

### Welcome

Happy New Year to all parents, guardians and pupils! I hope that everyone in our community had a peaceful, relaxing and wonderful Christmas holiday. We have started back this week celebrating the successes of our pupils from the end of last term. In particular the basketball team, coached by our Business Studies Subject Leader, Mr Rodgers. His detailed report on this team's successes is below. Thank you and well done to Mr Rodgers and our great basketball team! Also included in this newsletter is my celebration lunch with the Year 11 pupils who had performed so well in November's mock exams- both in terms of attainment but also commitment to their learning and showing significant improvement since the last round of exams. Finally, I want to thank and celebrate the hard work, commitment and brilliant citizenship of our wonderful pupil, Jack who continues to raise a huge amount of money for the Royal British Legion and his fully deserved promotion to become the youngest member of the Paignton Branch. Well done Jack - we are very proud of you. Wishing all of our community a relaxing weekend.

Mr Williams

## Paignton Academy U16 Southwest Basketball Champions!

15 months after returning to Paignton Academy, Mr Rodgers is again helping to develop fantastic performances by Paignton students on the basketball court. 18 years ago, Paignton, coached by Mr Rodgers, were cruelly denied the National Championship on a tie breaker, decided after the event in a finals weekend in Nottingham. In 2025, this Year 11 team will progress to the South Zonal round of the competition, hoping to go one better.

The Southwest Championships were decided over a 2-day event of 2 teams each from Devon, Cornwall and Wiltshire.

Paignton flew out of the traps on day 1 and comfortably won their first game by 13, 61v48 against Beaminster (Wiltshire). This was a relaxed game with the full squad contributing good minutes and the scoring distributed evenly with 4 players scoring in double figures, Olly 17, Sam 16, Leo 11, Jack 11. Unfortunately, near the end starting point guard, Olly, took a knock that would prevent him from starting game 2.

Without Olly's calming presence pulling the strings, game 2 proved more challenging. Woodroffe (Wiltshire) led from the start and Paignton's challenge became even tougher when 2 other starters, Sam and Jack, both had to be helped off the court due to injury. By the second half Paignton had managed to get level, as the boys gritted in and hustled for every loose ball. No more than Ethan who got elevated to starter during the tournament due to his consistent and infectious tenacity he showed throughout the 2-day event. The critical moment occurred in the 4th quarter,

when Olly, now back on, managed to score back-to-back 3 pointers to create our first substantial lead of the game. This also broke Woodroffe's spirit and the team was able to see out the game 60v48. Sam led the scoring with 26, while Olly also managed 16 despite not starting.



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Game 3 was soon up in an arduous first day. The boys had won 2 games but the toll of playing the games had left them gassed and with 3 starters struggling with fitness. Playing Treviglas (Cornwall), a team that had beaten Paignton by over a combined 50 points in the home and away fixtures last year, things soon got worse as Leo, a 4th starter also pulled up with injury. In all, at different points in the game, Olly, Sam, Jack and Leo all had to be helped off court, but all asked to go back on to fight for the win. Sol really stood up in this game, after feeling lost in game 1 and 2, his 7 points here, and all-round assured play, were vital in keeping the team in touching distance. Treviglas had been cruising most of the game, leading by an average of 10 points through the first 3 quarters, so in a last throw of the dice, coach asked the team to summon up unknown strength and energy, to

play a full press for 3 minutes, an energy sapping approach that involves 100% energy and focus by all, for every split second for it to work. Somehow energy was found, and it worked perfectly as within 3 minutes the game was tied, the team needed to go back to a more traditional defence now and hope they could hold on. Hold on they did and with Sam scoring from the free throw line with 12 seconds left, and then the team defending resolutely to not allow a shot to be taken won Game 3, 47v44. Sam gutted it out to lead again with 20, with Sol next up on 7, and Olly dropping to 2 as injuries really started to affect play.

A new day and the 2 biggest challenges left. Certainly, the tallest challenges with both teams sporting athletic 6'5 players in their teams.

First up Penryn (Cornwall). Given the size advantage Penryn enjoyed it would be difficult to win playing a passive defence, so the idea was to start with a high energy press, try to frustrate them and break their spirit, and then relax a bit later in the game. Paignton's defence was outstanding and we quickly went up by 6 before Penryn even took a shot. However, Penryn are an experienced basketball powerhouse, and they were not going to be easily broken. Although the defence remained outstanding throughout, Paignton were unable to capitalise on enough of the turnovers they created to break the game open as they were stuttering on offence and becoming a bit one dimensional, making it easier in turn for Penryn to stage their own defence, and preventing the team from ever feeling comfortable. The team never trailed, unlike day 1, and although it was never comfortable managed to hold on to win 53v48. Outstanding defence by all but Ethan, Leo and Sam especially created so many turnovers from the opposition it was hard to keep count. Sam led scoring again with 22, with 5 others all scoring at least 4 points.



4 from 4 but standing in Paignton's way was St Luke's, a 3 headed monster from Exeter, who had just demolished all comers, winning 3 of their other games by more than the winning margin of all Paignton's margins combined, 4 wins +33, one St Luke's games +54! They had 3 "Sam's" to our 1. It was just not a fair contest.





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Team was taken down to W5 for some last-minute tactics, with new one of a kind defensive formations drawn up (never before used in 36 years of basketball), motivational team talks – “no matter how bad it gets just don’t give up”, “coach has won from 23 points down before, never give up, just keep going”.

Then something bizarre happened. Straight from tip, their 6’5 Centre placed the ball perfectly over our Paignton’s players heads for another of their star players to take a comfortable 2-point lead two seconds into the game. But it did not happen, the tip was perfectly placed, their star power forward did receive the ball with nothing but the basketball in front of him, but not one but 2 Paignton players got back and knocked the ball out of his hands. That was the story of the game there and then. St Luke’s star 3 continually got the ball in good positions but were then set upon by a pack of Paignton Panthers continually clawing and harassing the opposition and allowing not a seconds rest. A team more used to scoring 26 in a quarter were restricted to 6 in the first quarter and Paignton were leading this machine of a team. Again, scoring was not coming easy, and too much was being funnelled through Sam and his drives to the basket, but he did respond with a career high 36, although the lack of balance restricted the offense. All through the game you waited for the beast of St Luke’s to escape Paignton’s trap defence and storm to victory, but it was not coming..... or was it.

With less than a minute to play and Paignton winning by 7, Paignton drained the clock down then missed a shot and St Luke’s scored, then St Luke’s stole the inbound and scored again, now it was only 3 in it and surely time was up, the game went on Paignton missed and St Luke’s scored a 3 pointer to tie the game, only for the refs to then realise the clock had malfunctioned, we had played about 30 seconds extra, but it is what it is and the game was tied. Mr Rodgers thought the Grinch had stolen Christmas!

St Luke’s started overtime by taking their first lead of the game and starting to look like the team that had driven fear into all those that had come before them. Not the Year 11 Paignton boys however, they lifted themselves off the floor one last time and just kept on fighting to a phenomenal 57v54 win and with it the U16 Southwest Basketball Title.

A massive, massive, massive thanks need to be given to all those at Torbay Tigers, without whom there is no way we could have staged the 2 days of tournaments and got our students ready to play.

For anyone interested in getting involved in basketball in any way in the bay please check out their website [www.torbaytigers.com](http://www.torbaytigers.com) or email [torbaytigers@aol.com](mailto:torbaytigers@aol.com).







## Year 11 PPE Exams Reward Lunch

As the last term concluded, Year 11 students at Borough Road and Waterleat Road were honoured with a delightful buffet lunch hosted by the Principal, Mr Williams. This special event recognised their outstanding achievements in the recent November examinations.

The students were chosen not only for their impressive academic performance but also for their dedication and for surpassing their expected target grades, reflecting their hard work and commitment to excellence.

Congratulations to all the students on their remarkable accomplishments!







## Shoutout to all our amazing skiers!

A huge congratulations to everyone who went on the dry ski slope trip last term!

You were all fantastic, demonstrating incredible resilience when the skiing got challenging.

Keep up the splendid work, and remember, the slopes are just the beginning of your incredible adventures!



## Student Success



Jack, a Year 8 student, recently received a letter informing him that he is now a Youth Member of the Royal British Legion, Paignton Branch. He is the youngest member ever recorded in the Bay and County!

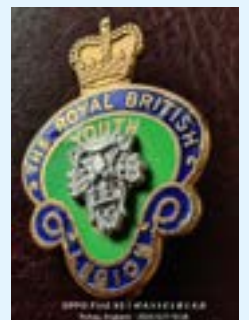
Attached are photos of his badge, which he will proudly wear while working with the Legion, along with a photo of the letter from the Membership Officer.

We are extremely proud of Jack! After dedicating so much time to raising money, he can now extend his service to charity.

Jack will join the branch alongside his Dad, who is the Vice Chairman of the The Royal British Legion - Paignton Branch.



Congratulations  
Jack,  
on your  
achievements!



**Paignton Academy**

Please like and follow our Facebook and Instagram pages to keep up to date with Paignton Academy's news.

Dates for Your Diary	
Wednesday 15th January	BRC Options Evening
Thursday 16th January	WRC Options Evening
w/c Monday 20th January	Year 9 Exams
Wednesday 29th January	WRC Year 9 Careers Day
Wednesday 5th February	BRC Year 9 Careers Day