DOWNSIDE
SCHOOL

28 October 2026

Dear Old Gregorians and members of the Downside community,

In my announcement of Mike Randall's appointment as Head last week, I said that I would write shortly about the next phase of development and growth that lies ahead for Downside School. I am delighted to report that the purchase of our core site freehold is now complete.

Whilst we have further work to do in raising funds to buy some other elements (such as Plunkett House, which for the time being we continue to lease), our ownership of the main buildings and grounds means we can press ahead with a number of important projects, including:

Project Stabilitas

Named after the Benedictine vow of stability, the purpose of this project is to secure a capital injection for the School, allowing us to invest in our newly acquired buildings and to purchase the remainder. This will ensure our accommodation and facilities continue to meet the needs of the community as it grows and flourishes.

We are in the process of obtaining planning permission for a small housing development on a surplus field. We have already received a positive response to our pre-planning consultation and recent changes in government policy have further bolstered our confidence in the project's success.

Project Albion

Our overseas franchising partner is in the final stages of agreeing the lease on suitable premises and has appointed a project team, which includes a member of Downside School staff to lead the set-up. Having already signed Heads of Terms, we are working on final arrangements and contracts.

Project Fiat Lux

With energy prices ever increasing, and recognising that our listed buildings are difficult to make efficient, we will reduce our expenditure on light and heat by installing solar PV and thermal panels on non-listed buildings and grounds.

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Registered Charity 232548

Project Mustard Seed

This is our fundraising initiative, which both helps us to advance the above projects and supports our means-tested bursaries, as well as the longer-term establishment of an endowment fund.

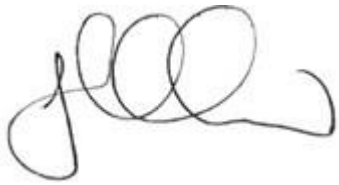
Each of these projects needs immediate 'seed' funding in order that they can grow like the mustard seed, to help sustain the School and its community in future. For example, achieving outline planning for Project Stabilitas will require input from architects, planning consultants, and the commissioning of various surveys. Bringing Project Albion to fruition will mean substantial legal fees, whilst Fiat Lux needs investment in hardware and installation.

We are immensely grateful to those who have already given generously to allow us to reach this point, where we can look to the future with confidence, but we continue to need your support. Whilst pupil numbers are now increasing, they are still below the level they need to be; and, whilst our balance sheet has been strengthened by the purchase of the site, many of the buildings and infrastructure are in need of refurbishment and restoration.

In conversations over recent months with members of our community, many expressed a willingness to give to projects like those above once the site purchase was complete. Others suggested they were waiting for signs that confidence in the School was returning. Now that both of those conditions have been met, we need to ensure Downside School is able not only to survive but to thrive, fulfilling its mission, as a Catholic and Benedictine school, to be a bright light in education and to inspire service in our world.

In order to help with any of the above projects, please follow this link to our website, or for more information on how to support us, please contact Melanie Woods, Director of External Relations on development@downside.co.uk .

In Christ and St Benedict,



John Ludlow
Chair of Governors