

THE



FALCON

July 2024

No one likes a hot dog

**Should the voting age
be lowered to 16?**

To Bee or not to Bee?

Axolotls



**Fearmongering
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Sixth Form Council

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Sixth Form Council

By LB, Year 12

As the year 13s were preparing for leaving school, a new council needed to be formed. Therefore, a long and important application process started, firstly with Head Boy and Head Girl, followed by the various minister positions. For Head Boy and Head Girl, we firstly had to write a letter addressed to Mr Pentland and Miss Leopold, outlining why we believe we would have been good candidates, and what we would like to change or improve about the school. Then, we had an interview with Mr Pentland and Miss Lambden to tell them more about us as individuals and to discuss the content of the letters. Then we had to write some concise pledges for a short poster to be put up in the Sixth Form corridor. Finally, we then had to write and do a short speech in front of the year, to be the last selling point. For the minister positions, there was only a letter and pledges that had to be done. The votes were counted and announced!

Here are the 2024-25 minister positions:

- Head Boy – Noah Hovvels
- Head Girl – Lydia Broadbent
- Minister of Student Voice and Deputy Head Boy – Thomas Conacher
- Minister of Equality and Welfare and Deputy Head Girl – Brooke Hodgson
- Minister of Education – Sienna Moore
- Minister of Finance and Charity – Sophie Hodgson
- Minister of Extracurricular – Melissa Woods
- Minister of Environment – Phoebe Dunning
- Minister of School Houses – Laura Evans
- Minister of Democracy – Matthew Dundon
- Minister of Media – Kieran Moss

We have two new roles that have been added to the council this year! These are 'Student Voice' and 'School Houses'. 'Student voice' was created to help connect the Sixth Form Council to Main School and increase our involvement. With the introduction of School Houses and House Captains, it felt right to include a position on the council which leads this.

As Head Boy and Head Girl, me and Noah represent the school overall, speaking at events both in school and out. We oversee the council and help pick up where others may be struggling, as well as following up with our own pledges. At some point we will partake in our own 'Head Boy and Girl Challenge', which we are both looking forward to immensely! We strive to be inclusive, friendly, and approachable. Therefore, especially other Sixth Form students, if you ever have anything you wish to discuss, for example anything you'd like to add to or change about the school, feel free to come and talk to us or any other members of the council. We are here to help everyone!



Developing our house points system

By AP, Year 8

The house points are awarded to the houses that win the interhouse competitions. These competitions take place throughout the academic year.

As of current, the house competitions are mostly PE and English related. These competitions are fun and engaging, but I would like to emphasise the fact that we can have more competitions for other subjects. This would allow all form members to get involved with a subject they like.

I also think the winners could get small prizes like sweets or trophies!

Here are some examples of ideas for other competitions:

- Composition challenge (Music) – who can make the most effective piece of music that represents a certain genre/era.
- Coding challenge (IT)– who can produce the best piece of coding within an allocated time.

Remember: this is my opinion, and you might really enjoy our current competitions. However I hope you respect my opinion, and I would love to see a variety of competitions next year.



Axolotls

By E-K B, Year 9

Axolotls – so many people don't know that they exist!

What is an Axolotl?

A salamander Mexican amphibian... or the Aztec god of fire and lightning! They are rarely talked about but are commonly called “Mexican walking fish” (although, they are *not* fish).

Axolotls are not very active creatures, but can regenerate their limbs, spines and brains, as well as lots of other body parts. They are carnivorous creatures and eat lots of other small amphibians like worms, insects and crustaceans. They have a life span of between 10-14 years. Their habitats are high altitude lakes and wetlands in Mexico, like lake Xochimilco.

Unfortunately, Axolotls are a critically endangered species due to losing their habitats to pollution, over-fishing and climate change.

Scientists believe the Axolotl is critical to studying regenerative medicine. A research article published in 2016 by The Department of Stem Cell and Regenerative Biology at Harvard University found that Axolotls can regrow parts of their brain after injury, growing diverse sets of neurons, and have the capacity to resist cancerous tissues.



Fearmongering in the media

By LD, Year 9

Fearmongering: The action of deliberately arousing public fear.

You might have experienced fearmongering and not even realised it. The media subtly feeds scary “truths” into our minds. But are they really truths? Is everything in the media 100% true? Is the world such a horrible place as the media portrays?

Fake news

Sometimes you hear stories of things that seem true, but maybe, underneath, they are built on a web of lies. Some people deliberately tell fake news to scare people into doing or promoting certain things or messages. Fake news is usually used with a certain goal in mind, may that be to arouse fear, to attract attention or to earn money.

Scamming

One of, if not the most well-known forms of fearmongering, is scamming. This is where the scammers feed pure lies to the victim. Sadly, the victim is usually of older age or younger age, as those ages are easy to lie to as they are not well educated on scamming. It is becoming more and more prominent in our 21st century society. It is important to make sure that those with access to any type of phone or email are educated about online scamming. Usually, scammers might say that a bank transfer has failed, or someone is in need, to create guilt and fear, making the victim more susceptible to being successfully scammed.

“Influencers”

Most people have probably heard of the term “clickbait”, this is where an influencer uses a dramatic image or title to make people either follow them, click on their story and interact with their post/video etc. Influencers often use dramatic titles to arouse fear in the audience, this is so that the audience will do some of the things mentioned above. Clickbait is mainly lies. Some titles and images can cause fear, relating back to fearmongering.

Why do people seek to arouse fear in others?

There are two main reasons why people may fearmonger. One is for self-benefit and the other is to get people to support a cause.

Self-benefit

People may fearmonger to gain profit for themselves. May that be money, popularity, likes or votes. Types of fearmongering that fall under self-beneficial are: scamming and influencer clickbait.

Supporting a cause

Some people arouse fear to make others support a certain cause, e.g. telling people that if they do not vote for a certain party, that the world will fall apart and suffer will entail. This makes people want to support a certain cause because of the belief that if they do not, they will suffer.



To Bee or not the Bee?

By CC, Year 9

Bees. Nature's greatest pollinator and honey producer. But could they still survive in harmony? As we all know, bees are in danger. In my last article, we discussed what man-made problems bees are facing. But this time, we are looking at the natural causes of bees dying. Hold my **beer**, this is serious.

Firstly, we are looking at a very peculiar insect. More aggressive than its native counterpart, the European hornet, today we look at the Asian hornet (vespa velutina). This hornet is distinguished by its dark, black abdomen and bright yellow-orange markings. They travel through ship cargos across seas. These monsters **decimate** bees; they eat up to 30-50 honeybees a day and are almost immortal - that's **unbeelievable!** The best ways to get rid of them is to poison or set fire to their nests at night when all the hornets are sleeping. Sweet baits can attract these insects and they aren't very big fans of peppermint oil.



The next murderer in focus is not a creature but a disease. Neonicotinoid pesticides. Banned in the Uk until 2024, this pesticide is one of the biggest reasons of bee deaths this year, that's a **-pollen!** This pesticide is less toxic for mammals than insects like bees, but this is not a reason to reinstate it. Mostly used on sugar beet crops, neonics can damage its nervous system and motor function. This affects the bees feeding, navigation, reproduction and foraging. They act by binding strongly to nicotinic acetylcholine receptors in the central nervous system of insects, causing overstimulation of their nerve cells (uncontrollable shaking), paralysis and death. Neonicotinoids are highly water soluble, persistent in the environment, and can migrate into all parts of treated plants, they don't wear off.

nicotinic acetylcholine receptors – ion channels that occur on body wall muscles of insects.



neonics- neonicotinoid pesticides.

Ghosts and the paranormal

By EA, Year 9

Ghost stories are everywhere! You might have heard them on the news, or even at a campfire. Here are a couple of interesting stories from across the pond.

The Crying Lady in the Dakota, New York

The Dakota apartment buildings were once home to musicians John Lennon and Yoko Ono, who moved in in 1973. John Lennon, a member of The Beatles, was also assassinated outside the building in 1980. Before this, John said he saw a "crying lady ghost" walking the halls. Similarly, Yoko claimed she saw John's ghost sitting at his piano, saying "Don't be afraid - I am still with you."

The Ghosts of the Crescent Hotel, Eureka Springs, Arkansas

This hotel opened in 1886 and was where a construction worker named Michael was killed. His ghost reportedly haunts room 218. The hotel turned into the e hotel into the Baker Cancer Hospital, owned by a fraudster who claimed to have the cure. Sadly, the patients that died there were buried in the hotel's basement. Although the owner has since been arrested, his patients' spirits supposedly remain. The famed TV show, Ghost hunters, caught footage of mysterious movement in the basement, indicating the presence of the supernatural.

There you have it - some of the stories I have found but there will be more! I'll be making a second part in a future edition.

125: The stopgap that lasted

By JH, Year 9

The Intercity Class 43 is the by some standards the pinnacle of rail technology advances. The Class 43 was originally created to be used as a stopgap between the ageing fleet of British Railway Diesels and the creation of the Advanced Passenger Train. This train was supposed to be the competitor to the *TGV* and the *Shinkansen*; it was made to be the train of the century. But for many reasons, it failed. This left the Intercity 125's to run the majority of long-distance routes.

The Intercity 125 was one of the first notable kind of fixed unit train. This meant that the formation couldn't be easily changed from one set to another, unlike the previous sets overall, this was an advantage, but this did come with its own set of challenges and drawbacks. One example is that if a carriage in the center of the train were to derail, the rest of the train needs to be uncoupled from the defecting carriage (which takes a long time because of the train's nature).

The 125 was created, as mentioned before, as a stopgap between the British Railway Diesels and the few remaining steam locomotives and the APT (advanced passenger train). This train's main selling point is that it could tilt, so it could go round corners faster than the conventional non-tilting train, therefore cutting journey time. But due to the failure of the APT, the 125 lives on.

But now, after four decades of loyal service, the 125's are now being sent to scrap, and their replacements are now rolling off the production line (quite literally), so we say goodbye to the stopgap that lasted.



An InterCity 125 in original British Rail livery near Chesterfield
(source: Wikipedia)

Should the voting age be lowered to 16?

By FM, Year 8

For as long as there has been a voting system, there has been a debate around who should be able to vote. As time has progressed, more and more groups of people have been given the right to vote, in the aid of increasing democracy (this is known as the widening of the franchise).

One popular argument for lowering the voting age to 16, is that 16–18-year-olds already have many responsibilities that adults have. These include working and facing criminal charges, as well as things like leaving home and, in some cases, paying taxes. By doing this, they are contributing to society in ways that all adults do, meaning that they deserve the right to tell the government what they want in the society - that is their future.

‘Scotland and Wales both have lowered the voting age to 16 for local matters,’ is another argument for why we should lower the voting age. In Scotland and Wales, there is an incredibly high voter turnout in 16–18-year-olds in local elections, higher than 18–25-year-olds. In the Scottish referendum, in 2014, 75% of 16–18-year-olds voted. This is higher than the combined turnout in any UK general election from 1992. This high turnout could lead to continued voting, increasing the overall voting age for young people in the long-term. They would do this because of previous experience with voting and understanding the system.

A reason some may disagree with these arguments is that 16–18-year-olds don’t have enough life experience or political knowledge to make an informed decision about their government. They might think this because to vote and know what you need out of a government means you must recognise the issues with the country, whether it affects you or not.

To summarise, 16–18-year-olds have responsibilities that already place them with experience to know the wants and needs of the country. As well as that, the countries part of the UK have proved the success of a lower voting age. However, to make an informed decision about the vote, you need a level of emotional maturity that some 16–18-year-olds do not have.

I'm stuck.

By MWS

One of my favourite hobbies is creative writing. Therefore, I am sharing my latest piece called 'I'm stuck,' which is inspired by my English lessons on Utopian and Dystopian settings.

Wake up. WAKE UP!

"What's that noise?" I whispered as I woke up.

Why is it so dark? No sound at all... this isn't my room! I can see and feel everything... this couldn't be a dream. I get up.

Everything looks so old, and dirty, and there's mouldy, overgrown holes in the floors. Except for that one wall... it has a door.

"Is anyone there?" I shouted.

BANG. CLATTER.

Rapidly, I jump out of my skin; I'm shaking like I'm in Antarctica. I silently tiptoe over the holes to the door. I hesitated as I reached out for the handle. But I grow courage, and slam the door open and-

I know this place. It's... my room.

I try to walk forward but something pushes me back. Trying and trying again, but it wouldn't let me through. As I scan the hazy window, I notice a hole – it's broken! There's a way out!

Frantically, I climb up the draws and out of the window, walking round to find a way out. My bewilderment ceases as I notice Rosalie, who is on the other side of the road!

"HELP ME" I desperately scream out to her.

She turns round in a snap, like she's seen a ghost. She looks at me, dead in the eyes; but... she can't see me.

I'm stuck.

No one likes a hot dog

By CV and SR, Year 7

Life hacks that we think pet owners should know to keep their furry friends cool in the summer;

1. To keep your pet cool, it would be useful to get them a cooling mat or pet bed that they can lay on to reduce their body temperature.
2. Another way is to get a dog friendly ice lolly and leave it in their water bowl for them to lick at so that they don't overheat.
3. Also, if you fill up a paddling pool, they can relax in it, and have a fun day splashing around with their doggy friends. My sneaky furry friend would always steal our family pool, so we invested in a doggy sized pool; they played in it all day then had a nap.
4. If you're planning on walking your dog on a hot day, never go at noon, and always check the temperature of the ground – if you can't keep your hand there, it is certainly too hot for your furry friend!
5. Always ensure that there is shade readily available for your pet!
6. For extra coolness, you could brush a damp comb through their fur.



Summer bucket list

By FB and LB

This summer, instead of staying indoors, it's time to enjoy the outside. This list is here to help you make memories that you will never forget and will last a lifetime.

- Go for a swim
- Gaze at the stars
- Try whitewater rafting
- Take a road trip
- Barbeque some new recipes
- Splash at the water park
- Take a family photo
- Watch a sunset
- Go to a fun fair
- Go to the beach
- Have a sleepover with friends
- Spend time with family

Feel free to use this as a checklist. Enjoy your summer!



Thank you for reading this copy of The Falcon.
We'll be back next academic year with our autumn edition!

