Chairman’s Welcome...

Welcome to the Seckford Foundation’s report of activities for 2017/18, a period in which we achieved a great deal and set in motion plans and steps which have begun to be implemented in the last few months.

After taking a leading role at the end of 2016 in the FLOURISH initiative, Suffolk’s campaign to identify and address rural deprivation in the county, we took on responsibility for Aspiration, Skills and Jobs, one of the six work streams identified as needing to be tackled following the conference which launched FLOURISH. This reflects one of the core missions of the Foundation - to provide support and help for young people in the county, both in education and in enabling them to access worthwhile and rewarding employment - and also coincided with our publication in June of a report we had commissioned the University of Suffolk to undertake into the effects of rural deprivation on young people in the county.

As part of that responsibility we were able to secure funding from the Salvation Army and the Prince’s Countryside Fund to assist in the employment by the Foundation of an Apprenticeships and Mentoring Manager. Jenny Stockman assumed her position in January and will be focussing not only on developing and expanding the Foundation’s own mentoring and apprenticeship schemes (see page 15 for details) but also on supporting small employers in the county who would be willing to take on an apprentice but have no administrative capacity to do so. We hope and expect that
Jenny’s work will make a real difference over time in identifying and creating career opportunities for young people, working alongside other agencies in the county.

In the meantime our Springboard initiative continues to provide grants to facilitate access to education and employment for young people. Some of the recipients in 2017 are discussed at pages 7 and 15.

In November the governors met to discuss a number of strategic issues in light of the current and developing needs of the local community. Amongst the conclusions we reached were that we should provide leadership in working to make Woodbridge a “dementia friendly” community. The initiative, on which we are working in partnership with the East of England Co-op, the Alzheimer’s Society, the Riverside Theatre and other local businesses, was launched in April with a presentation in the Seckford Theatre led by Cathy O’Brien, our Deputy Head of Care who is a trained Dementia Friends Champion. We hope that some positive steps will have been taken by the end of the year.

Collaboration with other organisations has been an increasing trend for us over the past 18 months. It really makes no sense for organisations in the voluntary and public sectors that have similar aims to use resources in competition with one another. A recent example of this was our stand at the Suffolk Show. Situated in the young people’s area (“Sports Plus”) we sought to provide information on our various initiatives for young people alongside Suffolk County Council, ICanBeA and Suffolk Apprenticeships. The stand generated a great deal of positive publicity including a large piece on BBC’s Look East.

On the education front, the big news at Woodbridge School apart from the achievements described on page 10 was that shortly before Christmas Neil Tetley, who has led the school since 2014, had accepted the headship of an international school in Madrid. He leaves Woodbridge at the end of July with our thanks for his contribution and our best wishes for the future. We welcome his successor, Dr Richard Robson, formerly the head of St Bedes College, Manchester, who will take on the reins from September.

The Free Schools have had a challenging infancy but last summer’s GCSE results were a just reward for the hard work and patience of all the students, staff, members of local boards and Free Schools Trust trustees. Full details are set out on page 12; the headlines are that each of our schools ranked in the top 10 percent in the county and on certain measures we were amongst the best performing multi-academy trusts in England. Congratulations to all on achieving these results whilst sticking to the principle that our schools should seek to give a broad education to our students and not merely equip them to pass exams.

2018 is proving, as we expected, to be another challenging year. As is well known funding of social care is a major issue with which Seckford Care continues to grapple whilst seeking to continue to provide the quality of care for which it has been nationally recognised (see page 18). Public funding of education will continue to leave providers short of resource, and as much as we try to avoid fee increases at Woodbridge School, costs over which we have no control continue to rise and contribute to making fee paying education increasingly unobtainable to many traditional purchasers; and that puts further pressure on our provision of bursary support.

Perhaps our biggest challenge, though, is that closest to home. Although we are widely known - and, I think, respected - across the county, the range and depth of our activities in Woodbridge and surrounding villages - where the work all began in 1587 - seem far less well understood. So we aim to take steps over the coming months to communicate more effectively with the local community, so that we can be seen as the charity for Woodbridge.

I would like to place on record my gratitude to all those who have served as trustees, co-opted committee members and in other voluntary capacities, and to thank in particular Judi Newman, who stepped down from the board in recent months and also those who have become trustees since the start of 2017. The Foundation could not function without the generous contribution of so many who give of their time freely and often.

Roger Finbow
Chairman

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We promote and support the education and care of the young and the elderly in and around the town of Woodbridge and the county of Suffolk
Seckford Foundation Rural Deprivation Research launched on Suffolk Day June 21 2017
Suffolk Show 2018
In May the Seckford Foundation launched a free mentoring programme to support and empower local young people living in rural communities. The launch took place in the Sports Plus area at the Suffolk Show along with talks and advice for young show visitors, including an inspirational speech by young entrepreneur and mentor Callum McCormick.

The mentoring programme aims to support young people – of any ability or background – living in rural communities, to develop the confidence and independence they need to progress in education, training or employment. The programme is funded by the Salvation Army, The Prince’s Countryside Fund and the Seckford Foundation, and a team of trained local volunteer mentors can be accessed for free through the programme.

The Foundation has run mentoring programmes in the past, but it has re-launched following the FLOURISH Rural Poverty Summit held in October 2016, and the rural poverty research conducted by the University of Suffolk last year. As well as launching the programme, it was a chance to introduce Jenny Stockman, (Rural Apprenticeships and Mentoring Manager) directly to those young people the Seckford Foundation is trying to reach and help.

Making Woodbridge a Dementia Friendly Town
The Seckford Foundation, led by Cathy O’Brien, Dementia Friends Champion and deputy head of care at the Seckford Almshouses, want the whole community to get behind the initiative to make Woodbridge a safe environment for people living with Dementia. Earlier this year, Cathy O’Brien hosted talks in Woodbridge Library and at the Seckford Theatre during ‘Dementia Awareness Week’ to highlight the positive actions that can be made as a community. As a Dementia Friends Champion, Cathy has also trained the Seckford Care staff, along with members of the community to become ‘Dementia Friends’.

We were delighted to see the Riverside Theatre involved in this initiative too, by screening a ‘Dementia Friendly’ film at their Cinema. Cathy gave a short talk before the showing of ‘Iris’ – a true story about a novelist with Alzheimer’s disease - and its hoped that this type of screening will become a regular event.

Over the coming months the Seckford Foundation will be continuing to partner with local organisations to help attain our goal of making Woodbridge a Dementia Friendly town. If you feel you could help in any way, please get in touch.

Rural Research
In 2017 the Seckford Foundation commissioned the University of Suffolk to conduct research into rural deprivation amongst young people in Suffolk. It found that young people experiencing income deprivation whilst living in rural parts of Suffolk are at risk of feeling ‘locked in’ and disconnected from education and employment opportunities. The research, which will guide the Foundation when forming its priorities in this area in the future, was launched on the inaugural Suffolk Day on Wednesday, June 21.

Grants
A couple of grants we have awarded recently (see more on page 15) are; £7,200 towards a project to provide bespoke coaching and tutoring for five students during the 2017 summer school holiday period for Lapwing Education; and £2000 to Smiths Row to help develop their pilot scheme which helps disadvantaged A Level students studying art, design and technology, to access the support required to complete their studies with the aid of a mentor.
Education

The Foundation aims to help younger people achieve their potential and lead financially independent and productive lives.
Woodbridge School has had another excellent year. 2017 began with outstanding results; the School’s best ever at GCSE (57.1% A*/A), and strong results at A Level (155 A* and A grades were awarded to A Level pupils). In 2018 the School beat even 2017’s record with 24% grade 9 (A**), and over 40% of all grades at 9 (A**) or 8 (A*). These results are testament to how hard our pupils have worked and how well they have performed in the first year of more demanding public examinations. A Level results were also strong, with almost 70% at grade B or above. Four pupils took up offers for Oxbridge to study Classics, Mathematics, Natural Sciences and Music.

We are therefore delighted to see that the dedication, academic endeavour and close relationships between staff and pupils have all been rewarded. These results really do illustrate the positive impact of ‘Learning@Woodbridge’ and the high quality of academic provision across the whole School.

2018 saw the departure of Neil Tetley as Headmaster, and we would like to thank him for incredibly positive impact on Woodbridge during his time at the School, during which many new initiatives were introduced, including ‘Learning@Woodbridge’. We are delighted to welcome as his successor Dr Richard Robson, previously Headmaster at St Bede’s College, a leading HMC Catholic school based in Manchester. The Governors were particularly impressed by the enthusiasm of both Richard and his wife Emma for the School and the town and their wish to cement roots in the local community; by Richard’s embracing of our learning philosophy ‘Learning@Woodbridge’ and his ambitions for the School; and by his strong track record in promoting the schools he has led. Richard scored extremely highly against all the requirements for our new Head that pupils, parents and staff shared with us. We believe Richard is just the Headmaster we need to drive the School forward, building on the developments begun by Neil Tetley over the past four years.

The School enjoyed many notable successes from the academic year 2017/18. Highlights include;

**ACADEMIC**
The Classics department has had an exceptionally busy and successful year. In the Michaelmas term, the department put in its debut production, *The Trial of Paris*, written by the School’s Head of Classics Anne Wright. Pupils in years 7 and 8 performed the play and were joined on stage by Lord Marlesford and the Rt Hon Sir John Waite, a former Lord Justice of Appeal.

The department also enjoyed tremendous success in two national competitions organised by Cambridge University. Sixth Form pupil James Phelan was awarded a prize in the prestigious Peterhouse-Vellacott Essay competition, whilst three groups of year 10 pupils were shortlisted for the Cambridge Ancient Worlds Video Competition, the highest number of shortlisted videos for any school in the competition’s history.

The FitzGerald Society, Woodbridge School’s junior Oxbridge programme, was launched with great success in July. The society is aimed at intellectual high fliers in years 10-11 with a zest for knowledge, and is designed to stimulate intellectual curiosity and increasing knowledge.

The School held its second annual Careers Fair in November, attended by over 500 visitors from schools across the county. The 65 exhibitors at the fair included Russell Group universities, local and national businesses and professional institutes. The Science department has offered a huge range of STEM activities this year both for pupils within the school and for primary school pupils in Suffolk. Year 9 pupils took part in the Royal Academy of Engineering STEM Spy Challenge and the winning team, ‘Best of the Best’ will go on to the Finals in the coming academic year.

**SPORT**
The school was ranked 51st in the top 100 schools nationwide for sport according to School Sports Magazine, and it has been another excellent year for both girls and boys sport, with particular highlights in cross country, athletics and equestrian, which all saw teams qualify for, and perform exceptionally in, national competitions. The Woodbridge Junior Girls’ team ranked sixth in the country after the ESAA English Schools’ Track and Field Cup.

**DRAMA**
Drama at Woodbridge continues to cement its nationally regarded reputation. West End-quality performances in the School’s state-of-the-art Seckford Theatre included the musical *The Sound of Music*, which saw 105 pupils take to the stage in sensational sell-out performances. Sixth Form students had audiences laughing out loud with their colourful and quick-witted performance of
had audiences laughing out loud with their colourful and quick-witted performance of the comedy One Man Two Guvnors, whilst Years 7 and 8 performed Zero to Hero, the modern retelling of the famous story of Hercules.

Away from the Seckford Theatre the Seckford Theatre Company which comprised pupils and staff from the School took The Egg-Born Princess to the School’s biennial trip to the Edinburgh Fringe.

In the most recent round of LAMDA examinations in the Trinity term, pupils achieved incredible results, with 66 distinctions out of 83 entries.

MUSIC
Few schools can boast music of the quality produced at Woodbridge. Under Mr Christopher Milton’s leadership the department continues to go from strength to strength. The audience at Ely Cathedral was wowed by a stunning performance of Michael Tippett’s complex masterpiece A Child of Our Time. The department has also performed numerous exceptional concerts and recitals during the course of the year, including public lunchtime recitals and major showcase concerts by the Swing Band, Chamber Choir and Chamber Orchestra.

ART
The freshly renovated Art department at Woodbridge also enjoyed a stellar year, with many new and exciting innovations brought in by dynamic Head of Department James Hutchinson and new Art Technician Ross Holden. The Department held its first local public exhibition Four Fifteen at a local Gallery, Artspace, in the centre of Woodbridge. The exhibition profiles work created by pupils beyond the classroom in the many clubs available in the department.

Also profiled at the exhibition was the new flagship initiative, Woodbridge Editions, a stunning range of limited edition black and white prints commissioned by the Art department and produced by Sixth Form students. The prints are available to purchase through the Art department online platform, www.woodbridgeschoolartdepartment.com. Students receive 50% of the sale price. The initiative helps pupils to understand the practical and entrepreneurial aspects of being a working artist.

OTHER HIGHLIGHTS
The Young Enterprise team were particularly enterprising this year. The team cleverly capitalised on the hugely popular local Suffolk market and produced its own stunning cookery book, East Coast Eats, a compilation of recipes submitted by celebrated local restaurants, cafes and celebrated foodies including Delia Smith! The team did incredibly well, winning a stand in the bustling Suffolk Show food hall and selling a fantastic 300 copies overall, turning a profit. Moreover, they have persuaded no fewer than seven retailers to stock their cookery books, designed with those taking self-catering holidays in mind. After a highly competitive final, the team came away with awards for Best Trade Stand and Best Interview.

The School continues to offer a wonderful array of trips. In the Lent term pupils visited Auschwitz, German exchange took pupils to Hamburg, whilst those on the French language trip visited Rouen and the Religious Studies trip saw pupils enjoy a visit to stunning Florence. The highlight of the year for several pupils came over the summer with a life-changing trip to Morocco, during which pupils experienced life amongst the inhabitants of a local village whilst working on a community project to bury a water pipe, before a breath-taking 4187 metre ascent of Mount Toubkal.

The CCF had another successful year coming second in Combat Cadet, a national competition. The RAF section won the drill round of the Cranwell competition and came second in the fitness section. We have continued our Combined Cadet Force partnership with Felixstowe Academy allowing students to join our contingent and our partnership with Beccles and Saxmundham Free Schools allowing their students to join an army platoon of our contingent.

Many staff and pupils at Woodbridge School continued to volunteer their time to help members of our community. Such activities included arranging fundraising events for the Bridge School, East Anglian Air Ambulance, St Elizabeth’s Hospice and EACH to name a few. Overall, the School raised nearly £16,000 for various local and national charities.

Woodbridge School provided children in local primary schools with the ability to participate in a variety of sports activities through provision of over 30 sports leaders. Other activities in the year included the annual Woodbridge School Youth Poetry event which continues to grow in popularity. The Woodbridge Young Poets competition is open to competitors from primary and secondary schools throughout Suffolk, and the Interactive Youth Poetry Reading event was also attended by local primary schools. Pupils have also acted as coaches and tutors to young people who are not pupils of Woodbridge School.

Investment in the School continues apace, and over the summer funds were invested in refurbishing the Art department and further improving facilities in the Boarding House.
The number of students enrolled at the Free Schools grew to 911 by the summer census, an increase of 80 on the previous year. Ixworth Free School had its first Ofsted inspection in 2017 and it was judged that the school “Requires Improvement”. We were disappointed by this outcome and a detailed action plan has been created and is being implemented to address the issues raised by Ofsted.

We were delighted however, to receive the validated GCSE results from the Department of Education in January 2018, which confirmed that the Trust was seventh out of 62 MATs nationally for its ‘well above average’ student progress at all three schools and was the best MAT nationally for improving performance for disadvantaged students.

In 2017 Beccles, Ixworth and Saxmundham Free Schools were all in the top 10 out of 85 secondary schools in Suffolk and top 10% nationally for Progress 8, which measures how much progress a Year 11 student has made since the start of secondary school.

The improvement in GCSE results and overall learning outcomes continued in 2018 with another set of fantastic results.

At Beccles Free School, out of 51 GCSE students in total, 67% of students achieved at least a Grade 4 in English and Maths, with many students achieving the top grades of 7, 8 and 9. This is the best set of results since Beccles has opened and continues the recent trend of improved attainment.

At Saxmundham Free School, out of 59 GCSE students in total, 63% of students achieved at least a Grade 4 in English and Maths.

At Ixworth Free School, out of 37 GCSE students in total, 62% of students achieved at least a Grade 4 in English and Maths.

There were, as ever, some fantastic individual performances at all schools with many grade 9’s being earned. Just as important though was the total progress of all students, as the Trust continues to improve learning outcomes, regardless of ability or starting point.

As well as academic achievement, the Trust aims to produce well rounded students who leave fully equipped for life and during the year there were many additional activities that took place at the schools.

Beccles achieved the Food for Life Bronze Award for healthy eating and its climate-friendly food culture and is currently working towards silver accreditation. They also welcomed the President of the Royal Horticultural Society to celebrate the success of the school gardening enrichment club and they raised money for various charities, including a fantastic £750 for GOSH, who were supporting one of the students in Year 11.

Ixworth also had a busy year; the choir once again singing at various venues, including the Bury Christmas Markets; Olympic athletes visited the school to inspire the students; and students made it all the way through the Book Mastermind County Finals.

Saxmundham launched its own Judo club, with the help of an Olympic Silver medalist, held numerous events for primary school students, including the Harry Potter Book Night and also held the first ever Saxmundham Free School Fun Day and Dog Show which was a fantastic success.
The Foundation strengthens the communities in which those we support live, ensuring no-one suffers through rural isolation.
The Seckford Apprenticeship scheme has now completed its fifth year and five apprentices have successfully moved onto employment. We are delighted that the Jackson Foundation has confirmed its intention to continue to support the scheme for a further two years. The Foundation is also continuing with its mentoring programme to support both younger and older people in maintaining their independence. Our scheme specifically seeks to provide apprenticeships for NEETs who for a variety of reasons – difficult home life, substance abuse, health issues, failure to complete education (and often a combination of some or all of these) have been able to find only basic unskilled employment or, often, no work at all.

The Foundation has continued to assist other organisations in the fields of care and education of the young and elderly. The Director of the Foundation and other members of staff are also trustees or committee members of other charitable bodies, including other schools. Their time is provided for free, together with support from other staff including financial, governance, human resources and catering advice.

The grants programme has continued with its bilateral approach, namely to enable access to education, employment and training to people aged 25 and under, and to enable access to facilities and services to promote independent living and life-long learning to people over aged 65.

In the last year we have awarded over £32,000 in grants to both individuals and organisations working in these areas. In that time, six organisations were given project funding; two of whom were funded by the Seckford Foundation for the second time. One of those recipients was the Rural Coffee Caravan, an organisation which visits rural locations and holds events that act as a catalyst for people to talk to one another and to enable them to access services and information. They received a grant of £5,000 towards the costs of replacing their caravan, following its theft in the summer.

Individual recipients included two young people who received an award towards the cost of essential equipment required for their apprenticeships. Other young people have benefitted from awards towards the costs of transport to their studies, and towards the cost of educational school trips.

Following on from FLOURISH, the rural summit for Suffolk, it was regarded as important that the summit should not be seen as a one off “talking shop” and that real action should be seen to follow, and in consequence a working party has been established, which has identified six work streams which are now in the course of being actioned. The Foundation has taken responsibility for “Aspirations, Skills and Jobs”, which the governors felt was appropriate given our ongoing interest in creating opportunities for young people in Suffolk. In February 2017 we held our first Aspirations, Skills and Jobs workshop for youth organisations in the county, with the aim of enabling organisations to work more collaboratively.

In June 2017 we received confirmation that the Prince’s Countryside Fund had generously agreed to co-partner with us and the Salvation Army’s Anglia Division in a new project: a Rural Apprenticeships and Mentoring project to last three years. The project recruited Jenny Stockman as Manager (details on page 3 and 7) to develop new apprenticeship opportunities for disadvantaged young people, and grow our Springboard mentoring scheme further in rural parts of the county.
The Foundation enables elderly people to lead safe, secure, independent and fulfilling lives and cares for them when in need.
During the year “Seckford Care” was chosen as the new, overarching brand name for the Seckford Almshouses, Day Club and Jubilee House. The strapline will remain “A tradition of quality care since 1587”.

In the Summer of 2017, national care regulator, the Care Quality Commission (CQC) awarded the highest praise to Jubilee House, for providing ‘Outstanding’ residential care with an “extremely compassionate, attentive and caring” team. Jubilee House is one of only a very small number of residential care homes in Suffolk to be rated overall ‘Outstanding’ – the highest possible rating – by the CQC. This new accolade follows the ‘Outstanding’ rating given in 2016 by CQC for the Seckford Almshouses very-sheltered flats, which are adjacent to Jubilee House on Seckford Street. National CQC inspectors spoke to Jubilee House staff, residents and families. They praised the care home for being “exceptionally well-led” with a “warm, welcoming and homely atmosphere” and a visible and effective leadership presence. The team at Jubilee House, the reports says, are “passionate and committed” to delivering a high standard of care, which is tailored to meet residents’ needs and preferences. Inspectors also found that residents at Jubilee House enjoy a fulfilling quality of life and are encouraged to maintain their independence. Inspectors praised the variety of activities on offer at the care home, as well as the ability for residents to pursue their own hobbies and interests with a range of clubs including arts and crafts, gardening, photography and film. Meals are another popular social occasion at Jubilee House, with residents complimenting the quality of food and the flexible menu of freshly cooked dishes each day.

To add to these awards the Almshouses have recently been awarded the ‘End of Life’ award at the Suffolk Care Awards. Judges praised the team for demonstrating a holistic and dignified approach. The CQC has previously praised Seckford Care for providing ‘Outstanding’ end of life care, with residents experiencing a “comfortable and dignified death in line with their and their families’ wishes”.

In September we launched Friends of the Almshouses, with the aim of fundraising to refurbish our beautiful Victorian chapel. Our aim is to install new moveable and comfortable seating, as well as upgrading the heating, lighting and hearing induction loop. There has been a very positive response, which we aim to build upon.

The refurbishment and renovation of the Terrace commenced in 2017 and has recently been completed - the sheltered flats have been rewired and refurbished in order to meet the needs of residents in the twenty-first century.

The Foundation continues to ensure that vacancies at the Almshouses or Jubilee House are offered to Social Services so those without the financial means can continue to access our services.
Jubilee House - “exceptionally well-led” with a “warm, welcoming and homely atmosphere” and a visible and effective leadership presence. Rated “Outstanding” CQC Report 2017
The Seckford Foundation

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