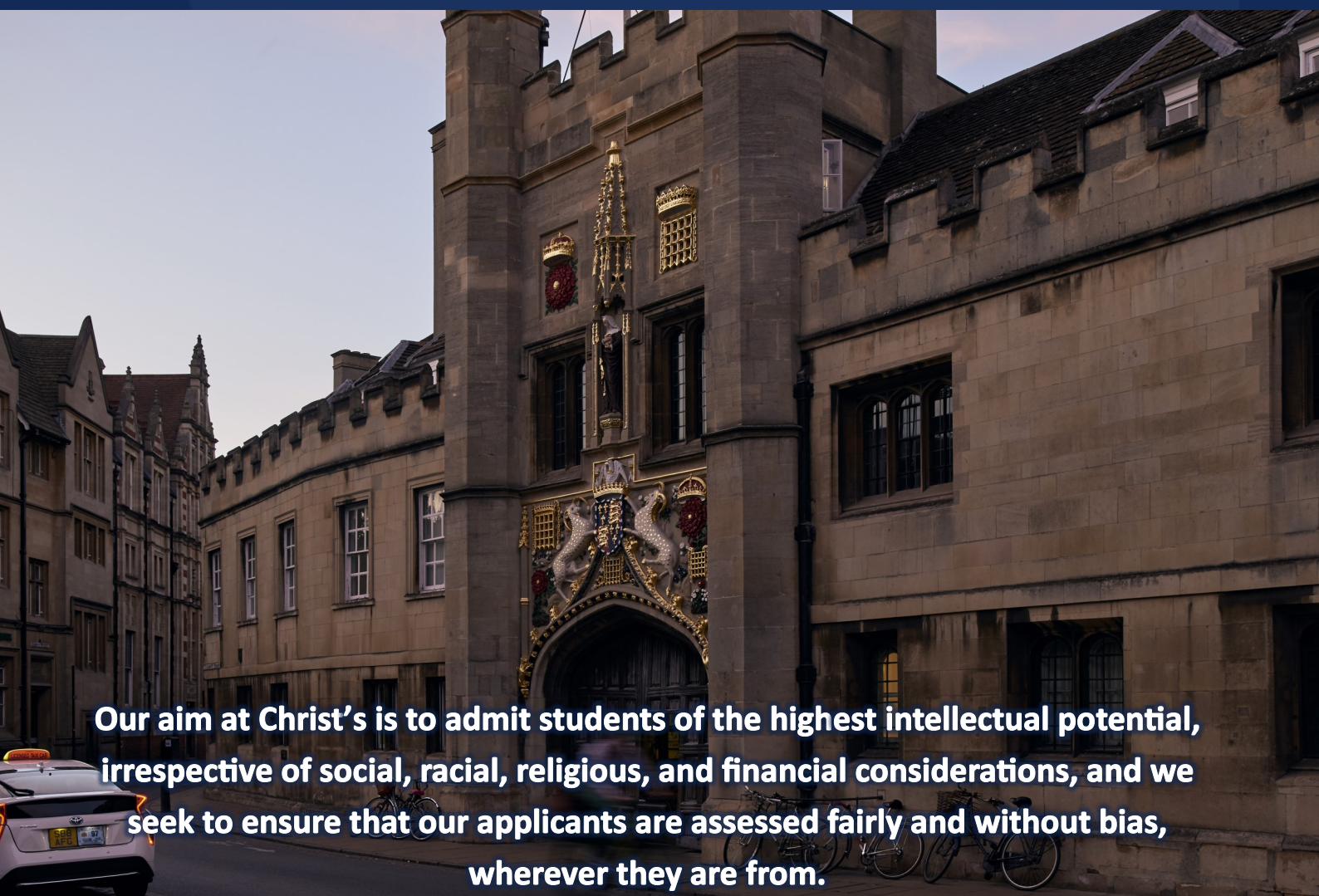




# *Outreach News 2019/20*

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**Our aim at Christ's is to admit students of the highest intellectual potential, irrespective of social, racial, religious, and financial considerations, and we seek to ensure that our applicants are assessed fairly and without bias, wherever they are from.**

We believe that all students benefit from diversity, and that they learn more, and learn better, if they are stretched and challenged by views and experiences unlike their own. To that end, we work to recruit students from a wide range of backgrounds and demographic groups, including groups currently under-represented at Cambridge, and we do our best to ensure that no student with the ability to succeed here is deterred by misconceptions or a lack of information about what our processes entail.

This year, with the ongoing pandemic, has been particularly challenging, and has required our team to quickly adapt and innovate our offerings, in order to continue supporting students online whilst we are unable to hold events in person. **This work will be continuing into the next academic year, and there is no doubt that it will remain a key feature of all future outreach work in the years to come.**

# 2019-20 Timeline pre-Lockdown...

Although it is strange to think about and look back on now, the end of 2019, and the beginning of 2020, was a productive one, with a number of successful Outreach events and school visits taking place up until the end of March.



SEP

## University Open Days

Dr Emily Tomlinson to Nordic Study Abroad Conference

OCT

## First of the Annual Year 12 Open Days

Denmark Academy of Talented Youth students visit

NOV

## Participated in Cambridge's third International HE Advisers conference

Last of four Link School Visits throughout Michaelmas

DEC

## Interviews for the 2019-20 Admissions Cycle take place throughout the month

Four Link School Visits throughout Lent - John Leggott, Stamford School, Bentley Wood, and Nower Hill

JAN

## Brilliant Club Spring launch, followed by Autumn graduation in February

Subject Taster Days begin, continuing to early March

FEB

## Second of the Annual Year 12 Open Days

*'As a first generation state-educated student, I'm very aware of the impact that targeted Residentials, seminars and open days have. If disadvantaged students can see themselves in Cambridge, they're much more likely to apply - especially when their first contact with the University is our wonderful admissions team!'*

Brad (m. 2019), JCR President 2020-21 and former Access Officer



## ...And post-Covid

**Last school visit at beginning of month -  
*IntoUniversity* from Harris Academy Bermondsey**

National Lockdown starts

**Began co-ordinating Project Access Mentoring  
Scheme across Cambridge, 165 students for  
2020 entry - See page 5 for more on mentoring**

Women in Maths moves online, over five weeks

**Teach First Webinars took place over three  
days - two on subjects, one on Cambridge**

Prospective Student Webinars begin - See page 4

**Making the Most of Open Day Webinar for our  
Link Area Schools**

International Outreach Webinars - More on page 6

**Virtual Open Day held with drop in events**

Student Q&A Film launched - See page 8

**Low Participation Neighbourhood Summer  
School held - Page 11 has more information on this**

MAR

APR

MAY

JUN

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stre

ins, Nurse, Porters, cat...

Library

While this has been a volatile year, and will continue to be so for the foreseeable future, what we have learnt from the past few months will be vital as we move forward, helping change our strategies for the better

*'Despite the circumstances, I have relished the challenges of continuing outreach during this period. It has required the development of new ideas, programme structures, and skills from webinar design to video editing, all of which will feed into future work for the benefit of students nationwide and internationally.'*

**Ellie Wood, Admissions and Outreach Officer**

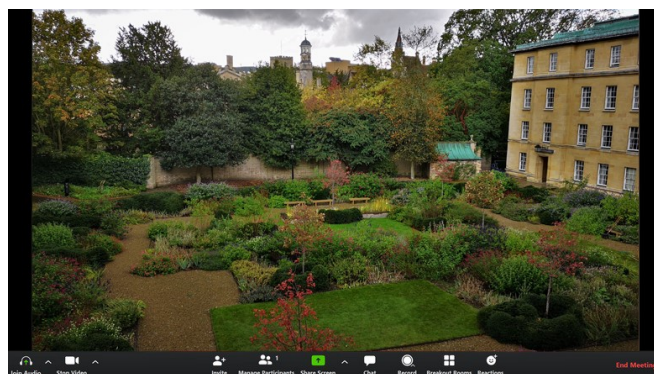
# Moving Online

With the onset of the pandemic, Christ's was forced to move its Outreach activities online, via services such as Zoom. However, these developments came with their own advantages, that could not have been predicted before Lockdown. Alongside our usual presentations to schools becoming webinars, and reaching a greater geographical spread as a result, we developed three specific webinar programmes:

## Join a meeting

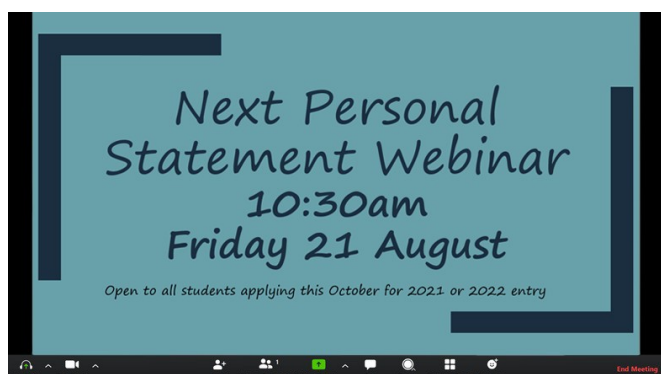
### Virtual Tours of College

In response to the fact potential applicants can't visit Cambridge for open days, we have run 'virtual tours'. In fact, this has enabled those who could not visit the College, due to finances, a close look at Christ's facilities.



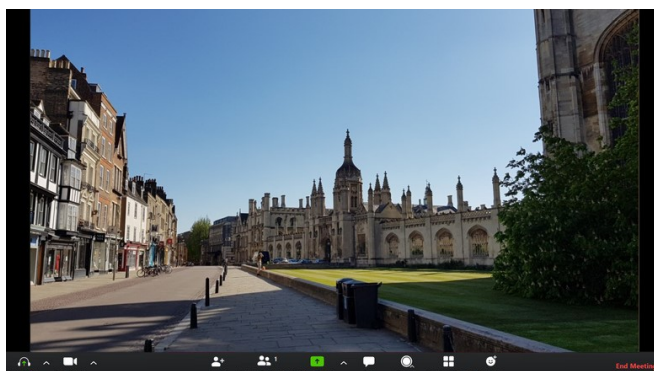
### Personal Statement Webinar

Starting with HE+ Students in early May, the webinars covered what to include in a personal statement, how to structure them, and how to add new content. This later became an open access event, due to popularity and interest.



### Cambridge for Beginners

For Year 12 students, who don't know much about Cambridge (both town and University) we held introductory sessions via Zoom. Prospective students were asked to score their knowledge out of 10, with those scoring under 4 prioritised.



*'I thought the webinar was incredibly helpful! My school offers no help with the application process and I was a bit lost. The webinar gave me a very clear picture of what is expected and I've even started writing my personal statement now.'*

**Participant from a Personal Statement Webinar**

# Mentoring at Christ's

The 2020 Admissions Cycle was one filled with a number of hurdles...



## Hurdle One:

Covid-19 causing school closures meant a number of offer-holders were having insufficient teaching for their A Levels.



## Hurdle Two:

This disproportionately affected students from disadvantaged backgrounds, who were already more at risk of not making their offers.



## Hurdle Three:

Changes to the STEP exam meant some students had to take a different paper, at short notice.

## Mentoring Solutions:

Alongside our **11 offer holders** involved in their wider mentoring scheme, we worked with **Project Access** on their innovative Coronavirus Tutoring Initiative. Offered to those in Years 12 and 13 and connected to Christ's, who were identified as having little teaching after school closures, it helped them continue preparation for university applications and courses.



**Over 280 students from state schools involved**

**41 Christ's offer-holders – c.240 former residential attendees**

We are also extremely grateful to Jan Wijek (m. 1974) who tutored eight students for the STEP exam, who otherwise would have been unable to access material.

*'[Jan's] tutorials and emails were the backbone to keeping me working, fulfilled and optimistic during the strictest part of quarantine' 'I would have otherwise been entirely on my own and most likely have felt overwhelmed by the seemingly unachievable task of meeting the entry requirements for my offer'*

**Feedback from students who received STEP Tutoring from Jan Wijek**

# International Outreach

Whilst the pandemic has made international travel almost impossible, this does not mean Christ's has been unable to continue its links with our International partners.

*UK Undergraduate Representative in July*



*Alongside Bootcamps in Poland, Finland, Austria, and Denmark*

*Hong Kong and Singapore*

*International Webinar Programme - Malaysia*

*Various EU countries*

One focus for the upcoming year will be how to attract EU students, with the government's decision that they will no longer be eligible for home student fees, or tuition fee loans, from October 21 entry. As part of this, we are expanding our International Bursaries to include some directed exclusively for EU Students. To learn more, or to support this initiative, visit <http://alumni.christs.cam.ac.uk/EU-international-awards>

## Coping with Covid - Cyprus Outreach in Focus

Before the Covid-19 Lockdown, Dr Emily Tomlinson, Director of Admissions, was due to visit **Cyprus** in 2020, as part of Outreach work organized with the University.

With travel having been prevented, she instead held a '**Virtual Tour**', with Webinars for each school in her itinerary, to keep up this important link.



*'[The seminar] gave a detailed overview of the requirements and what it takes to apply to and ultimately get an offer from a foreign university, and I also got a good impression of what it will be like to study abroad and at an elite university.'*

**Nordic Study Abroad Conference attendee—Pre-Lockdown**



# Residential and Visit Successes

Though we have a number of markers for success, one of the most heartening ones is how many of those we work with go on to make an application. This year, we have been delighted by the demonstrable impact of our Residential and visit programme, which has encouraged so many students to consider coming to Christ's.



**100+** of our 782 applicants for the 2019-20 Admissions Cycle had attended an event at Christ's



30% of attendees of NatSci, English, or History Taster Days, who went on to apply to Cambridge, applied for Christ's



*Almost 1/3 of the 2018 LPN Cohort who applied to Cambridge chose Christ's*

For 2020 entry, of those who applied...

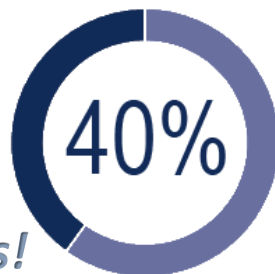


...who had attended Women in Maths Residentials

*and*

...who had attended the LPN Summer School

*Received Offers!*



...significantly higher than the National Average



Due to Covid-19, our Teacher Residential with Peterhouse had to become online appointments - we are looking forward to properly launching it in 2021!

But we still managed to work with **388** students from **248** schools via 2019-20 Residentials and visits

*'Attending the LPN Scheme gave me the skills I needed to apply successfully Cambridge and, crucially, the confidence to send in the application in the first place. I learned a lot about life as a student, what my course could entail and that Christ's cares about attracting students from a variety of backgrounds. I definitely wouldn't be at university here without it.'*

**Romany (m. 2020), Current Student and JCR Access Officer 2020-21**

# Student Spotlight—Esme

We wanted to take this opportunity to highlight one of our recent graduates, Esme Cavendish, who has had an invaluable role in our Outreach work since coming to Christ's.

Having now taken up the role of Access Officer with the Cambridge Student Union, and guiding policy in this difficult time, her contributions are emblematic of the vital role our students play in every element of the admissions process.



- **Matriculated 2017, reading English**
- **Admissions Student Ambassador**
- **JCR Access Officer 2018-19**
- **Cambridge SU UG Access, Education and Participation Officer 2020-21**



During her time here, Esme has...

**Given seven presentations at Outreach Events**

**Organized over ten events as Access Officer**

**Participated in open days, Residentials, and ran the Interview Help Desk**

## Christ's Student Q&A film



*Esme also featured in our new video for prospective students, answering some of the most frequently asked questions we get from potential applicants—watch it here—[youtube.com/watch?v=EnLQeD1Zdxc](https://youtube.com/watch?v=EnLQeD1Zdxc)*

*This student focussed approach to online outreach is something we hope to expand as we move forward.*

*'I've helped out at a Low Participation Neighbourhood residential summer school one year, seen people return the following year, and met them again at our open days. For me, the feeling of connection is very satisfying, especially when people go on to apply.'*

**Esme (m. 2017)**



# 2020 Bridging Course

**The Bridging Course** is a brand new initiative for incoming students, in collaboration with **King's College**. Designed for individuals who have demonstrated their potential at interview, but have been held back due to background factors, the course's aim is to get these students feeling confident and prepared to begin their degree in October.



Participants experienced a series of lectures and supervisions, to get them used to the teaching style, alongside sessions on topics such as **'Dealing with Cambridge'**, and were supported by an undergraduate mentor. It also included more social aspects to, from helping students find their way to departments, to tours of Cambridge, including of the **Master's Garden**, as pictured above!



Arranged as **three weeks** in Cambridge, beginning 31 August, until Covid-19

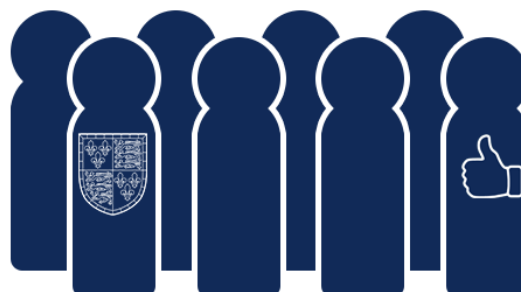


Became a **two-night socially distanced stay** to begin the course, then lectures took place **virtually** until 18 September

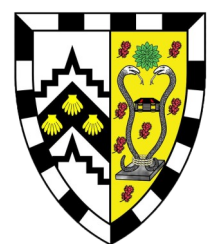


Developed by Christ's and King's Colleges...

Christ's students involved - 8



**100%** approved of in-person stay



...with Gonville and Caius intending to take part next year as well

*'[Having attended the Bridging course] supervisions are much less intimidating, I can now confidently attempt to write an essay, and I've met other people so I don't feel so alone'*

**2020 Bridging Course Attendee**

# Our thanks

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None of what we have achieved in this difficult year would have been possible without the help of various different people and organizations—of which we have pulled out a few we wanted to give our specific thanks to



## Paul Fannon

Paul, a Fellow elect and Supervisor at Christ's, was kind enough to act as the Sciences lead for the Bridging Course - his help and patience was invaluable for delivering this programme

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## Cambridge University Access

With the difficult task of moving Open Days to an online format, we were so grateful to be working alongside the Central University, to enable this vital work to go ahead



## Project Access

Long term collaborators with Christ's, this year they went above and beyond in order to deal with Covid-19, as you have seen throughout the report, and we treasure this continued link.

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## Our Donors

This year has been one of the most challenging in living memory, and all of the work we have done has been backed every step along the way by the generosity of supporters like yourself. Without you, all this couldn't have happened. **Thank you so much.**

*'Much of the work that we do also relies on contributions made by the Christ's community: whether students, fellows, staff, or alumni, as well as the charities and organisations with whom we collaborate – and they have gone above and beyond this year, more than ever!'*

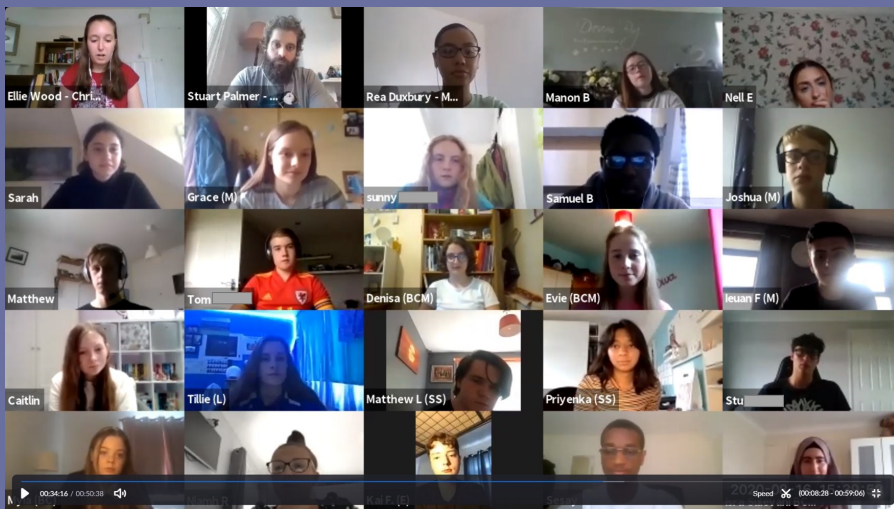
**Dr Emily Tomlinson, Admissions Director**

# Looking Forward to the Future

The 2020-21 Admissions year is certain to bring more challenges, but we are excited to match them. Alongside a general increase in our online content, which will feature our students more heavily, we have two major initiatives in the pipeline.

## Revamping the LPN Summer School

*Thanks to running this over the Summer, we learned a lot on how we can better focus this event in August 2021, in order to increase its positive impact for attendees.*



*Dedicated webinars around:*

- ⇒ *A-Level Study Skills*
- ⇒ *Super-curricular Activities*
- ⇒ *Finances and Budgeting*
- ⇒ *Personal Statements*

*Alongside a more assessment, and interview, focussed residential.*

By dividing this between an online and in-person experience, and moving away from the previous subject sessions model—which was difficult to provide in a way that catered for the over 120 students involved—this focus on soft skills and general support should serve to provide these students the skills, and confidence, to make successful applications to Christ's



We are excited to be begin working with **SEO London**, through direct support of a cohort of aspiring Oxbridge applicants, from ethnic minority or low socioeconomic backgrounds, with a regular webinar series—**more news to come!**

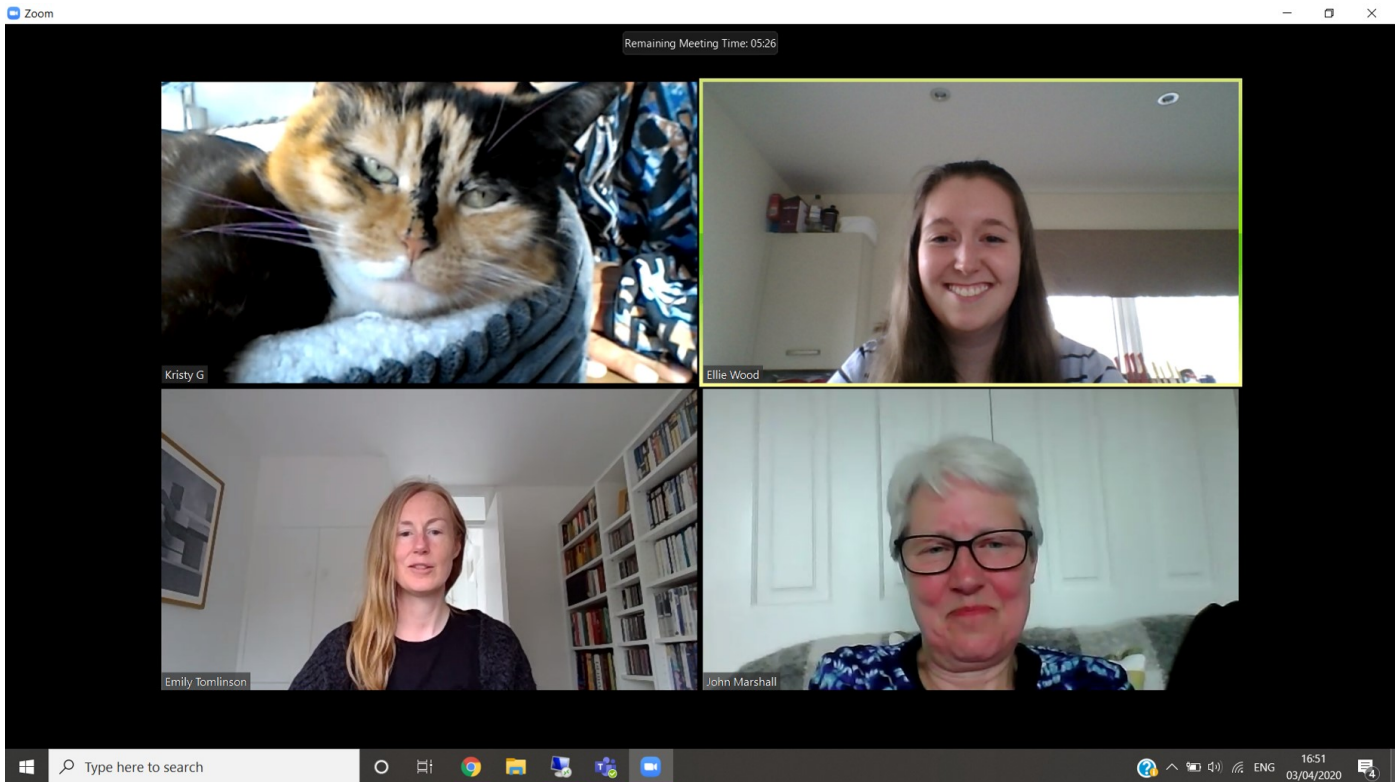
*This work will also include working with students interested in a wider group of top universities, to help them broaden their horizons through access to academic enrichment opportunities, and will help us to reach **even more students than we have before** in London.*

*'I found it particularly interesting to learn how accepting and accessible the college system is, and has made me feel much more keen to apply to Oxbridge in the future as I always felt it was quite out of reach.... It has given me a sense of motivation going into sixth form and also some purpose in this challenging time.'*

**LPN 2020 Attendee feedback**



# Get in Touch!



*From top right, clockwise: Ellie Wood, Jan Marshall, Dr Emily Tomlinson, and Kristy Guneratne - although Rocket is hogging the screen!*

We are delighted to talk about the work that we do here in the Admissions Department. If you have any questions about anything in this report, feel free to get in touch through the Development Office –

**[development@christs.cam.ac.uk](mailto:development@christs.cam.ac.uk)**

**To give to any of the causes in this report, use the following link to our Online giving platform - <https://bit.ly/2VOZb0t>**

**And follow us on Twitter! @ChristsAccess**

