

Excitement as ribbon cut on new £3m multi-purpose arena at bay academy



Torbay MP Kevin Foster cut the ribbon to open the Arena, with head teacher Mark Smith and head boy and girl John Welch and Elise Pulham

by GUY HENDERSON

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PAIGNTON Academy's new £3.15 million Arena has been officially opened.

The new development at the Academy's Borough Road base is a single-storey, multi-use hall.

It features retractable seating which leads to a mezzanine level and a lecture theatre which can also be used as a performance space.

The new building replaces a dated 1930s teaching block, and includes a kitchen, dining hall, entrance lobby and reception.

New groundworks, landscaping and car parking further improve the campus.

Paignton Academy head teacher Mark Smith said: "This facility will give our students a specialist performing arts centre and a modern dining hall at the heart of the college.

"The students are excited about the opening of the centre and we are very much looking forward to using the space to improve the learning experience for all of its users."

Stephen Kings, CEO of the Bay Education Trust which includes the academy, added: "This project adds so much value to Paignton Academy."

"Not only does it replace old accommodation with inspiring new facilities, it also enhances the offer to young people and parents of Torbay."

"TDA has supported this project from writing the bid for funding through to the final stages of the build."

"Their knowledge and understanding of the process has helped deliver this fantastic outcome."

Torbay MP Kevin Foster cut the ribbon, and was joined for the formalities by Anthony Mangnall, MP for Totnes, head teacher Mark Smith and head boy and girl John Welch



and Elise Pulham.

Former pupil Doug Cole also received a special invitation to the event, following the discovery of his 'time capsule' in the boiler room during construction works.

At the age of 15 - more than 70 years ago - along with another pupil, Colin Brewer, he buried some of his exercise books with a note in three milk bottles, which lay hidden under the building until its demolition last

year.

Mr Brewer has since died, but the academy has been in contact with his son Tony, who has visited the academy and still lives locally.

Doug Cole was born in 1933 and attended Tweenaway Boys' School, as the site was known back in 1940. He remembers the evacuated children from London and being educated half of the week with them and having half of the week off.

After finishing school, Mr Cole completed two yeazzars of national service and went on to work at STC, based in Paignton, for 40 years.

He also volunteered as a coast-guard for 40 years.

In 1993, he was awarded a British Empire Medal (BEM) in the New Year's Honours list for services to coast guarding.

One of Mr Cole's four children, Karen, works at Paignton Academy and his grandson, Sam, has started as a pupil in Year 7.

Mix of affordable homes delivered for South Hams

SOUTH Hams District Council is housing schemes will also include

A planning application has been