Saint Felix School
SOUTHWOLD

BEYOND THE HORIZON

with Matt Oakman

Autumn 2025

Dear Old Felicians,

Much has happened at Saint Felix since I last wrote, with the previous academic year drawing to a close with a memorable Parents' Day that highlighted and showcased the student talent across all facets of the educational provision. As well as celebrating those who have succeeded academically across the year, it was a wonderful opportunity to hear and see some of the musical, dramatic, artistic and creative highlights from the year.

Over the summer, strong A Level results, which resulted in excellent university destinations, and very pleasing GCSE results at the higher end displayed the hard work ethic in place amongst both the students and their teachers. One of the greatest strengths at Saint Felix is undoubtedly the sense of community, where support is built on positive and individualised relationships that benefit all. There have also been numerous student successes across a wide variety of different sports (Golf, Go-Karting, Showjumping and Swimming to name a few), as well as significant academic achievements and involvement in a wide array of local community projects, including leading the East Suffolk Youth Council; they never fail to impress.

The new curriculum, co-curricular programme, mentoring scheme and Saint Felix Diploma are all now in their second year, where we have looked to adapt where necessary and extend beyond where possible. As a smaller and more individualised school where personal relationships are at the heart of all that we do, we offer an educational provision that is deliberately set out for our students to ensure a richness of opportunity and the possibility to excel and develop mastery. A new scholars programme has just begun, Sailing is taking off, and our students are learning research and referencing skills via extended academic projects. It is exciting to see what they will go on to achieve.

In September, our new Football pitch at the back of Gardiner and Somerville hosted a match against the OFs, which you will be pleased to know resulted in a victory for our former students. On the back of a successful Golf match as well, where the students fought hard but were unable to beat the wily experience of the OFs, we are looking to host more such sporting events. With an OF Netball match next in the pipeline, please do contact our Head of Sport (Sam Borrer – saborrer@stfelix.co.uk) if you would like to take part in this or any of our future OF sporting fixtures.

Work has continued to upgrade our facilities, with Bronte now nearing completion as it becomes an International Centre to host immersion group visits, summer camps and residential opportunities. With revitalised teaching and learning spaces on the ground floor, accommodation units for the visiting students and their teachers on the first floor, and social spaces on the top floor, it will enhance the educational experience for our own students whilst also providing an important extra revenue stream. The next major project will entail turning the Sports Hall and Pool area into a fully functioning Leisure Centre that will both benefit our students enormously and provide a much-needed resource for the local community.

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The annual OF Reunion will take place on Saturday, 9th May 2026; please do add the date to your diary. All OFs are welcome, along with up to five of their extended families or friends. This year, we will be enhancing the experience with a Summer Garden Party theme. As well as an opportunity to reconnect with old friends, it provides an opportunity to revisit the grounds and buildings, meet our current students and hear some of the beautiful music that they will play for you, and find out more about the future plans for Saint Felix. I do hope to see you there. You can book your places at www.trybooking.com/uk/FMZX. In addition, Saint Felix will be hosting a Summer Ball on Saturday, 27th June 2026; it would be wonderful if groups of OFs would like to book a table to enjoy an evening of good food, fine wine and some dancing. More details to follow but please do save the date!

As Saint Felix looks to continue to grow and enhance the educational provision, the ongoing and continued support of the OFs is invaluable. If you would like to donate to the school to either help support bursary students or enable us to improve our classroom facilities and equipment, we are able to accept any benefactions via the Isabella Gardiner Trust to ensure that the money is used as intended and separated from Inspired Learning Group which is a commercial business. We are also currently looking into a full restoration of the Sunk Garden as well, where any gifts would enable this beautiful place of sanctuary to be restored to its former glory. More details to follow once we have a full estimate of the cost; I know that it is a place that is special in the hearts of many OFs, and we would like it to become not only a place for reflection but also an arena for outdoor performing arts. Please do contact us initially if you would like to donate and we will be able to link you with the Isabella Gardiner Trustees.

It is with great sadness that Saint Felix School learns of the passing of Mrs. Jayne Camburn. Although Jayne's time at Saint Felix precedes many of our current staff, those who remember her speak with great warmth, fondness, and admiration. They share stories of her unwavering dedication and support, and of how her influence helped to shape the foundations of our early SEND provision — the very foundations upon which our SEND department stands today. Our heartfelt condolences go out to Jayne's family, friends, and all who knew her.

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As Chair of the OF Club, Belinda Strachan has sent me several important messages to include in this letter:

Old Felicians' Club

All students who studied at Saint Felix are eligible to become members of the Old Felicians' Club. There is no joining fee or annual subscription. All you have to do is complete this online form at any time, whether you left Saint Felix recently or many years ago. Many OFs' contact details have also become out of date, so please do update yours and encourage your friends to do so too.

Drinks in London with a Talk by Claire Davies (OF) about her recently published book and AGM: Tuesday, 3rd March 2026

The next OFC event will be held at The Farmers Club at 3 Whitehall Court, London SW1A 2EL (nearest tube station is Embankment) on Tuesday, 3rd March 2026 at 6.30pm. The evening will start with a very short AGM. Following the AGM, we are very excited to welcome Claire Davies who will talk about her book 'Braver Than You Think: Cycling to Self-Discovery from Land's End to John O' Groats'. Signed copies of Claire's book will be available to buy. We will then have the chance to enjoy a drink and meet up with other OFs. A pay bar will be available throughout the evening.

Claire (St George's and Somerville 1976 -86) is a former speech writer and diplomat. At a mid-life low point, she took a sabbatical and decided to cycle the length of the British mainland, unprepared, unsupported, and alone. Her book, 'Braver Than You Think, Cycling to Self-Discovery, From Land's End to John O'Groats', describes her experience and the many lessons she learned along the way, including how empowering it can be to step outside your comfort zone, and how healing it can be to spend time alone in nature. Since 2023, she has cycled through 9 more European countries from end to end and hopes to complete them all in the coming years.
The event is free of charge but please let us know if you are coming, so that we know how many OFs to expect, by emailing us at OFClub@stfelix.co.uk Please note the dress code for The Farmers Club.

Keeping in touch

Please do let the OFC committee know any suggestions for events that you would like the committee to arrange. It would also be great to hear any news about your life since leaving school or reunions that you have had with friends, and memories of your school days, by emailing us at OFClub@stfelix.co.uk OF News will be included from time to time in the Saint Felix newsletter.

Mentoring scheme

Saint Felix is keen to match current pupils and recent leavers to OFs who can mentor them in their chosen career. Please do contact the Head of HE and Careers at Saint Felix, Mr Alex Grimmer (agrimmer@stfelix.co.uk) if you feel that this is something you would like to get involved with. We are very appreciative of OFs who have recently volunteered to assist pupils wishing to undertake careers in the performing arts and other areas.

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At Saint Felix, we are tremendously proud of our ability to offer excellence in education which is also financially accessible to as many families as possible. Our Emerging Talent Awards (for Reception to Year 6) and Scholarships (from Year 7 to Year 13) are available for students who demonstrate flair and the potential to excel in academics, sport, swimming, music, visual arts and/or performing arts. Such awards can offer up to 50% fee remission. Additionally, applicants who are related to an Old Felician benefit from a 5% OF discount.

We are also very excited to announce that we are now accepting applications for the Isabella Gardiner Bursary. This is a Bursary that can provide up to 100% fee remission and is open to residents of Southwold, Reydon and Wangford who are joining Year 9, 10 or 12 in September 2026. Please pass this news on if you know of anyone who may be interested.

It only leaves me to say thank you for your continued support of Saint Felix and I hope to see you at one of the numerous events planned over the coming months. The next newsletter for OFs will come out in February.

With warmest regards,

Matthew Oakman
Head

Please find dates for your calendar below.

Drinks in London with a Talk by Claire Davies: Tuesday, 3rd March 2026

OF Reunion: Saturday, 9th May 2026 at Saint Felix School

Saint Felix School's Summer Ball: Saturday, 27th June 2026

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