



Newsletter No 2

From The Chairman

Hello again. Last time, I talked about our core belief that democracy - SCUK's raison d'être above all else - is a matter of listening to each other with respect. In a series of articles over the next few weeks I plan to lay out some more of the underlying thoughts of the new SCUK. The first of them is here.

About "... listening with respect"

Listening with respect is so fundamental to good human relationships (and thence to a better world for us all to live in!) that you could barely overstate its importance. Most young people I observe are networking in txt-speak, interacting through X-box (while practising killing each other ever more realistically), on facebook, or whatever other social medium. Meantime, Mum and/or Dad/partner dispatch the kids to their rooms so that the adults can get kid-free space, abrogating much of their responsibility, failing their children miserably. Gulp... This is the road to nowhere fast. Whoa! Stop!

If we can teach young people to listen with respect – to each other, to adults, to people of another colour or creed, we come away from the road to nowhere. Instead we go down a path where people actually start to talk to each other – really talk to each other. So anything that leads in that direction is good – more please! Anything that doesn't, chuck it over the side as fast as you like. Young people learn massively by following the example of those in their immediate environment. Once upon a time, it used to be a parental responsibility to give them the example and it worked like that. Mostly. Now, there is a yawning and widening gap between young people and adults where communication on any sensible level is breaking down, triggered by a tidal wave of e-media. You see it. I see it. Every day. It's a sea-change. It will shake our society to its very foundations.

School Councils are not going to solve it at a stroke or at all. But for some young people, it will provide a working model of how people should and do listen to each other with respect. Mostly.

I would love to write to you in a year's time and tell you how one young Jew and one young Muslim discovered that they have Abraham in common in their faiths because they began listening to each other with respect at a School Council; that one alienated young black person and one alienated young white person discovered that they have alienation in common and actually there's a better way. Because they began listening to each other with respect at a School Council.

These are dreams. You could call them trite, I suppose, but they are genuine. They set a direction. They say that if, one day, some young people talk meaningfully to each other for the first time and they can see that they can influence their future by means of democracy – pupil democracy - it will have been a good day's work because they will carry that memory through the rest of their lives. And that's why School Councils are worth it.

School Councils Sponsorship

Do you wish this was you?



Alex is in Year 5 at Bucklesham Primary School in Suffolk but it is in sailing that he is making his name. Alex has been sailing since he was 5(!), for four years with his brother John and in the last year, sailing with Abigail Croft. John and Alex were National Junior Champions in the Cadet class. Abigail and Alex lead the rankings for places in the GBR team that will sail the Cadet World Championships later this summer in Poland.

The Cadet class is supported by the Royal Yachting Association (RYA) as a "pathway" class, which means that this class leads on to bigger boats and eventually on to Olympic classes. The RYA has a superb Squad system. Alex has been sailing in the National Junior Squad for the last two years, being coached by National Junior Squad coach, Adam Bowers. The RYA looks after the sailors not only in their sail training but also in terms of their diet, physiology, psychology.

Alex works hard. Sometimes the ropes are frozen mid-winter and he has to break the ice out of the boat to go sailing but he is there every weekend, practising his skills winter and summer. Alex is ambitious and will progress to helming his own boat. At the age of 10!

Alex is sponsored by School Councils and as, you can see, carries School Council's good name with pride. Alex served as a School Councillor in years 1&2 and in years 3&4. Here they dealt with things like bullying, stuff getting broken, sports equipment going missing and whether or not to have a cover for the sandpit. Alex is now on the ECO-committee, which concerns making the school greener by switching off electricity, discussing a wind turbine, composting, paper recycling and recycling generally.

Do YOU have a good sports story to tell? Do you know someone whose sports career we should know about. If yes, email us about it stephenpage@schoolcouncils.org

Resources and Membership

Due to popular request we are pleased to announce a new addition to our range of School Council resources!

**** ECO COUNCIL BADGES****



These badges are enamel with green writing, gold coloured backing and a safety, brooch type, fastening which makes them suitable for all ages. Your pupils will be proud to wear them!

These badges are currently on order and we are now taking PRE-ORDERS at just £2.00 each (including VAT).

Email your pre-orders to Paul at orders@schoolcouncils.org so that your Eco-Council can be wearing their badges as quickly as possible. Your invoice will be sent with your order.

Are there other resources you would like to see in our shop? Do let me know and if the demand is there, we will do our best to source and stock.

Hot Topics

What's going on, then?

We need to know the hot topics being discussed in YOUR school council presently. That way, we can get current feedback on what's important to school councils collectively. In a future newsletter, we'll publish the list of issues, so that you can see what other schools are doing and what's important to them.

If there is anything you are particularly struggling with, tell us and we'll publish the first pleas for help. It's quite likely that someone out there has come across your problem already and can tell you how they tackled it. Networking at its best!

School Councils Foundations News

To those of you who are new to the School Councils Foundation, simply, we are the charitable arm of SCUK.

For more information about the Foundation and our vision **please contact the Foundation on 01394 288518**

Healthy Schools

The Foundation has yet to hear about the bid submitted to Healthy Ambitions Suffolk.....hopefully good news soon.

Hygiene Audits...a must have?

Working with a nationally respected brand the Foundation has secured a number of 'free' in-school hygiene auditsto find out more contact David Wing at the Foundation.

Other News

Politicswhat does the change of government mean to us....the trustees are trying to work out where the coalition leaves us and whether our ability to deliver against our vision is advantaged or disadvantaged?

We continue to seek and develop **new relationships**.....as a fledgling charity we are still learning. Fortunately we have good advisers working with us and others continue to join us...however, if you feel that you have something to offer please contact me on **01394 288518**

And finally.....the trustees are aware that whilst we have a UK wide remit our trainers, our advisers and indeed our trustees are not truly representative of the United Kingdom. If you want to become involved as a voluntary regional representative please get in touch with me, David Wing on 01394 288518

Next week.....Nickie Brander from The Bog Standard Campaign on why their work and our partnership is important to our children and their future.

Keep the contact coming!

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