

Summer 2020

Secured for the Future

Jason Fletcher

It is my pleasure to inform you that today, on the 17th August 2020, Child Light Limited, the charitable company which operates Heritage School, became the owner of 17-19 Brookside.

15 years ago, the idea of starting a new school was mentioned for the first time. 13 years ago in September Heritage School opened to 16 pupils in 19 Brookside. 11 years ago we expanded into 18 Brookside. Eight years ago we expanded again into 17 Brookside. Two and a half years ago we purchased Panton Hall.



Today, with the purchase of 17-19 Brookside, we can say that the work of Heritage School has been firmly established where it was planted. We pray that this work will be able to serve Cambridge families for decades to come.

On a Saturday evening in January 2019 (it was the 12th) I received a phone call from one of our landlords. They had decided, he told me, to sell 17-19 Brookside and we had until mid-April to put forward our best offer in the region of £5,000,000 to £6,000,000. Otherwise, the property would be put on the open market. About two weeks later, I received a letter informing us that the landlords were serving notice of their right to break (i.e. cut short) the lease, so a new owner would have vacant possession at the earliest opportunity. We had 18 months left, until the summer of 2020.



On Sunday the 13th I met with two Trustees to begin thinking through our response. Immediately, we started the process of talking to banks as well as to friendly investors, potential donors and charitable trusts to see what might be possible. We appointed Bidwells to act for us and commissioned a valuation. A small group of us gathered weekly to pray.

Meanwhile, we began negotiating with the landlords to sign a new lease that would undo the break they had served and give us more time, even if the building were sold to new owners. We became acutely aware that having only one more year on site would have a severe impact upon pupil numbers in 2019-20 and the viability of the business. By the time we wrote to the parent community on the 13th of March 2019, the landlords had agreed a new lease with a higher rent. This guaranteed us an additional year on site until at least August 2021 -- a very important step.



Initial feedback from banks underlined the scale of the challenge: we would need to raise £2,000,000 to £2,500,000 above what we might be able responsibly to borrow. With that demanding fundraising goal in mind, we were exploring the possibility of a new sympathetic landlord, and we were considering other potential sites in and around Cambridge. But we also knew that the opportunity to acquire the freehold for a site like ours in central Cambridge was rare. The long-term security and independence of ownership was, we felt, a prize worth pursuing.

Our Easter Appeal was launched on the 31st of March with accompanying videos. We had been hugely encouraged early on that purchasing the main site might just be possible by a very significant pledge of support from a friendly investor. That, together with clarification from a bank about what we could borrow, gave us confidence at the time of the appeal that we had about 80% of the necessary funds in place with, as we believed then, about four weeks left to make an offer. Thanks to the amazing generosity of so many in the parent community and beyond, our Easter Appeal raised £300,000 in donations or pledges and a further £100,000 from another friendly investor.

In response to our initial purchase offer in May of just under £5,000,000, the landlords replied in July that they would not accept anything less than £6,000,000, but that they would give us more time to improve our offer. Having taken advice from Bidwells and weighed our options -- and trying to take the long view to 2030 and beyond -- we signed an agreement that would give us until 29 February 2020 to meet their asking price.

At the start of January, on the advice of a parent, we opened a conversation with a different high street bank, HSBC. They have been very supportive and agreed in principle to lend us £500,000 more, covering half of the shortfall. As we approached the last week of February, we were still looking at options with new potential landlords when a friendly investor, whose support was crucial to the school starting in 2007, stepped in again and wonderfully offered to lend the remainder. On the strength of these commitments, on the 28th of February we were able formally to offer £6,000,000.

We still needed a valuation for the bank to confirm the amount they would lend. We had made reasonable assumptions for normal times, but then came the pandemic. A week into lockdown, despite the deepening uncertainty, the valuation report was issued and it was *higher* than we had hoped. We would be able to borrow what we needed and at a reduced cost.

Matters have progressed slowly since early April. At last, however, the many complex pieces have come together and no insurmountable obstacles have arisen. We have, thanks be to God, crossed the finish line - more than a year and a half since that telephone call in January 2019.



Our final position is that the cash contribution from the school, thanks to so many of you, is £500,000. Support from friendly investors totals £1,500,000, and a commercial loan from HSBC covers the rest. As I mentioned, we entered a new lease last spring. Relative to that obligation, a remarkable aspect of our final position, inconceivable even six months ago, is that the annual cost of being owners is almost identical to what we were paying as tenants.

So many of you have given so much to make this possible. We are humbled by and deeply grateful for your support - through your prayers, sacrificial giving of time and money, words of encouragement, and more - to help us achieve this extraordinary milestone. Thank you also to parents for standing with us over these many months of uncertainty. It has been an amazing collective effort.

I'll leave you to consider these words, which were a comfort to me on the 13th of January 2019 as I pondered the road ahead: 'Why are you so afraid, O you of little faith?' 'Cast your burden on the LORD, and he will sustain you.' 'In quietness and trust shall be your strength.' (*Daily Light for the Daily Path*, 13 January, Morning) Soli Deo gloria.

Note: Professional fees in support of this transaction have been over £150,000. We are £45,000 short of meeting all costs associated with the purchase, without any subsidy from our modest cash reserves. If you would like to make a final contribution toward the costs associated with the purchase, or pledge to contribute toward that end during 2020-21, please contact us on giving@heritageschool.org.uk.



Iona Sclater, Much Loved and Enormously Missed



Our thoughts remain with the Sclater family following the tragic loss of their eldest daughter Iona. She died just over a year ago, in a riding accident on the 11th August 2019.

Iona was a much loved and respected member of the school community. She started at Heritage in Year 7 along with her two younger sisters. Iona contributed so much to school life and she should be graduating from Heritage this term together with her friends in Year 11. We continue to miss her enormously.

Nature Challenges

Fiona Macaulay-Fletcher



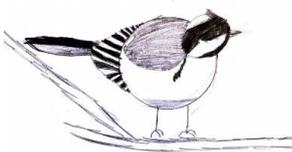
In keeping with the Nature Walks and Nature Painting that we prioritise at school, I have set a weekly Nature Challenge for the whole school to enjoy during this period of Learning at Home. When so many other things in life have been on pause and closed to us, we have been given a wonderful opportunity to slow down, observe and enjoy the amazing natural world around us. I hope that we are all learning to appreciate nature even more than we did before.



Challenges have included the identification of butterflies and birdsong, and the creation of light traps - to entice moths to stay still long enough to be identified and painted.



Dragonflies and damselflies have been hatching in recent weeks. Pupils have been asked to paint them and to find out what makes them different from each other.



Teachers have been delighted with the careful work that has been submitted and the pride pupils have clearly taken in their work. I do hope families have enjoyed these projects too and that they will inspire all of us to continue to walk with our eyes wide open, with an enquiring, questioning and appreciative mind.



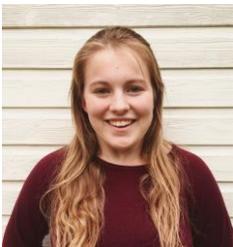
Providing Five Full Days a Week for our Youngest Pupils

At Heritage we have intentionally designed a gentle start for our youngest pupils, with two full days and three half days for Lower Prep and one half day for Upper Prep. We believe that this brings a helpful balance to a child's week, with focussed, high quality learning taking place at school and time to rest and play at home.



To simplify logistics for parents for whom the half-days are unworkable, from September 2020 we will be offering Stay & Play at school on each of these half days (from 1.30-3.30pm) with Miss Cage and her team. These sessions are entirely extra curricular. They do not contain any extra teaching and are intentionally low-key. Children who do not attend will not be missing out. The cost of child care for any one of these afternoons, on a termly basis, will be £225. For further information please contact the School Office.

Welcome to our New Staff Members



Welcome to **Miss Katy Moorhouse** who will be taking over as the Year 3 class teacher in September. Having studied and completed her PGCE at Durham University, Miss Moorhouse is passionate about music (she is an accomplished singer, pianist and Choral Director) and looks forward to weaving lots of music making into her teaching across the curriculum. She is also keen on netball, skiing and ultimate frisbee! Mrs Symons will be supporting and mentoring Miss Moorhouse one day a week.



Welcome to **Mrs Esther Grove** who will be our new Reception Class Teacher. Originally from Cambridgeshire, Mrs Grove has many years of experience teaching infants. She is excited to be joining Heritage where her own values are reflected in those of the school. She is familiar with Charlotte Mason having home-schooled her own 3 children for a short time in South Africa. She is a keen artist and enjoys jewellery making, silk painting and many handicrafts. She is also trained in a variety of dance styles and is enthusiastic to teach her pupils country dancing.



Welcome to **Mrs Nicki Proietti** who will be leading as our SENCo. Mrs Proietti has many years of experience in SEND, teaching and management roles. In addition she is both a drama enthusiast and amateur set designer. She is a strong advocate of reading and enjoys a great many sports as well as being very interested in outdoor learning and Forest Schools.

A Letter from our Head Girl, Siana Brealey

"If someone had told me a few months ago that I wouldn't sit my IGCSEs, that I would miss my last term of school, and that I would be doing lessons over 'Zoom' I would have laughed. This however has been the reality. It has been strange, and required a bit of an adjustment. But, it has been really nice having this extra time to prepare myself for my next step, pick up my old hobbies, and enjoy the weather!

It hasn't been an easy year after losing a dear friend. I will never forget Iona; her determination and the way she put her absolute all, into everything she did, something I aspire to do every single day.

My year group has been together for so long - some from the very start - that it is almost as though we are siblings. It will be really odd not seeing everyone everyday but I'm sure we will meet up and I am so glad that an event for the leavers has already been provisionally arranged.

Being Head Girl for the past year has been a massive privilege. I have learnt so much from this experience and my time at Heritage. I have hugely enjoyed it and I wish all the best to next year's Year 11's and the Prefect Team, I know they will do a great job!"

& from our Head Boy, Owain Williams

"Mrs. Rowland, our History teacher, often reminded us that in dramatic points of history, there were children like us, growing up and living their lives. This year we joined those children.

We started the year with the untimely passing of beloved student and friend Iona Sclater, the worst thing that can happen to a school and a community.

Then the pandemic emerged. No matter what year you are in, Covid-19 has made life strange and difficult. For Year 11, it robbed us of the chance to say goodbye. The pandemic isn't over and this point of history will affect us long after Covid is no longer such a threat. However, the most important thing to remember is that tragedy and suffering do not define us. Despite all of this, we are still a community. As children and young adults, we are the ones who will change the future and make it a better place together.

During our time at Heritage we all learn many lessons. I believe that the most important lesson I have learnt here, is how a community makes each one of us so much stronger."

A Note from the HCA Chair, Meg Lowe

Thank you so much for all your support for the HCA this year. The Heritage community is so special, as a result of friendships old and new. It's been wonderful to have so many different events going on this year; a ceilidh, coffee mornings, cake sales, pub evenings and more recently, many zoom catch ups!

Wonderfully, we've also raised lots of money since September; over £1000 for Heritage and over £1000 for Amazing Grace School, Uganda.

Our bank balance now stands at over £4,300 which will be put towards future projects to benefit the school, the pupils and the community, once the building purchase is completed.

As Meg steps down as Chair of the HCA, we are so grateful to her for all she has done. We are pleased to welcome Ellie Stoneley and Rachel Bruins as our new co-Chairs and look forward to an exciting year ahead!

