



St Brigid's News

Special Edition
12th October 2020

Dear Parents/Carers,

Lieutenant Colonel Alistair James Wood was awarded the MBE this week for his contribution to the Combined Cadet Force. Col Jim Wood (as he is more commonly known) was nominated for the award of MBE in 2019 by the former Headteacher of St Brigid's School, Ms Rona Jones and the 160th Brigade (Welsh) Army cadet team. The award is in recognition of Col Wood's tireless efforts as a volunteer to develop and continue the Combined Cadet Force at St Brigid's school.

Col Jim Wood joined the Regular Army as an Officer in the Royal Signals in 1984, serving a full career until his retirement in 2009. Following his retirement from the Army, Col Wood took up the position of Contingent Commander of the St Brigid's CCF, initially for six months to 'help out'. When Col Wood took over the role of Contingent Commander in 2009, the CCF was a small and struggling unit which was under threat of closure with very few adult volunteers and only 10 registered cadets.

Col Wood set about developing the resources, staffing and curriculum of the school's CCF and has transformed it into the hugely successful organisation that it is today. St Brigid's is one of only 6 state schools in Wales with a CCF and currently has over 100 cadets registered. In addition, the CCF now has a



regular contingent of 7 adult volunteers, both members of staff and others, who give up their time to support the young people of St Brigid's School. This growth is purely attributable to Col Wood's enthusiasm, determination and drive for success. He is an inspirational role model to each and everyone of them.

His 'six month agreement' has now continued for over ten years during which time Col Wood has not only dedicated most of his free time each week to the running of the school's Combined Cadet Force but has given up many weekends to allow the young people of St Brigid's to have the full cadet experience and develop their personal skills.

Col Wood has further used his qualification as a mountain leader to assist with Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions and has further expanded the cadet experience to include indoor climbing which has resulted in over 100 young people achieving National Indoor Climbing Award Scheme qualifications. He has also introduced orienteering, regularly giving up his free time at

weekends to take cadets and other school pupils to participate in local and national competitions with great success (one pupil is currently the under 14s Welsh champion).

All the St Brigid's pupils are given the opportunity to complete in the DofE award at their individual ability level resulting in the school having a higher completion rate than all the seven secondary schools in the locality collectively. Nearly 250 cadets have achieved Bronze Level, 130 Silver and 35 have achieved Gold since 2010 and this is now one of the most successful in terms of pass rates in Wales.

Everyone at St Brigid's are very proud of his achievement and thankful for his contribution to the CCF over the last decade.

Mrs L Crimes
Pennaeth/Headteacher

