

# OAKLANDS NEWS

SPRING 2024

## WORKING WITH OUR COMMUNITY

Welcome to the first community newsletter for those living close to the campuses of Oaklands College. We are dedicated to delivering an excellent service to our local learners and are committed to engaging with all nearby residents interested in accessing the exceptional learning opportunities and spaces we provide.

As we continue the renewal and enhancement of our college estate, we are also expanding engagement with our local communities through events and sharing facilities.

We will also be setting up a community consultation panel for local residents to ensure you are properly consulted about our activities at Oaklands College. We will share our future plans with you and work with you to help us shape our activities for the coming years.

To join our consultative community panel and/or sign up for future electronic editions of this newsletter, simply email: [community@oaklands.ac.uk](mailto:community@oaklands.ac.uk)

and the yearly Welwyn Garden City Vintage Festival. Uniquely, at our semi-rural St Albans campus, local families have been able to enjoy our licenced zoo. Book a visit today at: [www.oaklands.ac.uk/oaklands-zoo](http://www.oaklands.ac.uk/oaklands-zoo)

It is our intention to keep refining and developing the range of activities across all our locations, in consultation with you. As our offer evolves we will ensure it continues to benefit as many in the local community as possible.

Claire Dolan, Deputy Principal at Oaklands College, said: "We have been really touched by the involvement and support we have had from the local community.

"As a community focused organisation, skills development for the local economy is key and we are delighted that the quality of our provision was recognised by the recent Ofsted inspection which resulted in us being judged Good across the board for every aspect of our organisation.

"While the quality of our education and training has a direct impact on the lives of so many local people, 16-18s and adults, we also strive to be a hub of community activity, not just for learning, but also for leisure and business.

"We hope you'll enjoy our community newsletters and we look forward to working with you in the future."

You can keep up-to-date with future events at:

[www.oaklands.ac.uk/news-events](http://www.oaklands.ac.uk/news-events)

Please note that future editions of this newsletter will be in electronic format only, in line with our sustainability policies.

We have three wonderful sites at Oaklands, and it is our vision to ensure all are at the heart of local life and that our neighbours feel the benefits from having a fantastic college on their doorstep.

We are delighted more local people than ever have been able to access community events across all our campuses during the past year. They have joined us for events including OakFest, Foodies Festival, sports tournaments, and of course our lambing weekend. Our facilities have also been used by businesses and local government.

Our Welwyn Garden City campus is home to local performing arts groups



We have a long tradition of collaboration, as can be seen from this early edition of the college magazine dating back to 1952. We intend to build on this tradition with future editions of this community newsletter being published termly in an electronic format you can subscribe to and receive by email.

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# BUILDING FOR THE FUTURE

The new-look St Albans campus is taking shape as our £62m construction project continues.

The work will transform the old estate for the benefit of students and other users as we increase engagement with the community through events, local schools' activities, and sharing of facilities.



There has been considerable progress as the new Construction Centre takes shape. The steel frame and ground floor slabs have been completed, roof liner sheets are installed, and the roof insulation has been put in place. Work has also started on the masonry walls for the ground floor.

As we went to press, we were due to commence the installation of the external wall cladding, the windows, internal staircases, and acoustic panels.



An agreement has also been reached on the building of the Sports Pavilion, replacing an old barn conversion. This will start with groundworks, foundation installations, and drainage. The building is expected to be completed later this year.

The pavilion will further enhance our sports facilities, which have already gained an international reputation thanks to the success of our Oaklands Wolves academies. Sports academies have been a feature of the college since 1936.

As always, the good old British weather plays its part, and we have had our share of high winds, but the construction project is on schedule.

The overall development was approved in 2017 and set the scene for the college's second century in existence. It includes a creative Gateway Building as the centrepiece of the complex, to include a student centre, support services and a café.

Students are already benefiting from the Evolution Centre, which was completed in 2021, providing 49 new classrooms and offices for staff.

The residential Homestead was finished in 2020. This has greatly enhanced our offering to those students who request accommodation and are members of the Oaklands Wolves academies. The brand-new immersion centres, due to be started this year, will provide leading edge 360-degree immersive learning technology classrooms.

Oakland's Deputy Principal Finance, Resources and College Planning, Mark Sellis, said: "We are incredibly pleased to see the work taking place and on schedule to deliver an estate that is sustainable, digitally enabled, and designed to drive inclusion in all our teaching and learning activities."

Jacqueline Page, Deputy Principal and Student Experience lead, said: "The investment in our estate is all about providing students with a first-class environment which is conducive to outstanding learning, and also inviting other partners, such as local employers, to use our facilities. We look forward to providing updates as we provide the excellent new facilities to support our local learners and other community partners."

For updates on this and footpath arrangements during construction, see our website [www.oaklands.ac.uk/latest-construction-development-update/](http://www.oaklands.ac.uk/latest-construction-development-update/)

## RODENT RESCUE

More than 150 animals have found a new home at Oaklands College thanks to the Rodent Rescue centre. Our success in giving these little creatures a new life is due to the support of our local community around Oaklands College, including donations, joint work with schools to spread the word about animal welfare, and participation in events on campus.

Rodent Rescue was started in 2020 by Briony Stokes, an animal technician at the college, with help from her mum and the team here at Oaklands.

Our little guests get a safe and secure new life and lots of attention. Their upkeep adds to the real-life experience of our animal care students.

They're also a big hit with students with special needs at our LIFE provision (Learning for Independence and Future Employment). Therapy guinea pigs Ed and Nedd (pictured) are particularly popular at LIFE – providing seven sessions a week.

The challenges are varied, including earning the trust of rescued animals, some of whose owners have given them up. There is also sickness and the inevitable loss of the pets when

they come to the end of their natural life.

This gives students the opportunity not only to hone their skills but develop the experience and maturity needed when they work with animals in the future.

We have a licensed zoo, an equine centre, farm animals and a wide range of exotics.

Find out more by scanning the QR code





## OFSTED SAYS WE'RE GOOD

We are absolutely delighted to acknowledge the incredible hard work of our staff, amazing students, local partners, and new leadership team which has resulted in a rating of Good following our recent Ofsted inspection.

We enjoyed the inspection process, confident that this outcome could be achieved as a result of the careful measures which have been put in place to take Oaklands College to new heights.

Ofsted found excellent improvements, clearly showing our direction of travel to become Outstanding.

As well as an overall Good grade, we were in fact given a "Good" for every aspect the inspectors looked at, with the report shining a bright light on many areas that exhibited excellent features.

Again, we owe our thanks to the support we have had from the community, including Hertfordshire County Council, St Albans City and District Council, Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council, Hertsmere Borough Council, Hertfordshire and local Chambers of Commerce, Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership, and our strategic education partner, University of Hertfordshire.

We would also like to thank those employers who have helped us to develop our curriculum with practical help and funding, and advice to ensure we are teaching the skills needed in the workplace.

These relationships were cited by Ofsted as a key strength.

The college is judged "Good" for education quality, student behaviour, personal development, leadership and management, 16-18 education, adult education, and support for students with high needs. We believe the result is a testament to our amazing students.

Andrew Slade, who has been Principal since September 2021, said: "It's tremendous to see our approach being so clearly acknowledged and supported by Ofsted."

Special features of the college include a centre of excellence in its engineering, construction, creative, and SEND areas as well as its own zoo, extensive managed ancient woodland, and a working farm which prepares students for a wide range of careers.

The college also has a proud sporting history, dating back to 1936, which has bred an internationally renowned centre providing academies in a range of sports for 16-18 year olds to train, alongside their vocational or academic courses.

The new management team has increased involvement in the economic life of the region, collaborating with local partners, home counties and London to ensure that the educational curriculum offer meets the skills needs locally.

Vocational training is carefully co-designed by employers so that it is relevant to their needs, ensuring the success both of students and business.

## UNLOCK YOUR POTENTIAL WITH ADULT COURSES AT OAKLANDS COLLEGE

Our courses aimed at adults cover a wide spectrum, including professional development, leisure and interest, and courses for employment. Adult student, Angela Allen, who studied English and Maths, rediscovered forgotten skills and acquired new ones, all while receiving support and encouragement from our dedicated teachers: She said: "You're never too old to learn. I have remembered skills I thought I had forgotten."

Find out more by scanning the QR code [www.oaklands.ac.uk/study/adult-courses/](http://www.oaklands.ac.uk/study/adult-courses/)



# IT'S ALL HAPPENING ON CAMPUS

*Oaklands welcomes everyone from the local community to its campuses*

Following our annual Laming Weekend, we'll be gearing up for the return of **OakFest** on 29th June. The festival is all about music, entertainment, food, and community spirit.

We're also proud to see the return of **Foodies Festival to St Albans** from 21st May to 2nd June featuring Sister Sledge, Blue, and Symphonic Ibiza.

We also have **Open Evenings** at Welwyn Garden City on 23rd April and St Albans on 25th April, both from 5pm to 7pm.

This is an opportunity for potential students, including adults, to understand more about what we can offer, see the facilities and meet our teaching staff.



## CELEBRATING OUR STUDENTS' SUCCESS

We are very proud of our students and the difference they make to the community.

Learn more about our student successes by scanning the QR code opposite.



## JOIN US AS A STUDENT SUPPORT ASSISTANT

Are you driven by the desire to support young people with additional needs? Oaklands College is on the lookout for passionate individuals to join our team as Student Support Assistants (SSAs) in our well-respected LIFE provision for people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

If you're ready to embark on a fulfilling journey, making a tangible impact every day, we want you on board! Flexible working options with salary of £25,000 pro-rata.

These term-time-only roles are great for work/life balance and can be the entry point for a career in Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

**To apply, email us at [life@oaklands.ac.uk](mailto:life@oaklands.ac.uk) by 24th April 2024.**



## OAKLANDS COLLEGE ALWAYS WELCOMES NEW VOLUNTEERS

Volunteers are invaluable to us because they support our students with English and maths, contribute to the upkeep of our beautiful estates, and help care for our animals. We are always looking for individuals eager to make a difference. If you may be interested in joining our vibrant volunteer community, we'd love to hear from you at: [recruitment@oaklands.ac.uk](mailto:recruitment@oaklands.ac.uk)



*For more employment opportunities, Join us for our SEND recruitment day*

- *Date: Wednesday, 1st May*
- *Time: 9:30 AM*
- *Location: St Albans Campus*

**Jobs for local people**

<https://www.oaklands.ac.uk/about-us/working-for-oaklands/>

