

## A celebration of culture and language

On Tuesday 26 September 2023, we hosted our annual European Day of Languages Fair which included the languages and cultures of those within Europe and those across the world. It was a wonderful event, in which our students from other countries (and some of their friends) showcased their fabulous cultures, with an array of different foods (e.g. pastel de nata from Portugal, cinnamon buns from Sweden, fish balls from Hong Kong, biscuits from Czechia, Thai empanadas from Thailand and many, many more!). Different languages were also tried, and visitors earned flag stickers for their efforts. For Spain, there was even a survey as to whether people preferred their Spanish omelettes with or without onion, which is a very contentious issue in Spain itself! We also had a quiz from Bulgaria, mint tea from Morocco, Chinese name writing, and brilliant traditional outfits worn by Sara from Portugal and Alexia from Romania. Mr Bowman wore his lederhosen to complete the picture!

There was a real buzz in the school hall, and we were so impressed with all of the efforts from students (and parents too, thank you!) on the day. Miss Defay also put together a quiz for form time, in which forms had to guess which of the 10 languages were spoken to add to the celebrations.

Thank you to our brilliant students, our events and site teams and particularly Miss Defay for putting it all together! À la prochaine!

*Miss Roderick, Head of Modern Languages.*



Inside this month's edition:

PSFA pages 6-7, PE News page 10.

Would you like to advertise in Birchwood News?

A one off advert (5cm x 5cm) £25.00, or to advertise for a whole year (8 editions) £100.00 please contact newsletter@birchwoodhigh.org.uk for further information.

# HEADLINES

Dear All

It is a pleasure to be writing my first formal piece for you as Principal of Birchwood High School. When I spoke to staff at the beginning of term I told them that taking over from Dr Ingate was a daunting prospect. I would like to thank Dr Ingate for all of his generosity and care in ensuring that there was a smooth handover and wish him every happiness in his retirement.



My first half term at Birchwood has been an exceptionally busy one as I get to know the school, its community and how it operates. There is a huge amount to be proud of here at Birchwood and this edition of Birchwood News highlights a lot of this. The vibrant wider life of the school is here for all to see. You will read about sporting success, exciting trips, charity events and stunning curriculum activities like the European Day of Languages Fair (which was a real highlight for me). All of these contribute to Birchwood being a school that is so much more than just somewhere you come to do lessons. It is a school where you can thrive and where you can develop interests and skills that will serve you for life.

I would draw your attention to the number of students who have successfully completed the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award. It is very rare for any school to be in a position to offer the gold award let alone have so many students complete it. My congratulations go to all of those who took part and thanks to Mr Loveday and Miss LaLonge for leading this.

I would like to commend the new Year 7 for the way they have started their time at Birchwood. They have been a focused year group so far and are taking their new school life seriously. I look forward to seeing how they flourish over the coming seven years.

A school community also has clear roles for parents to get involved in what we do. You will see in this newsletter information about the PSFA and how you can support their activities. We are also looking for some parents to join the Parent Council. If that is something that interests you then please email me at the school.

A real highlight was our recent Open Evening where we were able to showcase to the community the kind of school we are and show families with children in Year 6 why Birchwood is an excellent place to be part of. The school had an amazing buzz about it that evening and I would like to thank the students and staff who put so much into the presentations, tours and activities. We welcomed in excess of a 1400 families during that evening with many more joining us after that for an Open Morning visit. Even after just a few weeks in post it was an evening that made me very proud to be part of the Birchwood community.

It seems hard to believe that we are already at half term, although the change in the weather this week has given us a sense of the seasons changing (do you remember the heatwave at the start of term?). I hope that whatever you are doing over half term that you are able to have a little time to relax and recharge ready for the charge toward Christmas.

Sam Griffin  
Principal



Year 7 dissection of a flower.  
Xander Eden, winner.  
Well Done.

Mr Loveday, Science

## Finance Information

I am Mrs Young, the parental and student contact in relation to all income for the school. We use an online payment system, ParentPay, for administration of the school income. If you require ParentPay login details or have any queries please do not hesitate to contact me via email: [jyoung@birchwoodhigh.org.uk](mailto:jyoung@birchwoodhigh.org.uk)



**The Red Box**  
Any female student who requires Period Products at short notice, can go to Reception and ask for the Red Box.  
Mrs Cook, Receptionist



## MFL students visit Sadlers Wells to see Flamenco



On the evening of the 6 July, three students from our Year 12 Spanish class attended the wonderful 'Alma by Ballet Flamenco Sara Baras' Flamenco show at the Sadler's Wells Theatre in London. We met Miss Roderick, Miss Defay and Mrs van Baalen at 16:00 at the train station ready to head into London by train and underground. On arrival we all headed to a traditional Spanish 'tapas' (small savoury dishes) restaurant called "Llerena", where we enjoyed the most delicious meals ranging from pan con tomate (bread with tomato), anchovies, toasted peppers, patatas bravas, chorizo, and so much more. After a very filling dinner, we made our way to the theatre in time for the 19:30 start.

The show was spectacular, beautiful, glamorous and packed with brilliant choreography and highly skilled dancers who filled us with emotions without uttering a word. Accompanied by the incredible singers and band, Sara Baras and her dancers managed to create a stunning atmosphere full of emotion that took your breath away each time they stepped on the stage. It was superb cultural immersion which has massively improved our understanding of Flamenco and its origins in the Spanish culture. What a show!



## Term Dates 2023 - 2024

### 2023

#### Autumn Term 2023

Friday 1 September –  
Wednesday 20 December  
Half Term  
W/B Monday 23 October –  
Friday 27 October

#### Spring Term 2024

Thursday 4 January – Thursday 28 March  
Half Term  
W/B Monday 19 February –  
Friday 23 February  
Thursday 4 January and Friday 5  
January CPD

#### Summer Term 2024

Monday 15 April – Friday 19 July  
Half Term  
W/B Monday 27 May – Friday 31 May

#### CPD Days

(no students in school  
unless requested)

Thursday 4 January  
Friday 5 January  
Monday 22 July  
Tuesday 23 July (occasional day)

### 2024

#### Autumn Term 2024

Monday 2 September 2024 – Friday 20 December 2024  
Half Term  
W/B Monday 28 October

#### Please note

Monday 2 September 2024  
CPD 1 no students  
Tuesday 3 September 2024  
Years 7/12 only  
Wednesday 4 September 2024  
Whole School

Please note that the school is closed to students on all CPD days, unless a member of staff has asked students to attend.

#### Other Important Dates...

Year 9 Parents Evening,  
Tuesday 7 November

Sixth Open Evening - 5.30pm to 8.00pm  
Thursday 16 November 2023

Year 13 Parents Evening,  
Tuesday 21 November,

Year 11 Mock Examinations -  
20 November to 1 December.



# Geography Students visit the River Rib

On Friday 29 September, 8Y (X side went on Thursday) went on a geography trip to the River Rib. We took the coach to Standon and then walked to where we were going to carry out our investigations. The investigations we carried out included: a valley profile, a sketch of the area, a biodiversity investigation and a water speed and velocity investigation. For water speed and velocity investigation we went in the water to measure the depth all the way along the width of the river. We took note of all our findings. The velocity test was carried out by putting a tennis ball in the water and timing how long it took to travel 12m. To complete the sketch of the area we went to the top of the valley and drew the main parts of the river and its surroundings, for example the meander. We also looked at the different plant species living around the river. We found that grass was the dominant species. For the valley profile, we put two poles 5m apart and looked through a clinometer to see what angle was between the two poles. This formed the valley profile. I thoroughly enjoyed the trip to the River Rib, it was so much better than normal school.

Daniel Anderson, BBC reporter

**BIRCHWOOD  
BROADCASTING  
CORRESPONDENTS**



# Design the Birchwood High school Christmas Card competition 2023

## What to do now...

Produce a fantastic design! Check out the specifics.

Bring your card design to Miss Morrison in C23.

Submit by Monday 6 November at the latest.

Judging will take place during the following week with Mr Griffin making the final judging decisions. **Good luck and enjoy!**

### Do

- Your card must be an original design.
- Your card can be of any festive scene.
- Your design **MUST** include the Birchwood logo.
- Your design can be made using any media (see the don't list) and any size or format as your card will be scanned and reproduced.

### Don't

- Make your card **too light**
- **Include glitter**
- **3D elements**
- Include any writing or seasonal greeting as this will be added electronically.



### Prizes:

1<sup>st</sup> prize £25 Amazon voucher + 30 house points

2<sup>nd</sup> prize £10 Amazon voucher + 20 house points

3<sup>rd</sup> prize £5 Amazon voucher + 15 house points

All entries will be awarded an Achievement point.

## ALUMNI NEWS

Where can an apprenticeship lead you?

Our Alumni student Callum Jolly shares his pathway from School...

Callum took a big leap into tech at Tesco four and a half years ago, and he's never looked back. And with a project like Whoosh, there's even more innovation ahead. Take it away, Callum.

"I joined Tesco on a commercial apprenticeship straight out of school and started as a Buyer's Assistant, selecting the products we stock in store. I ended up mostly working on buying in dolls for children, which seems funny now and so removed from my role in tech.

I've moved roles a few times since then, but it was working in the Online team that got me interested in technology. I was working on developments for the Tesco website, looking at how our products were advertised online. My role was to write the business cases for any changes, and then the Product team on the tech side would take over. They'd speak with Design, Analytics, Optimisation, and Research, to make sure that the work proposed was right for our customers. Then they'd implement the changes, build it, get results, run tests.

I'd watch all this happening from afar and feel like I was missing out on some really interesting, exciting stuff. So I started to take steps towards moving into the Product team. It's now been four and a half years since I moved over, and I'm still absolutely loving it.





#### **Why not follow us on .....Facebook**

We have a Facebook page where you can keep up to date with events and meetings. Please follow us at Birchwood Parents Staff and Friends Association (PSFA) Birchwood PSFA (birchwoodpsfa@gmail.com)

#### **DON'T FORGET you can help us raise funds via TheGivingMachine**

If you are a regular online shopper you can generate free donations to our school at no extra cost to you every time you shop via TheGivingMachine.

Please have a look online [www.thegivingmachine.co.uk](http://www.thegivingmachine.co.uk) and search for Birchwood High School.

#### **Birchwood Bonus Ball**



**Congratulations to Ellen Hamer who was the winner of the September draw! Ball 97 was drawn by Louisa Atherton and Ellen won a massive £186.00!**

The Bonus Ball is a great way to support the school, and at the same time be in with a chance of winning some cash every month! It is £3 per month per ball, payable either in one lump sum or monthly as a standing order. A draw takes place at the end of each month and the winner receives half of the money collected, the other half going towards PSFA funds, for our children.

#### **Our bank details are:**

**Barclays Bank**

**Account Name: Birchwood PSFA**

**Account Number: 23298728**

**Sort Code: 20-25-19**

**Email [treasurerbwpsfa@gmail.com](mailto:treasurerbwpsfa@gmail.com) to let us know you've paid and how many balls you would like.**

**\*Another 10 balls sold would see a monthly jackpot of £200 – if you haven't purchased a ball yet, then now is the time\***



#### **PSFA Facebook Page**

Please follow us on our Facebook Page 'Birchwood Parents Staff and Friends Association PSFA' and stay up to date with upcoming events and meetings.

#### **PSFA Preloved Uniform**

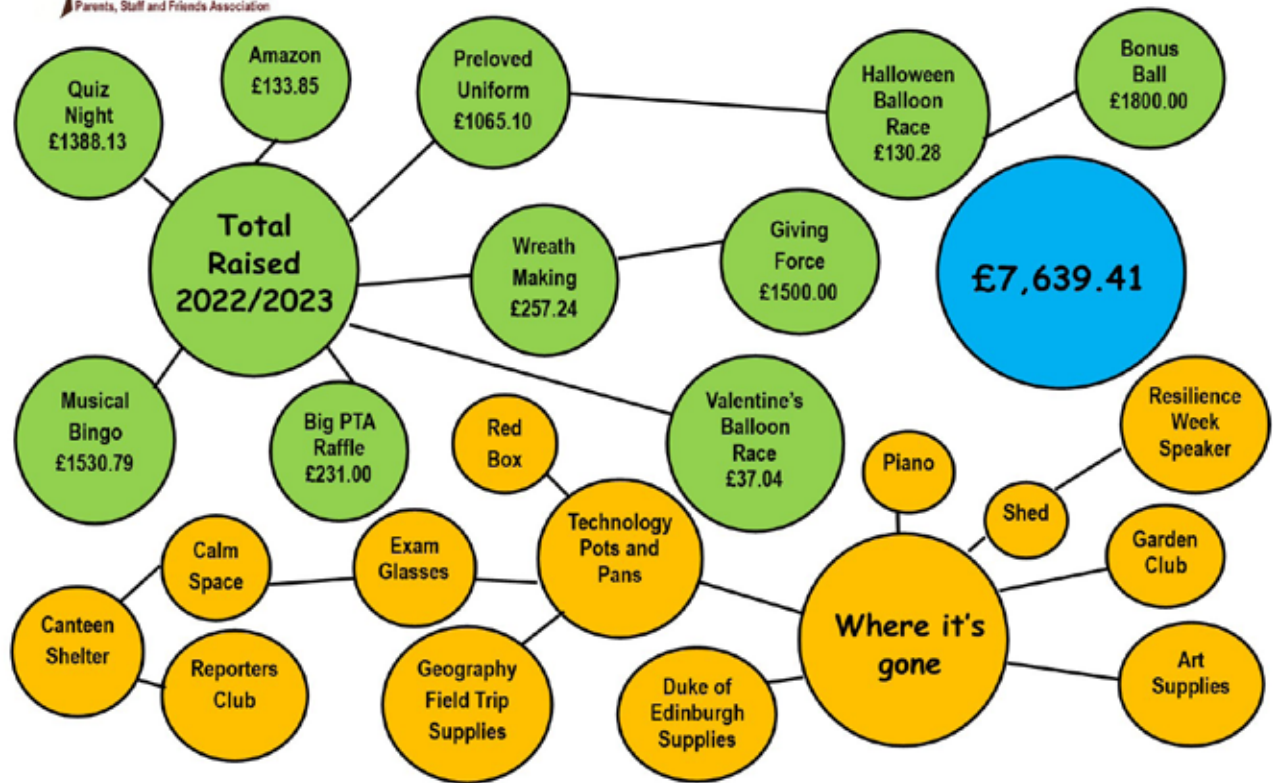
If you are replacing items of branded school uniform and the old items are still in good condition, please consider donating good condition items of preloved uniform to the PSFA. Please drop off clean items of uniform to our reception. If you would like to make a purchase of preloved uniform, please email [psfapreloved@gmail.com](mailto:psfapreloved@gmail.com). Please note this email address will be checked once a week and uniform requests available for collection from student reception, upon receipt of payment.

#### **Other ways to support the PSFA**

You can generate free donations to our school at no extra cost to you every time you online shop via TheGivingMachine. Please have a look online [www.thegivingmachine.co.uk](http://www.thegivingmachine.co.uk) and search for Birchwood High School.

We have registered with Stikins Name Labels. The school can earn up to 30% commission on all sales. Please visit [www.stikins.co.uk](http://www.stikins.co.uk) and quote our fundraising number 1955.

# Total Raised 2022 - 2023



\*Bonus Ball  
£1,800 (£300 from  
previous financial year).

Birchwood High School  
**PSFA**  
Parents, Staff and Friends Association

Birchwood Parents Staff and Friends Association  
invites you to take part in our

## Virtual Halloween Balloon Race

Each balloon costs £4. The three balloons which  
have travelled the furthest will win;

**1st Prize £60**  
**2nd Prize £25**  
**3rd Prize £15**

**Race starts: midday on Friday 27th October 2023**  
**Race ends: 8pm on Tuesday 31st October 2023**

To purchase your Halloween balloon, please visit  
[www.balloonrace.net/biot](http://www.balloonrace.net/biot)





## Going for Gold in the Brecon Beacons!

In September 2023, 16 Year 13's took part in their Gold Duke of Edinburgh practice and assessment expeditions for a whole week in Wales. This was a serious undertaking of a minimum of 8 hours of planned activity each day including map reading, route planning, teamwork, camping and cooking as well as, walking 15-20 km's, day after day. The Birchwood students and their kit were really put under severe pressure during the week with considerable wet weather conditions (it was only sunny on one full day).

The students started in Hay on Wye walking over Hay Bluff and Lord Hereford's Knob over the course of the next few days which are two huge hikes. They eventually worked their way across landscapes with some beautiful views to the outskirts of Abergavenny which was their final destination. Enroute they stayed at various campsites including the beautiful, but remote LLanthyony Prior campsite. They had to carry everything with them for their assessments which included all their food, clothing, cooking and orienteering supplies.

We were overjoyed with their hard work, resilience and can do attitude throughout the whole week. Well done on an amazing week!

*Mr Loveday and Miss LaLonge*





# PE news....



Mr Jones and Mr Hill took a small group of Year 7, 8 and 9 students to the Bruce Longden Challenge on Wednesday 12 July 2024. All students represented the school wonderfully and managed a new environment very well. Special mentions for the following athletes who won their respective events: Jacob B - High Jump, Harry P - 1500m, Finley C - 4x300m, Reuben O - 4x300m, Joel P - Long jump, Zico M - Shot put, Ralph S - Javelin, Ethan P - 4x300m and Jacob S - 200m and 4x300m.

Well done on a fantastic competition everyone! Mr Jones, Head of PE



## Game Changer 20 September 2023 Essex County Cricket Club



Madeleine Gilbank, Principal Student of Birchwood High School, took a break from her academic studies to visit Essex County Cricket Club to receive an award for her fantastic work with Wendens Ambo Cricket Club.

Madeleine has been involved in coaching at the cricket club for the last six years, taking on the coaching responsibilities for Year 1, support for Year 4, Girls and Ladies. The cricket club is a thriving club that now has over 300 young people involved regularly on weekends from April to September.

Madeleine started her coaching journey at age 11 and then followed this up at 14 with the Young Leaders in Cricket Award, in which she won a National Award for her volunteering hours and fundraising efforts. Now aged 17 Madeleine has assumed full responsibility for coaching various Year Groups including supporting the newly formed Girls and Ladies section of the club.

The Award that was given by Essex Cricket was for the efforts that Madeleine has put in to engage, motivate and develop cricket with all those she interacts with. In receiving this Award Madeleine said, "I am delighted to have been nominated by the club and be recognised for my work. I love what I do, and it is a pleasure to be part of such a supportive and wonderful club".

Madeleine now goes on to receive a County nomination for the National ECB Game Changer award.

## Student News...



Congratulations to Oliver Klumpler and Finlay Sandall who won Gold with the Bishop's Stortford Canoe Club at the National Hasler Marathon Finals on the River Severn in Worcester.



Congratulations to Jayden Bahra for winning two golds in the British Karate Championships and one Silver and one Bronze at the BASK International.



## Birchwood Fitness Suite Gym Membership

Fifteen station fitness suite with Technogym cardio and strength equipment, free weights and power rack.

Changing rooms and free car parking available to members.

No contract or one-off joining fee.

Pricing:

Weekly membership £3.60 inc. VAT

Rolling weekly membership available.

Opening Hours:

Monday to Friday 18:00 – 21:30

Saturday 08:00 – 17:00

Sunday 09:00 – 13:00

For joining details visit [birchwoodfs.schoolhire.co.uk](http://birchwoodfs.schoolhire.co.uk)





### SHREK

Rehearsals are underway for this year's whole school musical. Please keep an eye out for tickets going on sale in the coming months. We are certain that seats will be filled and joy will unfold with each performance. Show week is Tuesday 5 - Friday 8 December! Watch this space!

### OCEAN

Birchwood Sixth form equality group meet fortnightly on Tuesdays, Week B to discuss gender-based issues within our school community and how best to tackle them. We are recruiting River Reps from younger years so please let your children know that we want their voices to be part of our mission to educate and dispel gender bias at Birchwood. Watch out for the next invite to one of our meetings.



### Feel Good Fridays

OCEAN group members hosted our second Feel Good Friday event on Friday 29 September where many staff and sixth formers hosted an informal drop in session in the drama studio at lunch time and all male students were invited to come along if they wanted to. Board games and some chilled music enabled students to sit together and talk in a safe space. The hope is that this becomes somewhere, where boys can come if they need to offload or have some space from every day issues. These sessions will take place the last Friday of every month. Please encourage your children to attend if you feel they need this space.

## Drama Students completely overwhelmed by the theatrical brilliance of the experience of "The Burnt City".



On Thursday 14 September we took our A level drama students to see Punch drunk's production of The Burnt City. What an experience it was! Between the neon-drenched backstreet's of downtown Troy and the menacing shadow of Greece, a sprawling labyrinth hides secret doorways, rooms, nooks and worlds of such detail - smells, sounds and encounters with actors at every corner. After donning a white mask, students are encouraged to leave their loved ones behind as they choose their own fate and enter a colossal playground of 100+ rooms across two mythic cities. As night fell the Gods, mortals, dreamers and lovers came alive and students were immersed in their worlds. Some quotes from students: 'Miss, that was immense.' 'That was the best thing I've ever experienced.' 'Can we go again?' As predicted, students did us proud in their conduct and were completely overwhelmed by the theatrical brilliance of the experience.

*Mrs Hassani, Head of Drama*



# Alvin Ailey American Dance

On Thursday 14 September the Year 12 and 13 Performing Arts students watched Alvin Ailey's 21st creations at the Sadlers Wells theatre, London. Alvin Ailey American Dance Theatre brings its unique mix of contemporary and classic movement to the London stage. The Company dazzled with technical brilliance and palpable energy truly inspiring Birchwood students. The company performed four pieces, one of our favourites being the final piece a 21st century creation to some of the student's favourite R&B and hip-hop tracks.

*Miss Parker, Dance*



A poem written by a Year 11 student...

## The Pathologist's Victim

Your life is lost in the hands of  
dementia,  
Memories wrenched from the back of  
your mind,  
Slowly losing your senses and  
memories of us,  
One of the worst diseases of any kind.

You're a prisoner in your own head,  
Isolated from your joy,  
Dementia treating it like a game,  
And playing you like a toy.

The skin on your bones is weathered,  
My heart is now made of glass,  
It shatters every time you're here,  
And don't even glance.

You stare into the distance,  
I can't help but wonder,  
What you'll think of  
Before you're six feet under.

You still lay in the depths of my heart,  
And forever there shall live your soul.  
All of this is part of life,  
Now the end of yours will take its toll.

I feel you drifting and slipping,  
You feel too far away,  
And I know you're not truly gone,  
But I miss you every day.

Thank you for sharing.

*Mr Ockendon, English*



## Mr Morton's Raffle Win for Dementia Research.

Over the summer Mr Morton, whose mother suffers from a rare variant of Dementia was delighted to find out a raffle he had helped to promote and organise had been a huge success. Alzheimer's Research UK's Rachel Bates said "Mr Morton has shared his story to support the Alzheimer's Research UK Spring Raffle and has helped to raise an incredible £76,983 for dementia research!"

Mr Morton's family have been actively engaged in Dementia Research for over a decade. His mother has worked with Researchers from Cambridge University and the University of London and has had multiple brain scans, also taking part in longitudinal testing whilst Mr Morton has worked with several researchers looking at the impact of dementia on carers and on patients in the later stages of the disease.

For more information about how you can help with dementia research, either look at Alzheimer's Research UK's website or search for Join Dementia Research online.

<https://www.alzheimersresearchuk.org/>



# House



House Captains  
are listed below:

**Hadham**  
Ilinca Dionisie  
Bonnie Wright  
Liv Donaldson  
Layla Ellis

**Dane**  
Darcy Loveday  
Amelia Nicholson  
Harriet Nineberg  
Alfie Wood  
Sydney Godden  
Tabitha Hermit  
Aaron Shaw

**Stort**  
Jack Pillinger  
Amber Mayer  
Matthew Winder  
Katrina Zune  
Cameron Scott  
Charles Spencer  
Abigail Sear

**Waytemore**  
Paige Squires  
Ruby Waller  
Leighton Bishop  
Alex Curtis  
Imogen Thorpe  
Rosie Pressland

*Head House Captains -  
Daisy Dunn and Scarlet Dillon*

*Deputy Head House Captains -  
Ivy Felstead and Lydia Griffin*

*Assistant Principal Student -  
Jessica Hobday*



**Our fundraising for 2022 to 2023**  
At the end of the Summer term we handed cheques over to The Bishop's Stortford Food Bank and Sparkle Malawi nearly reaching a combined total of £8,000. Both of the charities were so grateful and wanted me to pass on their thanks.

*Mrs Collyer, Head of House*

**DANE wins the  
House Cup for  
2022/2023**



*Everyone in the school voted for a charity of their choice.  
This year's winning vote was the Essex and Herts Air Ambulance.*



**SPELLING BEE  
WINNERS**

Thank you to all the Year 7's who attended the spelling bee at lunch time in September. The results are:

**1st place** Arti Ghami  
**2nd Place** Bonnie Brown  
**3rd Place** Eve Jackson



The Birchwood High School House team rallied students to make the New Apton Centres dream of giving Joan 105 cards on her 105th birthday on Monday 9 October.

During Joan's long life she has dedicated a lot of her time to charity work, so the House team, who raise money for charities during the year at Birchwood, thought it was only appropriate she received recognition for her hard work.

Mrs Barnard delivered the cards on behalf of the House team.



**Essex & Herts  
Air Ambulance**  
Your local life-saving charity







# Join our team



## Futsal for Boys & Girls U12-U17

Futsal is an exciting, fast paced 5-a-side indoor football-based game that originates from South America.

The nature of the game places large emphasis on technical skill and ability in situations of high pressure and is subsequently an excellent breeding ground for football competencies that can be transferred into football.

Some of the benefits are;

1. Improves passing & shooting.
2. More goal scoring opportunities.
3. Players have 600% more procession during a match compared to a normal football match.
4. Quicker decision making due to the smaller pitch and less time on the ball.
5. Smaller, heavier ball supports closer ball control and manipulation supports the technical development.
6. Training or matches are never impacted by the weather.

Bishop's Stortford Futsal are looking to add to their already established training sessions for the following boys & girls age groups;

U12-U14 – Monday 5.50pm-6.50pm

U15-U17 – Monday 6.50pm-7.50pm

U12-U14 – Wednesday 6pm-7pm

The sessions take place at Birchwood Sports Hall and are priced at £7, with a free taster session.

We play regular competitive matches and tournaments throughout the season.

For any boys or girls that are interested in any of the sessions please contact;

Matt: 07899905117

Email: [futsalforfun@outlook.com](mailto:futsalforfun@outlook.com)

Twitter: @FutsalFor

Facebook: @futsalforfun7

Coaches are Futsal & Football FA qualified.

