to our free Discover Teaching Seminar at St Joseph’s Catholic College, Ocotal Way, Swindon, on Tuesday 16 April at 5.00 pm.

You can get tailored guidance on routes into teaching, meet Swindon SCITT staff, talk with experienced teachers and have all your questions answered.

Swindon SCITT offers secondary teacher training in:

- Computer Science
- Design & Technology
- English
- Maths
- Modern Foreign Languages
- Science with Biology
- Science with Chemistry
- Science with Physics

For more information please visit our website:

www.swindonscitt.org.uk

Register for your place now via email: c.moon@swindonscitt.org.uk

or contact: Swindon SCITT, St Joseph’s Catholic College, Ocotal Way, Swindon. SN3 3LR Telephone: 01793 716970
A visit to Merton College, Oxford for Villiers Park Scholars

On the January trip, after reaching Merton College of Oxford University, we were given a morning speech from the university’s recruitment representative. We were told lots about the history of the university, the differences between Uni’s and details about Uni life and costs. After we were given an introduction into Greek language and grammar, we were shown how the Greeks had designed their alphabet to relate to maths.

At about half 12, we were shown down to a dining hall where we ate lunch: Lasagne with peas and sweet corn followed by chocolate cake. Students from the university were scattered among us scholars and we had the chance to ask questions about subjects and A-levels and general Uni life. Then we finished with a tour of the grounds. The college really displayed the stunning side to Oxford and showed the difference between the busy high streets and the traditional buildings.

Overall, the trip really made me realise that going to one of the top university’s in the country really isn’t out of my reach and has made me want to apply to Oxford or Cambridge.

Evan Costello 11R1

Brilliant Boccia Success!

On Wednesday 16th January two teams of Boccia players from the P.I. Unit entered the County Boccia Championship held in Swindon. After winning many games both teams had to play each other in the final for the gold and silver medal positions. Team B Sean Lucas, John Cousins, Lewis Hazle and Brandon Humphries won the gold in a nail biting finish. Team A silver medalists were Louise Fisher, Ben Morris, Camilo Pires and Kian Conde.
Both teams will now compete in the South West regional Boccia Championships being held in Exeter on January 31st. All students showed excellent sportsmanship and were great ambassadors for Commonweal.

“I enjoyed the challenge,” John Cousins 8ST1.
“I liked meeting old friends,” Louise Fisher 9R2.
“Brilliant sportsmanship,” Brandon Humphries 8SA2.
“Good team work,” Sean Lucas 7W2.
“It was fun,” Camilo Pires 7W2.
“It was epic,” Lewis Hazle 9R2.
“It was really good,” Ben Morris 7SA2.
“I enjoyed it,” Kian Conde7ST1.

KS4 students LOL for Spanish production

Little did we think when asking the Onatti Theatre Company to come in and perform their play ‘En el Campamento’ (At the Campsite) totally in Spanish, that the most memorable moment would feature a teddy bear! However, the accidental decapitation of ‘Señor Bubú’ the teddy has caused untold grief among those who thoroughly enjoyed last month’s production...

KS4 students of Spanish and Drama GCSE, along with a few privileged Year 7 students, all laughed out loud as the 2 native-speaking actors, Jaime from Madrid and Sandra from Valencia, played out a scenario of two young people going camping. As Sandra’s character, Maria, was not used to going without day to day luxuries such as electricity and proper washing facilities, she found it frustrating and confusing, especially after packing three suitcases including no less than 9 pairs of shoes! Her patient other half was very calm to start with, but tempers were soon frayed as they set up camp, culminating in a shouting match in which the aforementioned cuddly toy was luckily the only casualty!

The play was hilarious and surprisingly easily understandable, as the actors consistently repeated, gestured
and indicated props to help the audience understand, whether they were familiar with the Spanish language or not. There was also a good level of audience participation and the students who were singled out handled it admirably and displayed excellent Spanish and acting skills themselves!

The Spanish GCSE students all claimed to have been able to follow the play in its entirety and to have independently gleaned new vocabulary and the Drama students were equally entertained. They were watching carefully for the ability to act without relying on their audience understanding solely verbal language, as they are currently studying Paralinguistics.

Abi Whitehouse, Year 10, an initially shocked, but very brave participant, who was randomly plucked from the audience to convey messages aloud in Spanish between the actors, who were pretending not to be on speaking terms, said: “The Spanish play was really entertaining, good to watch and made me laugh. It was quite embarrassing standing up and participating, but I improved my confidence about speaking in Spanish a lot! Poor Señor Bubú though!”

Sally-Ann Ilse was also impressed… “It was really funny…but I miss Señor Bubú! It wasn’t hard to follow at all; I understood almost all of it and learnt new things as well. It was really educational to have proper Spanish speakers!” Message received in the MFL Faculty! We look forward to welcoming the company back next year and will certainly be looking out for further foreign language entertainment opportunities for Commonweal students.

Young Enterprise Newsletter

Two Year 10 Young Enterprise groups; The Saints Company and Spectrum events attended the Wiltshire Trade Fair at Nationwide on Wednesday 12th December along with twelve other teams from colleges and
schools across Wiltshire. They enjoyed a successful days trading. The Saints were judged runners up for their trade stand and for showing a clear vision of their company by working towards establishing a brand. They won £50 to invest in their business.

The students formed their businesses in September by buying their own shares to raise the initial capital, allocated roles including managing director, financial director and marketing and sales. They then decided on their product or service. The Saints had already established their T-shirts brand and Spectrum events decided on putting on events; the first of which was the very successful Year 7 disco on Tuesday 11th December with 20% of proceeds being donated to the NSPCC. They also made packets of sweets which they also sold at Hairspray and have been invited to take part in an NSPCC event.

The students are also supported by business advisors and we are very fortunate this year to have Daniel Thuysbeart from John Lewis and Ray Norman previously Head of Lethbridge Primary School. The students visited John Lewis for a sales and marketing talk, tour around the shop and introduction from the manager.

**Future events**

Please come along and support the students at the Outlet Centre in Swindon on Saturday 9th February where they will be selling their products.

The Young Enterprise companies have been invited to attend the Swindon Business Trade show at the Steam Museum on Tuesday 19th March where they will have the opportunity to showcase their company and products, have a discussion with a business mentor.
and visit the 80+ business stalls. Students will take part in the North Wiltshire area finals in May and will be hoping to win a place at the Wiltshire finals.

Ms Julia Rose
Head of Business and Technology

Update on the Back to Black & White Art Project

I’m writing to you to let you know about all the work we’ve been doing to ensure Back to Black and White is remembered by our community!

After our first exhibition at the Swindon Museum and Arts Gallery, we have been touring the exhibition around Swindon and further afield with great success and lovely compliments!

In the Summer holidays we had the exhibition displayed in the Wiltshire and Swindon History Museum in Chippenham and in October it was enjoyed by visitors at Swindon Central Library. We reached thousands of people during that time!

If you would like to see the touring exhibition with family and friends there is still time. We are currently showing the work at the Great Western Hospital Community Art Gallery until the 22nd of March.

The exhibition will be in The Designer Outlet from February the 11th to the 24th ahead of a tour the North and West Swindon Libraries before the summer!

For more information on the exhibitions please visit our Back to Black and White projects page, which we regulary update:

http://createstudios.org.uk/back-to-black-and-white/?origin=film

On this link you will also find the films we made for each group!

We are also posting you a gift as a thank you for taking part in Back to Black and White project!

We have commissioned a publication of the project in which each group features, it’s a lovely book that documents your contribution.

Here is the PDF link to the book:

Best Wishes
Jennifer Blackwood
Create Studios Project Assistant and ex Commonwealian Culture Swindon
It may have been a short term, but we have certainly packed a lot in! It would be remiss of me not to mention our Christmas events which were of a very high calibre.

The Christmas Carol Singing Tour was well received and this year we managed to visit four residential homes for the elderly in Old Town and sing them a selection of well known carols. Tesco once again supported us and gave us all a lovely dinner before we sang in the store’s entrance way. Many thanks to Tesco, Ashbury Lodge, King’s Court, The Cheriton and Princess Lodge for their warm welcome and we hope to visit them before Easter with some cheery songs of Spring!

The Head’s favourite event of the season was the Carols in the Gym which this year attracted 250 people. Word must have travelled along the Facebook vine as we have never had so many folk attend. It was a fantastic night with lots of beautiful performances and a splash or two of audience participation!

The last of the Christmas events was the Community Carol Singing by parents, friends, neighbours of Commonweal, King William and Lethbridge Schools. This community event helped raise over £400 for CLIC Sargent and Ruby’s Fat Cow Fund.

We had a small number of Yr 6 audition for a Performing Arts Scholarship and once again there were some really talented children who we hope to see September.
**New from Music**

The new year has welcomed lots of new initiatives and ideas in the Music Department. Firstly we officially welcome back Mr Oliver to the teaching staff and wish him all the best for his career at Commonweal. Mr Oliver spent 2 terms with us at the beginning of 2011 when I was on maternity leave. We then saw (and heard) him join us for the Christmas events at the end of last term.

Mr Oliver has brought with him lots of ideas to help reinvigorate music at Commonweal including the all new ‘House Band’ that has formed to provide backing for the new vocal groups that we are running.

There is also a re-launch of the Jazz Band that formed back in 2011 and we hope they go from strength to strength.

Junior choir has undergone a transformation along the same lines that Senior Choir became Glee Club and is now known as Fame Academy! Numbers are growing week on week and we welcome any Year 7 & 8 students who enjoy singing to come along and try it out. These clubs will be performing at many events in the coming months.

All our clubs are now preparing material for the annual Spring Concert that is due to take place on March 20th. Please see the poster on the back page.

**Clubs reminder:**

- **Monday after school** – Jazz band
- **Tuesday lunchtime** – Fame Academy (Yrs 7 & 8)
- **Wednesday lunchtime** – Chamber Choir
- **Wednesday after school** – Concert Band
- **Thursday lunchtime** – Glee Club (Yrs 8 - 11)
- **Friday after school** – House band

Ali Sutcliffe  
Head of Music

**News From Dance**

**Primary Outreach:**

We have a new group of students who are offering Dance Clubs to our local feeder schools. Saskia Kevrn, Anya Bryan, Charlie Asprey and Simone Lyons are all currently offering after school clubs at Lethbridge and King William schools. They have worked hard to create appropriate
dances for the children and preparing them for future performances potentially at the Wyvern Theatre. To help them prepare for this opportunity Simone and Charlie are attended a Dance Leaders course for young leaders to help them develop the skills and confidence essential for this experience. We are hoping they will use their knowledge to teach successful lessons and be able to pass on their skills to others for the future.

Due to the success of their first club Jess Murphy, Shauna Warren Grace and Anna Davis have been asked to continue their Yr 5 and 6 Dance Club at Lethbridge school. Along with the other girls this will continue to provide them enough experience to hopefully gain Arts Award Silver very soon. Good Luck Girls!!

**Boys Dance Workshop with Banxy**

Banxy came into school on Thursday 31st Jan to teach a mixture of our boys from Year 7 – 10 and Year 6 gifted and talented boys from our feeder schools Lethbridge and King William, with the aim to create the beginnings of a dance for a performance. Banxy will then offer after school sessions on a Wednesday at Commonweal school to continue the work started. We are looking forward to seeing the final product.

“I really liked taking part as it was fun to show my personal sequence to the group,” Felix Bowyer Yr 6

**Uplands Dance Project**

Last year seven Year 9 girls worked with seven physically impaired children from Uplands School to create a dance for their annual talent show. The collaboration was such a success and the girls got so much from the project that we have decided to collaborate again. Thirteen of our Year 9’s are planning to spend three afternoons with the children to create a dance piece for their school musical. The girls are currently working to choreograph the dance in preparation for the rehearsals starting in February. Watch this space for photographs and documents of their experience.

**Miss Bowden, Head of Dance**
Yr 7 Gambia Day

All of Yr 7 were off timetable to take part in the school’s Gambia Day. The students took part in a range of workshops including Drama, Dance, Art, Drumming and some saw a Cookery Demo which was delivered by the school’s chef Diane Kelly. Miss Birkbeck delivered an atmospheric drama workshop where the students developed and performed animal characters from Africa.

External Dance, Art and Drumming professionals, some from Africa, made the day feel authentic and special. The purpose of the day was to give students an understanding of the culture of this small African country. Every two years there is a school trip to the Gambia which involves the students raising money for two schools over there.

The students also have to deliver workshops to primary school age African children, so the Yr 7 Gambia Day will put them in good stead!

“I had a lovely day. I liked the drumming best, because of the high and low sounds,” said Xandier Gibbons.

Forever Young

This term Yr 10 saw a performance by a young band called, ‘Forever Young,’ who came into school and performed in the hall during a PSHE lesson. The band are linked to the charity Cybersmile which provides information and help on Cyber Bullying issues.

All is on target for the school’s collaboration with the Swindon Festival of Literature’s Youth Poetry Slam. I have managed to get 9 schools onboard this year.

Dates for Old Town Festival have just been released following the recent committee meeting I attended. This year’s dates are: 8th June - 15th June. I will be booking acts very soon. Please keep an eye on the website www.oldtownfestival.co.uk
Join us for a Zumba marathon on

Saturday, 16 March 2013
2pm – 5pm
The Commonweal School (gym)
The Mall, Swindon

Registration is £5 and we ask all participants to get sponsored for taking part.

To register or for more information please contact Claudia Albornoz on 07933 793851 or email latin5.claudia@hotmail.co.uk

ZUMBA WITH CLAUDIA
Move It
Dance Trip
@ Olympia London
£29.50

Friday 8th March
8am - 5.15pm
Pick up a letter from Miss Bowden or Josie in the Performing Arts Office
Spring Concert @ Christ Church
Cricklade St, Old Town

Wednesday
March 20th

Starts 7 pm

In collaboration with
The Commonweal School,
Lethbridge Primary School
& The Big Sing Thing

Tickets £3.00
Yr 6 siblings free entry

To purchase tickets please tel:
Commonweal School on 01793 612727