

The Waldorf at St John's, Marlborough

When the Trustees came up with the idea of launching the *Waldorf Experience* described in David's blog I approached Nicky Edmondson, the Principal of St John's, Marlborough. Her immediate response was very enthusiastic and she quickly saw how the *Waldorf* could help the school's programme of outreach to local communities. With this backing I quickly moved on to the practical planning. I worked with Sally xxxxx who helped to coordinate things on the school side and with Sue xxxx and Holly xxxxx on catering and music.



The result of much hard work from so many wonderful people was that we were able to hold two very successful Waldorf events at St John's. The first was in April and the second at the end of June. We catered for 34 guests on the first occasion and 32 on the second, although that number could have been a lot more as news of the first *Waldorf* had spread. We now have a waiting list for future events and have promised that those disappointed this time can come to the next *Waldorf* in the autumn.



Both events proved very enjoyable for all concerned with excellent food and great entertainment from the students, all much appreciated by everyone.

The sixth form students who acted as hosts and served the food and drinks were superb ambassadors

both for the school and for young people in general. The interaction between them and the guests was a joy to witness and the students enjoyed the events as much as our guests did.

The food was of a very high standard. Sue, the catering manager at St John's, and her team produced an afternoon tea that would have graced the tables of any of the top hotels. Guests commented on how lovely everything was and tucked in with gusto to the beautifully presented sandwiches and cakes.

Because these first two events were pilots we wanted to build on what worked. We were surprised by how much we got right but there is always room for improvement and also innovation to keep *Waldorf* fresh and exciting. One change we made from our first event to our second was to extend the entertainment to include students from all years in the school and embrace a more ambitious programme. It worked a treat.



We had instrumental pieces and singing solos and duets all through the first part of the afternoon followed by the school jazz band for the second half. Fantastic performances from all and very much appreciated by our guests who did not mind that the jazz band was quite loud! Many thanks go to Holly and Emily and the very talented students who entertained us all so well.



The singalong with students and guests was a great success.

The best part of both events was the interaction between everyone - the guests with the students and the guests amongst themselves. Our guests had the chance to make new friends and renew old friendships - it was really surprising how many of the guests knew each other but had lost touch over time.

The response to both *Waldorf* afternoons has been very humbling - so many people wanted to thank the Foundation and St John's for organising the event. They appreciated that we made it easy for them to attend and were overjoyed for giving them such a special afternoon.

Many of our guests also wanted to praise the students for the high level of entertainment but more especially for their friendly and respectful manner.

Bridging the gap between young and old is a very important part of what the *Waldorf Experience* is all about and if we judged the two pilots solely on that criteria alone we would consider them an overwhelming success.



A real buzz has been created by everybody who has been involved in putting on *Waldorf* and more people want to be involved. This response is a strong motivator for us to do more.

So next steps - another *Waldorf* at St John's in the autumn followed by our "Concert with Canapés" early next year. We intend to invite to the concert all those guests who have attended our *Waldorf* afternoons as well as all those others who have helped with identifying possible guests, providing transport and generally giving us the support we need to bring these special events to fruition.

We are really looking forward to getting these next two events planned and are confident that they will both be a great success.