

## News

Like us at  
facebook.com/oxfordmailFollow us  
@theoxfordmail

## World's most advanced robot to join business school debate

THE 'world's most advanced social robot' is expected to take on a panel debate in front of Oxford University students.

The robot 'Furhat' will engage in the discussion on the evolving role of robotics in business with students from the Said Business School on March 2.

Originating from Sweden, Furhat communicates with humans by speaking, listening, showing emotions and maintaining eye contact.

The robot will take part in the panel discussion as part of the school's annual Oxford Said Entrepreneurship Forum, joined by Oxbotica founder Ingmar Posner, UiPath chief robotics officer Boris Krumney and Furhat Robotics CEO Al Moubayed.

It will be the fourth year for the event and this time the focus is on technology and sustainability.

Said Business School professor of entrepreneurship and innovation Thomas Hellmann said: "Rapidly developing technologies such as artificial intelligence, driverless vehicles and mobile apps are opening up a new world of opportunities for businesses.

"But this level of disruption requires a new kind of thinking from entrepreneurs.

"Which technologies should they invest in? How can they bring their innovations to scale? And how can they create a sense of 'purpose' in their work?"

"We are helping the business founders of the future to gain a greater insight and understanding into these trends to help them navigate this complex landscape."

The panel discussion will take place from 10.45am to 11.45am and is expected to attract about 400 people to watch the debate.

## Hopefuls appear in front of judges

JUDGES from the worlds of television and music will cast their eyes over hopefuls as auditions begin for a new talent contest.

Didcot is attempting to create its own version of Britain's Got Talent and the first stage will begin tomorrow at the Cornerstone Arts Centre.

Organisers Play2Give and Angels Performing Arts have invited people of all ages, backgrounds and skills – from dance, comedy, musicians, singers and more – to have a go.

Auditions run from 11.15am until late afternoon with successful applicants going forward to compete at the grand final on June 29.

Clare Cook, CEO of Oxfordshire charity Soundabout, will head up the panel of judges on the night alongside the star of TV children's show, *The Worst Witch*, Megan Hughes, and Leroy Dias Dos Santos of street dance group, *Flawless*.

The event is helping to raise money for Soundabout which uses music to unlock the potential of people with learning disabilities.

Money will also benefit the Angels' fund, Off the Streets, which supports disadvantaged children to enjoy dance.

Ms Cook, herself a finalist on Britain's Got Talent in 2017, as part of the Missing People Choir, said, "I am excited and honoured to have been asked to judge this fantastic event, and very grateful to Play2Give and Angel Arts for supporting Soundabout in this way."

## School's reassurance after it slips down ratings



Long Wittenham Primary School.  
Pic: Steve Wheeler

A SCHOOL has reassured parents after being downgraded from a 'good' rating for the first time in at least 20 years.

Long Wittenham CE Primary School, near Didcot, has been judged to 'require improvement' by Ofsted, after decades of upholding a 'good' rating.

The latest report, published on Valentine's Day following an inspection last month, states that quality of teaching at the school is 'variable', despite a 'broad and balanced' curriculum.

It adds that, although steps are being taken to drive change, it is 'too soon to measure the impact'.

Ofsted rated the school 'requires improvement' in three areas, but 'good' for categories of 'early years provision'

and 'personal development, behaviour and welfare', resulting in an overall judgement of 'requires improvement', which is the second-worst standard.

There were many positives in the assessment of the 90-pupil school, however, and the inspector said new teachers had 'added fresh impetus to the momentum for change'.

The inspector said governors boasted 'expertise' and 'know precisely which areas the school needs to improve'.

Ofsted's website lists reports for the school dating back to 1999, all of which resulted in 'good' ratings. The most recent full inspection was in 2014.

The school's head and chair of governors both sent out lengthy letters

to parents about the report, reassuring them that their plan for improvement was already securing positive change.

Headteacher Alison Bellingham wrote: "Our school has seen vast changes, all of which have been entirely necessary to improve outcomes for our pupils."

"We have experienced 100 per cent turnover in teaching staff and 40 per cent turnover in support staff, which inevitably brings challenges in embedding our ethos and vision. In our opinion, this does not read like a school in requires improvement, but a school in the middle of a long and extremely focused journey rooted in a commitment to strive for rapid, accelerated and sustained progress for all of our pupils."

## Agency signs up as OX5 Run's 'biggest ever team' after vote

Naomi Herring

nherring@nqo.com

THERE is just one month to go until the starting whistle will sound for participants in the OX5 Run 2019.

Hundreds of people are expected to tackle the 5K fun run on Sunday, March 24, in aid of Oxford Children's Hospital charity.

Among them will be a team of staff from Oxford letting agency Finders Keepers, as one of the biggest corporate teams in the race's history.

The 37-strong team signed up to the OX5 as it announced the company has taken on the Children's Hospital charity as its cause of the year following a staff vote.

Senior marketing manager Victoria Lyall said: "Every other year we choose out charity of the year and we invite all staff to nominate."

"We have more than 100 staff and interestingly the Oxford Children's Hospital Charity had four votes; the only one to be nominated multiple times."

"It is clearly a charity that everyone is very aware of and passionate about supporting."

Ms Lyall said the company had 22 runners taking on the OX5 Run around Blenheim Palace last year and raised more than £2,500.

This time, the team of 37 employees have a target to raise £3,500 for the children's hospital.

Ms Lyall added: "I went [to the children's hospital] with a colleague to have a look around and it is just amazing."

"Everyone has been in hospital either themselves or with family generally as an adult, but to have to go through that as children must be awful."

"So to have somewhere like Oxford Children's Hospital to go, where it doesn't really feel like a hospital is great."

"They make so much effort, even down to the paintings they have on the walls to calm and distract



Finders Keepers sign up as one of the biggest corporate teams for OX5 Run 2019

## RUNNING TOTAL: 37 lettings staff set to take Blenheim challenge in charity push

children on the way to the operating theatres."

The marketing manager will be taking on the OX5 Run for the first time with her colleagues and said she had been told to expect a fun day with 'lots of hills'.

She added: "It went really well last year and everyone really enjoyed it."

"It is going to be a really nice day of team bonding as well as raising money for a great cause."

The OX5 Run, sponsored by Al-

len Associates, is one of the first in a long line of fundraisers the company have in store for the cause including skydiving, quizzes and other races.

Damon Boughen, community fundraising manager for Oxford Hospitals Charity, said: "We are so thrilled that Finders Keepers have chosen the Oxford Children's Hospital Charity as their charity of the year."

"It's really wonderful when local companies show their support for

the hospitals that serve their local community and we're particularly delighted that Finders Keepers has kicked off their year of fundraising by entering a huge team into the Oxford Mail OX5 Run.

"To have 37 people taking part is just fantastic; we think this is the biggest corporate team the event has ever had."

"We'd encourage all local companies to consider entering a team in this amazing local event."

The run will take place around the grounds of Blenheim Palace and is £17.50 to enter as part of an early bird deal ending tomorrow.

For more details, or to sign up, go to [ox5run.co.uk](http://ox5run.co.uk)