

From the Parent Council

Cllr Keith Glazier
 East Sussex County Council
 County Hall
 St Anne's Crescent
 Lewes
 East Sussex BN7 1UE

29th July 2008

Dear Councillor Glazier

We are writing to express our concern at the continuing lack of funding available for the renewal, refurbishment and general maintenance of buildings at Thomas Peacocke Community College.

Continuing efforts by staff, students and parents have ensured that the College has made huge strides over the last five years. The College's improving GCSE results meant that in 2006 it was the county's most improved school, becoming the highest achieving co-educational school in the Hastings and Rye Excellence cluster. Exclusion figures continue to decrease. The College is now top of the league in terms of attendance improvement and continues to stay above both the national and county attendance improvement levels. This year the College was awarded Specialist status for the Performing Arts. This September, after months of hard work by staff, students and parents, the College will be re-launched as Rye College. It will be oversubscribed for the 3rd year running.

However, much of this good work is at risk of being undermined by the very poor state of the College buildings, some of which appear to fail to meet even basic Health & Safety standards.

Moreover, it is difficult for us as parents to encourage our children to take pride in their College when the increasingly dilapidated state of the buildings suggests to us that the Council has no interest in providing them with a safe, pleasant and conducive learning environment. Indeed, at a recent Parent Forum held at the College, the depressing and run-down state of the buildings and grounds was raised as a matter of major concern by the parent body.

A decent environment is essential to effective learning. We were pleased to see that you recognized this when you said, with regards to the new Primary School, *'the town really needs this new school which will provide a much better learning environment for the town's young people.'* We believe a better learning environment is now needed for the town's 11-16 year olds.

The proximity of the new Primary School buildings only serves to emphasise the dilapidated state of the senior school. Meanwhile, huge investment is also being made in the new Academies in Hastings, which have been promised substantial capital finance.

Rye has a good, successful and popular College. We would be glad if you could advise us of the plans the County Council have to bring its buildings up to a standard which our children deserve.

Yours sincerely

Jane Ward, Chair

Roy Apps, Deputy Chair; Edward Kooij, Secretary; Katie Barden, Jane Beecham, Diannah Bennett, Fran Bryan, Lyn Giles, Angeline Ledgeway, Jackie Powell, Alison Prentice, Angela Soderberg, Claire Stevens, Sorrel Tucker; Members; Thomas Peacocke Community College Parent Council.

cc: Cllrs Peter Jones, Med Stroude, Rupert Simmons, David Elkin. Matt Dunkley, Director, Children's Services. Cllr Sonia Holmes (RDC), Rye Town Council. Michael J Foster MP, Nick Perry (Lib Dem PC), Amber Rudd (Conservative PC) Ann Cockerham, Principal, Thomas Peacocke Community College
 Liz Baldwin, Chair, Governing Body, Thomas Peacocke Community College
 Lydia Turk, Chair, Student Council, Thomas Peacocke Community College

Rye College

Parent Council

Following the lead of the Scottish Parliament, the Government is actively promoting the setting up of Parent Councils in schools as a way of 'encouraging them to become involved in school life.'

Following a Parent Forum meeting held at the College in December 2007, a group of fifteen parents of students across all the year groups was given the task of setting up a Parent Council. We believe it is the first Parent Council to be established in East Sussex. Another first for Rye!

We have taken our aims from the ideas and comments made by the parents who attended the Parent Forum. We have set these aims out in our constitution. They are:-

- To identify and represent the views of parents on the education provided by the School and other matters affecting the education and welfare of the pupils
- To work in partnership with the school to create a welcoming school which is inclusive for all parents
- To promote partnership between the school, its pupils and all its parents
- To develop and engage in activities which support the education and welfare of the pupils

One of the major concerns raised at the Parent Forum meeting was the state of the buildings at the College. This is a concern that is shared by students, staff and governors and the whole school community. Two of our members have met with Cllr Holmes at a recent Councillors' surgery to discuss this issue. We have also written to Cllr Keith Glazier.

Our members are: Jane Ward, Chair; Roy Apps, Deputy Chair; Edward Kooij, Secretary; Katie Barden, Jane Beecham, Diannah Bennett (Parent Governor link), Fran Bryan, Lyn Giles, Angeline Ledgeway, Jackie Powell, Alison Prentice, Angela Soderberg, Claire Stevens, Sorrel Tucker. Maureen Coleman, Assistant Principal, is our link to the College's SMT.