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# Hills news



A termly round-up  
from Hills Road Sixth  
Form College.

Summer 2026 hillsroad.ac.uk



From left: Tim Lomas, Ian Pryer, Vicky Williamson, Chris Hemming, Jo Trump, Ali Kirkman with the awards.

## Success at the National Sixth Form College Awards 2026

Hills Road is delighted to have won the Sixth Form Colleges Association Award for Sustainability, in the Climate Action category and was named runner-up in the Health and Wellbeing category for our Coaching programme at the Award ceremony on 17 June. The awards recognise outstanding practice across the sixth form college sector and reflect the dedication and expertise of colleagues across the College.

Principal Jo Trump said: "What makes this recognition particularly special is that it reflects the strength and breadth of the work taking place across the College every day, both in terms of our commitment to climate education and to a coaching culture.

Read the full story at:  
[hillsroad.ac.uk/sfca-2026](https://hillsroad.ac.uk/sfca-2026)

**“I would like to thank all colleagues who have contributed to these achievements for their talent, dedication and innovation.”**

**JO TRUMP, PRINCIPAL**

**Also inside:** Students at Hills Road once again demonstrated their commitment to social change during Social Action Week 2026, held from 18 to 22 May. Read more on pages 4-5.

# 2 AT A GLANCE



Students visiting the Wellcome Genome campus.

## DNA detectives

The DNA Barcoding Enrichment group earlier this year had the amazing opportunity to visit the Wellcome Genome Campus.

Students investigated real-world applications of genetics and biotechnology as they explored how DNA technology can be used to verify food authenticity. In addition to applying advanced molecular biology techniques in a state-of-the-art setting, they saw the largest DNA sequencing facilities in the

world and met a range of people working in the genomics field.

The visit was made possible through a Royal Society Partnership grant to Hills Road Biology to explore food authenticity in supply chains; and kindly supported by the Wellcome Sanger Institute, one of our valued STEM partners.

Read more at: [hillsroad.ac.uk/latest-news/year-12-students-dive-into-dna-to-test-food-authenticity](https://hillsroad.ac.uk/latest-news/year-12-students-dive-into-dna-to-test-food-authenticity)

## From Hills Road to Sunday Brunch

On Sunday 31 May, former Music Technology student, Nikki Figueroa Czarnobaj 2021-23, appeared on Channel 4's *Sunday Brunch*, performing alongside singer-songwriter Freya Ridings.

Nikki was also recently selected to perform at an exclusive industry event celebrating the release of the Bob Dylan biopic *A Complete Unknown* in yet another milestone in his gowing career. Congratulations Nikki, we look forward to seeing what you do next.



Nikki (left) with pop star Freya Ridings (centre).

## Local social enterprise inspires for IWD 2026



Kate Nation talking to students.

Back in March, Hills Road welcomed Kate Nation, CEO and founder of Cambridge social enterprise Turtle Dove, for an inspiring lunchtime talk. Kate's talk was arranged as part of the International Women's Day programme, which this year had

the important theme, 'Give to Gain'. Students learned about meeting potential in the charity sector as well as the work of Turtle Dove in supporting young women across Cambridgeshire who face barriers to education, employment or training.



***“Turtle Dove’s talk was a perfect, and local, example of the IWD ‘Give to Gain’ theme in action.”***

**KAREN WHITE-VARMA,  
HEAD OF STUDENT  
PERSONAL DEVELOPMENT**



From left: Society leaders Jerome, Isabella and Sofia.

## Society launches competition

The Hills Road Law Society wowed this academic year, as they launched their own student-led essay competition. Planned, delivered and marked entirely by the students, the initiative encourages participants to tackle complex legal questions, develop analytical skills and engage

with issues that extend beyond the curriculum. Competition winner Eliska Hradilova said the competition helped her “strengthen my research, organisation, and planning skills”.

Read more at: [hillsroad.ac.uk/latest-news/law-essay-competition](https://hillsroad.ac.uk/latest-news/law-essay-competition)

## Filmmakers of the future

Hills Road students studying Film and Media got inspired this spring as they attended the Watersprite Film Festival. Through screenings, talks and networking opportunities, students were able to engage directly with industry professionals and emerging creatives. Students gained valuable exposure to storytelling, production and the many pathways available in the creative sector.

**“I really loved the overall atmosphere, with so many people passionate about developing careers in the film industry!”**

**KAMILA MATVIIENKO, Y12**



The new Student Council members with Tim Lomas.

## Meet our new Student Council

We are pleased to announce the election of the new Student Council, comprising ten Year 12 students who will play a key role in representing the student body and supporting college initiatives.

Florence Cross has been elected as Chair and will also lead on Equality and Community. Jayden Lam has

been appointed Vice Chair and will serve as Societies Officer. The remaining members of the Council are Ethan Cheung (Treasurer), Amy Kellythorn (Inclusion), Dan Frumson (Communications and Social Media), Melis Korkmaz (Mental Health), Angie Abdelhamid (Charities), Bow Hughes (Environment), Emme Mak (Secretary), and Ella Guron (Events Officer).

Vice Principal Tim Lomas said: “This is an exceptional group of students who have already demonstrated strong leadership qualities. I have been particularly impressed by their commitment throughout the campaign process, as well as the exciting range of ideas they have put forward. I very much look forward to working with them all.”

# 4 SOCIAL ACTION WEEK

## Over £40,000 raised during Social Action Week

On 18-22 May, Year 12 students raised an outstanding £40,034 (total at the time of writing) during Social Action Week 2026, supporting an impressively wide range of charities and community causes.

Social Action Week challenges students to design and deliver projects linked to causes they are passionate about. Working in teams, they spent the week planning campaigns, organising fundraising activities and engaging with their chosen charities, while developing valuable skills in leadership, teamwork, communication and problem-solving.

This year's fundraising projects showcased remarkable creativity and commitment, ranging from sponsored walks and bake sales to a quiz in the hall and fun social media challenges - all aimed at making a positive impact beyond the College community.



**“**Our students have made a meaningful difference to individuals, communities and the wider world – they are true agents of change.”

SARA MACFARLANE,  
HEAD OF ENRICHMENT





The week concluded with student presentations, where teams reflected on their achievements and the lessons they had learned throughout the process. Representatives from event sponsors PEM and supporters Unloc attended the presentations and commended students on their professionalism, creativity and dedication.

Congratulations to all students involved on another successful and inspiring week of fundraising!





The men's and women's volleyball teams.

## Hills shines on the National sporting stage

A team of 54 Hills Road students proudly represented the East Region at the AoC National Finals at the University of Nottingham over the weekend of 18 April, competing alongside around 3,000 students from colleges across the country.

The students delivered a series of impressive performances across the weekend. Morgan Gall secured a silver medal in Women's Tennis, while the Women's Volleyball team battled their way to a silver medal finish. In Cross Country, Kalle Van Paridon's performance helped the East Region team claim another silver medal.

Elsewhere, the Cricket team finished sixth overall, while both Badminton and Men's Volleyball achieved fifth-place finishes, with the volleyball team also receiving a Sportsmanship Award nomination. The Mixed Hockey team recovered from a challenging opening day to record two victories on Sunday, alongside strong performances in Tennis and Table Tennis.

More importantly, Hills Road students were outstanding ambassadors for the College, demonstrating determination, teamwork and sportsmanship throughout the event.



These opportunities are made possible through the generous support of our sponsors, whose contributions help fund team kits, coaching and equipment. We are grateful to **Blues Property, Hill, Hollis, Ingleton Wood, WPA Benevolent Foundation** and **Zephyr** for their support.

To find out more about supporting Hills Road sport, contact our Development Office via [lbrinson@hillsroad.ac.uk](mailto:lbrinson@hillsroad.ac.uk)

# Sports Awards 2026



Members of Sports teams proudly flew the flag for Hills all year.

Award winners from across Hills Road's sports teams were recognised at the annual Sports Awards Evening, celebrating achievement, commitment and leadership throughout the 2025-26 season.

Held at the Hilton in Cambridge city centre, the event brought together students, staff and coaches for an evening of celebration, recognising individuals and teams who made outstanding contributions to sport at the College throughout the year.

See the list of winners at: [hillsroad.ac.uk/latest-news/sport-awards-2026](https://hillsroad.ac.uk/latest-news/sport-awards-2026)



Students at the Awards evening following a successful 2025-26 season.



2025-26 trophies.



Some students won in multiple categories.



Attendees enjoying the well-deserved celebrations.

# 8 PERFORMING ARTS

During the Spring term, Year 13 Performing Arts students performed in their final practical exams in front of visiting examiners. Good luck to all our wonderful students as they await results from their exams.

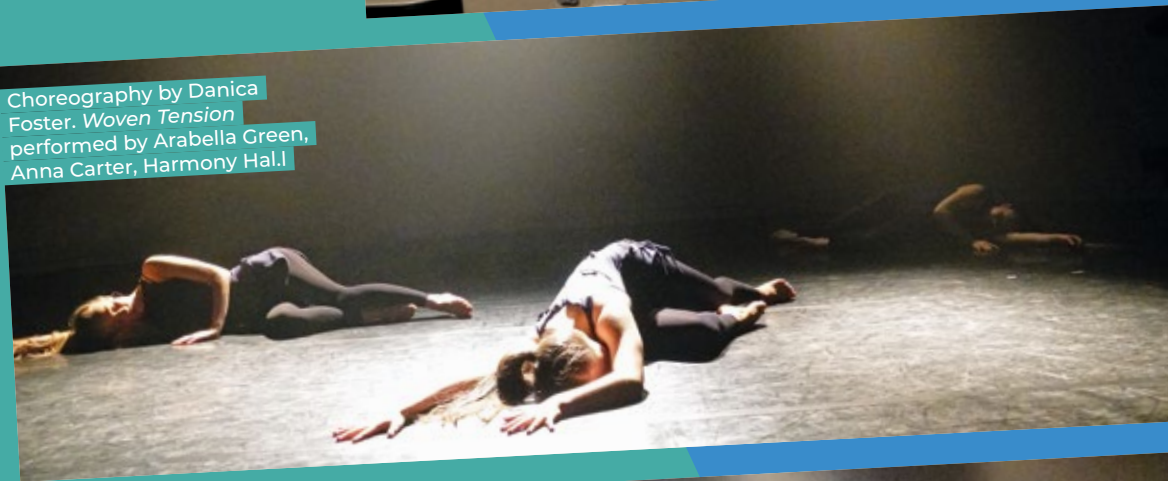
Aoibheann Leighton-Scott performing a monologue from *Adult Child/Dead Child*.



## Dance

Dance students performed their own work, choreographing fabulous group and solo pieces to a diverse range of music from Tchaikovsky to Jocelyn Pook.

Choreography by Danica Foster. *Woven Tension* performed by Arabella Green, Anna Carter, Harmony Hall.



Group Choreography by Rielle Sutherland. *Caged Freedom* performed by Leona Catchpole, Lee Murphy, Rielle Sutherland.





Hugh Devitt Williams, Eloise Scotland, Rex Brookes performing *Accidental Death of an Anarchist*.



Clarice Cavill and Ava Henry performing a duologue from *Blood Wedding*.



Clarice Cavill cross examines Marnie Pounds watched by members of the ensemble in *Machinal*.

## Drama

Drama students performed a huge range of work they had chosen themselves, from fast-talking New York comedy, *The Odd Couple*, performed in a naturalistic style, to an intense piece of physical theatre from Lorca's great tragedy, *Blood Wedding*.

Starring the talented Y12 Enrichment group, *Much Ado About Nothing* brought Shakespeare's masterpiece of a romantic-comedy to life. Hotel Messina awaited the audience, and they enjoyed their stay!

“Looking back on our production of *Machinal*, it is important to recognise the exceptional commitment shown by everyone involved. From the earliest rehearsals to the final performance, students brought dedication, creativity and enthusiasm, resulting in a powerful and focused production that held its audience throughout.”

JONATHAN BONNET,  
PERFORMING ARTS

What's coming up? Come and experience a truly unique night at the theatre showcasing our talented students.



Book here

# 10 ECO SPOTLIGHT



REUBEN  
COWELL, Y13

*“The HR4.5K is one of my favourite dates in the College calendar. It was great to see everyone come together to dress up, raise money and have fun outside.”*



## Supporting Eco Week 2026



From fancy dress runners at the HR4.5K to talks from national figures in politics, journalism and sustainability, Eco Week 2026 brought environmental action to life across the college.

As ever, the annual HR4.5K fun run was a real highlight, as students and staff donned costumes, got active and raised funds for Just One Tree's reforestation projects in Kenya.

Students also heard from guest speakers including Pippa Heylings MP (shown above in green) and Alan Rusbridger, and explored sustainable living through the Eco-Fair, clothes swap and book swap. Organised with support from student Sustainability Reps, the programme showcased the College's commitment to sustainability and demonstrated how individual actions can contribute to tackling climate change and biodiversity loss.

## There is no Planet B

Jo Trump, Principal and Chris Graham, Sustainability Lead delivered a talk at this year's Sixth Form Colleges Association conference on Thursday 18 June, entitled 'There is no Planet B - making progress on sustainability and towards Net Zero'.

They discussed the strategies introduced at the College to reduce its carbon footprint, including being a flight-free college, Eco-week, introducing the Level 3 qualification in Sustainability as an Enrichment activity for Year 12 students, partnering with the Cambridge Institute for Sustainability Leadership and converting to electric minibuses.

Jo said: "It's great to have the opportunity to share what we do and why it matters with colleagues across the sector."



***"Having the chance to support and encourage others is even more important than just doing it ourselves."***



CHRIS GRAHAM,  
SUSTAINABILITY LEAD



Anna Hughes (second left) with students from the Level 3 Sustainability Enrichment group and Sustainability Reps with Jo Trump (third right).

## Hills Road achieves Gold Award for Flight Free status

At the final staff meeting in June this year, Anna Hughes, Director of Flight Free UK presented Hills Road staff and students with the Gold Award in recognition of the College's flight-free status since 2020.

So impressed was Anna that she invited Hills Road to feature as a case study college on the Flight Free UK website and asked Hills Road students to be part of the film production crew

***"Thank you to students Oliver, Kamila, Lara and Lena for their help making the film, and to staff at Hills Road for helping to make it happen."***

ANNA HUGHES,  
DIRECTOR FLIGHT FREE UK

to create a film about how the College became flight-free, as reported in our Spring edition. The film celebrates the role of our College as a case study, with staff and students discussing how and why all trips no longer involve flying to the destination. Since 2020, all College trips have been undertaken by coach, rail or ferry.

Chris Graham, Sustainability Lead, explained the value of the students' participation in the project: "By combining environmental leadership with creative media skills, our students are not only stepping forward as sustainability advocates, but also developing their ability to communicate complex issues in a clear and engaging way."

The students' film is now available on the College website, together with insights from the filmmakers about what they learned from the project: [hillsroad.ac.uk/latest-news/flight-free-film](https://hillsroad.ac.uk/latest-news/flight-free-film)

# 12 STUDENT AWARDS



Winners of the 2026 Responsible & Active Citizen award.

“We are delighted to see so many of you recognised for the positive difference you make to the lives of others and to the wider College community.”

JO TRUMP, PRINCIPAL

## Class of 2026 celebrated at Student Awards



Jo Trump presented Reuben Cowell with the Jack Merritt Award.



Peer-nominated winners in the Resourceful & Resilient category.

On Thursday 7 May, Year 13 were invited to celebrate the remarkable contributions they have made to life at Hills Road during their time at the College.

This year, there was an impressive number of nominations across all of our core value awards (Creative & Confident Learners; Resourceful & Resilient Individuals; and Responsible & Active Citizens), pointing to the talent, commitment and positive impact of this cohort.

From academic excellence and personal resilience to leadership and community engagement, students were recognised for the many ways they have enriched college life. The ceremony also included peer-nominated awards, the presentation of the Jack Merritt Award, and a special celebration video reflecting on the experiences and achievements of the Class of 2026.

See the full list of winners and watch the Year 13 celebration video at [hillsroad.ac.uk/latest-news/student-awards-2026](https://hillsroad.ac.uk/latest-news/student-awards-2026)



Winners of the 2026 Resourceful & Resilient Individual award.



Peer-nominated winners in the Creative & Confident category.