



## Newsletter 12<sup>th</sup> March 2021



### Dear Families

It has certainly been a momentous couple of weeks at both our schools. We welcomed back Rabbits and Badgers at Clandon but were unable to open for Squirrels and Kestrels due to a positive covid test in those bubbles. This was so upsetting for us all and I know our oldest children really struggled with the last-minute change of plan. They have adapted so well, and we cannot wait to finally have them back on Monday. Rabbits and Badgers made a great return to school and enjoyed the full run of the school without the big children!

At Shere, the children returned full of the joys of Spring. Their delight in seeing each other and their teachers was lovely! We had just got into the swing of things when we were forced to close due to a burst water main in the village! I suppose these things are sent to try us, but a calmer return to school would have been nice! Thank you to all parents for getting to school so quickly to collect your children.

### Federation News:

The consultation on our federation has now closed and I am thrilled to be able to tell you that on Monday evening governors at both schools voted unanimously in favour of federation. This means that on 19<sup>th</sup> April 2021 the Newlands Church of England School Federation will be created! This is a historic moment for our schools and one which marks a new and exciting future full of possibilities.

As the governing body of each school will be dissolved on 18<sup>th</sup> April 2021, we need to elect parent governors to the new governing body. You will have received a separate Parentmail today about the election process. Being a parent governor is a huge commitment but a very rewarding one. Certainly, being a governor on the newly formed Newlands governing body will be a fantastic opportunity to shape our partnership, represent your school and the parent body and help form our ethos and vision now and for the future.

### Thank you:

I would like to take the opportunity to thank you for your kind emails and messages this week in relation to my letter on Tuesday. I have been overwhelmed by your kindness and support. I am doing very well with my dialysis and once shielding ends I hope to be back to work at school rather than at home; it will be lovely to see you all again!

### Forest School:

I understand there has been some disappointment about a lack of Forest School at Shere for the moment. I would like to take this opportunity to clarify our decision on this provision.

We have appointed a new Forest School Leader, Natalie Williamson. Throughout lockdown Natalie has worked at Shere providing support and Forest School activities for the Reception bubble. For the next four weeks she will be at Clandon providing Forest School sessions. This seems to me a completely equitable way of sharing this resource.

I am not currently willing to ask Natalie to work across multiple bubbles in each school. The risk of that many contacts is too great and should she test positive, all bubbles in both schools would close.

After four weeks we will review our risk assessment and we very much hope that community rates will be low enough to allow Natalie to work across both schools. In the meantime, children at Shere will

continue to access all the wonderful outdoor environments with their teachers and teaching assistants. It also seems timely to point out that without federation our schools would be very unlikely to be able to recruit such a skilled practitioner who has already proven to be a wonderful asset. Children and staff in both schools have been full of praise and have thoroughly enjoyed the sessions!

Natalie would be grateful for any donations of outgrown children's waterproofs for Forest School. Please contact her through either of the school offices.

### Shielding:

Shielding advice is currently in place until the end of March. I think all of us at home very much hope it will then come to an end and we will be able to return to school. For now, myself, Mrs Morton (Clandon Kestrels) and Mrs Fox (Shere Owls) will continue working at home. Both teachers are in regular contact with their classes via Teams.

### Mothering Sunday:

I do not think there has ever been a better time to spoil our Mothers! As parents I have witnessed you take on the challenges of this pandemic with amazing resilience and skill. It has certainly not been easy for any of us, and I am in awe of you and what you have sacrificed for your children. I would like to wish you all a happy Mother's Day and hope that you are well looked after and allowed some rest!

St James' Church in Shere is hosting a Mothering Sunday Service on YouTube which you are all welcome to join.

Online Mothering Sunday All Age Service. YouTube – Parish of Shere 10am. [St James' Shere and St Mark's Peaslake : Current Services \(parishofshere.com\)](https://www.parishofshere.com)

### Remembering Mothers:

Many of us have lost precious loved ones recently, and I know that the loss of a mother or a mothering figure has touched our many of you in both school communities since last year. Our thoughts are with you this weekend.

In both St James' and St Mark's churches there will be an opportunity to remember those who have mothered you. There will be flowers available so do drop in.

### Welcome to Honey the Guinea Pig:



Finally, a very warm welcome to Honey; Guinea Pig in residence at Shere School. Having a pet is a wonderful childhood experience and Honey has proved an instant hit with Owls Class. Having a pet is a relaxing and rewarding experience and I am pleased we have added this experience for our children.

I am really keen to encourage a connection with animals both as pets and through Forest School, so one guinea pig is just the beginning!

Much love to you all,

Vicky