



ECO-COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

CHRISTMAS TERM 2023

Dear Parents and Pupils

Welcome to another edition of our Eco-Council Newsletter.

Firstly, we would like to take this opportunity to introduce this year's Eco-Councillors and to welcome some new faces:

6th Form – Rachel Lambert

S5 – Amelia Brocklebank, Adam Farley

S4 – Dan Grugeon

S3 – Samuel Hayles

S2 – Millie Henley

S1 – Katie Cottrell

Year 6 – Ann Spicer, Isla Bell

Year 5 – Hugo Bradley-Brown, Asanka Newte

Year 4/3 – Lovella-Faith Holland, Beatrix Pragnell, Neave Bell

Year 2 – Amelia Rhodes

Year 1/R – Ella Holland

This edition's focus is coral reefs. Rachel Lambert and Dan Grugeon have both written a very interesting article for our newsletter.



Hidden just below the water line lies the world's oldest and most biologically diverse ecosystem. As if its magnificent colours and natural beauty were not enough, it also provides habitats and a source of food for almost 8000 different species of fish, as well as turtles, sharks, crustaceans, cephalopods and more. Not only does this ecosystem benefit the marine world but also us. The reefs provide natural coastal protection against waves and storm surges, taking 97% of energy out of these, helping to prevent damage to the coast, infrastructure, homes and lives. On top of this, reefs generate around £6 trillion of global income every year. From providing food for local coastal communities to jobs for fisherman and the largest factor, income and livelihoods from tourism. Reefs bring in visitors from around the world to marvel at their awe inspiring vibrance. Lastly, the corals live symbiotically (meaning the one helps the other and vice versa) with an algae, and this relationship is helping scientists who study them to discover new ideas including life changing medical cures.

However, coral reefs are under serious threat. Global warming leads to a rise in sea temperatures, which can put corals under stress, causing them to expel their symbiotic algae. This means removing the corals' main source of oxygen, food and protection. This event is called 'coral bleaching' because it makes the corals turn white, and unless temperatures cool again the corals can die. Coral reefs face many other human-induced threats too. Climate change causes extreme weather such as hurricanes and cyclones to happen more often, which can damage coral reefs. Increased levels of carbon dioxide dissolving in the oceans leads to ocean acidification (becoming more acidic), making it harder for corals to build their calcium carbonate exoskeletons. Pollution from agriculture, plastic, sewage, waste and oil spills may contain chemicals that are harmful to corals. Trawling, a fishing technique that involves dragging a large net along the seabed is destroying entire reefs. In addition, coral heads are sometimes collected for jewellery or to be placed in aquariums. As you can see the list goes on.

Fortunately, there are things that can be done to help our reefs. There are many organisations that have created projects where they are growing coral nurseries in order to help repopulate the reefs, as well as submerging structures that support the growth of the corals' exoskeleton. However, this is an expensive and time-consuming task and unfortunately time is running out. We, as individuals, must make an effort to be considerate towards our reefs and marine life that supports it. Even around the coast of the Island there are reefs, meaning it is crucial that we as a community are aware of them. For example, if you are going swimming try and use a reef friendly sunscreen; if you see litter, whether on a beach, in the sea or elsewhere, pick it up because all rubbish can end up harming marine life; and try to conserve the water you use, as the less water you use, the less contaminated run off ends up back in the ocean. Finally, spread the word and make sure people are aware of the incredibly precious and fragile habitat that exists just beyond our sight. It requires everyone's efforts to help.

Mrs White and I meet with the Eco-Council every Thursday, and both of us agree that they are a dedicated group of pupils determined to make a difference to our school, Island, national and global environments. They choose their own topics for discussion, set and manage their own agendas, and discuss matters with intelligence and maturity. Every year group is represented, and their teamwork and support for each other is inspiring. If any parents or family friends work in environmental roles and would like to talk to the Council, then please do get in touch. Mrs White and I are very proud of them, and we hope you enjoy reading this bulletin.

Mrs K White and Mr David EJJ Lloyd