



**DARWIN COLLEGE**  
CAMBRIDGE



# The Campaign for Darwin College

Scholarship for Solutions

60 years of forward thinking



## The Campaign for Darwin College: Scholarship for Solutions

*Welcome to our Campaign. Building on Darwin's strong foundations and 60 years of scholarship, we need your support to build our future and contribute to solutions to the world's biggest challenges.*

Darwin was founded with a clear sense of purpose, which still forms the core of our identity today. As the first exclusively postgraduate College at Cambridge, we offer a unique focus on research, across all disciplines. Our commitment to fostering an egalitarian and inclusive community is central to our approach, resulting in a welcoming international community from over 80 different countries.

These founding principles have, for 60 years, brought together enquiring minds from all over the world to broaden understanding and contribute to our shared future. With your support, we can enhance and sustain our position as the pre-eminent postgraduate and research-intensive College at the University of Cambridge.

This Campaign is founded on the College's Strategic Plan 2022–2032. Funding this ambitious vision for Darwin will require an investment of £40 million, much of which is needed for today's priorities. In addition, we aim to secure £20 million in legacy pledges – planned gifts that will help to secure the future priorities of the College far beyond 2032.

With your help, we will raise £60 million to fund:

- New students and researchers from across the globe to reach their full potential
- Cross-disciplinary collaboration, producing innovative solutions to global challenges
- Innovative approaches to energy generation to become a carbon zero campus by 2032

- A new space in the heart of the College to bring Darwinians together, fostering interdisciplinary connection, innovative scholarship and social interaction.

"Building on our 60-year legacy we are launching a major fundraising campaign to provide greater support for students, improve the College site, reduce our environmental impact, deepen our contribution to the research and education this University provides, and to enhance our impact on the greatest challenges facing the world today."

**Dr Michael Rands, Master, Darwin College**

## For the equality of scholars

Doctoral students are one of the great driving forces of research and innovation – but funding is scarce.

As home to the largest community of PhD students in Cambridge, Darwin acts as a crucible of collaboration and cross-disciplinary scholarship and learning.

To maintain this, we need to be able to attract and support future generations of scholars, who will continue to create groundbreaking, globally impactful research and enliven our community.

We aim to create at least 50 new funding awards to attract more of the best research students to Cambridge regardless of their ability to pay. Some awards will be especially for academically outstanding students from historically under-represented groups – both from the UK and internationally (such as the Caribbean, Africa and South-East Asia).



**Dr Bea Simpson**

studied for a PhD in Education while creating and overseeing an educational charity back home in Uganda.

“The courage to set up the charity came the minute I was accepted at Cambridge. I knew that it had to do more than just get me a degree – it had to have a wider impact. Cambridge has really shaped my understanding of education, and Darwin has been at the centre of that. Seeing our volunteers in action gives me an incredible joy which fuels me.”



**Dr Nathaniel Anderson**

Charles and Katharine Darwin Research Fellow, and Marie Skłodowska-Curie Fellow at the Wellcome Sanger Institute, has had a significant breakthrough in understanding the factors keeping children cancer-free.

“Through cutting-edge single cell genomics, we have, for the first time, been able to crack the code of persistence in CAR T-cells in children with great clarity. We hope that our research will provide the first clue as to why some CAR T-cells last for a long time – which we know is vital for keeping children cancer-free after treatment. Ultimately, this work will help us to continue to improve this already life-changing treatment.”

## For warming the heart of the College



From the very start, Fellows and students at Darwin have worked and eaten together without being artificially separated. In the Parlour, Dining Hall, Bar and gardens, thousands of informal conversations have inspired new ideas, enhancing learning and offering insights that increase research impact.

A unique culture has developed through these shared spaces, facilitating the exchange of ideas through seminars, informal research talks, and lectures. These foster emerging research through debates and discussions which transcend disciplines and hierarchy.

However, over the last 60 years, our community has grown faster than our estate. We are therefore introducing an architectural masterplan combining two major projects to enhance life on-site while significantly reducing our environmental impact.

### **A Pump House by the river**

Darwin is committed to pursuing the goal of becoming carbon zero by 2032. In tandem with an extensive programme of fabric improvements to the existing buildings, our riverside location allows us to pursue an excitingly innovative approach to heating the site.

A new Pump House, next to the Cam, will house the technology required to provide low-carbon river-source heating and hot water throughout the Silver Street campus. A network of pipes will distribute heat to individual buildings, allowing the river which has long shaped the College's site and identity to also provide its energy from entirely renewable sources.

The design promises to create a sympathetic addition to the College site, which celebrates innovation, raises the profile of sustainable energy solutions,

and complements the existing industrial heritage of the site and surroundings, from Newnham Mill to the Malting House.

### **A 'Garden Room' under the Dining Hall**

The centrepiece of these plans is a spectacular Garden Room beneath the Dining Hall, overlooking the lush gardens and riverbanks. This will become the new centre of College life – a place for both socialising and working, fostering innovation, interaction and the exchange of ideas – enhancing and expanding these core elements of the Darwin experience.

Reflecting the instantly recognisable geometry of the Dining Hall above it, the Garden Room will bring a sense of completion to the site, providing a light-filled, multipurpose space for Darwinians to connect.



## For the support of solutions

Darwin is intellectually vigorous, multidisciplinary, international, and increasingly focused on research that contributes to understanding and addressing global challenges. Imagine what further investment could achieve.

Guided by the expertise of our Fellowship, the UN Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs) and the University's own strategic research initiatives, we will focus on themes and goals where there is an urgent need for new approaches and where Darwin can make a difference.

The world needs a plurality of views to solve problems that affect people beyond the sphere of those trying to address them. As a community of scholars, we are committed to addressing significant global social, economic, political and environmental challenges. Our desire is to do this effectively and quickly – leveraging the evolutionary leaps in thought that occur within our interdisciplinary, research-intensive environment.



### Create a Darwin College Global Innovation Hub

Over the next decade, Darwin aspires to support the best ground-breaking research and enhance the global impact that such scholarship can achieve.

To help humanity solve the challenges we face, we will issue an invitation for multidisciplinary groups to work together. Our whole community will be invited to take part – students, Fellows, alumni and staff – harnessing the widest spectrum of Darwin's talent.

### New Generation Research Fund

Multidisciplinary research requires further investment in new people, those who have the vision to see beyond, and the ability to work across academic boundaries and so find the solutions the world needs. We seek to create new posts, jointly with departments and strategic research initiatives across the University, and where there is alignment with the College vision. Such strategic research posts require longer term funding in order to attract brilliant minds.



**Dr Jonathan Ictovitz**

completed a PhD in Astronomy at Darwin in 2024, and is now a postdoctoral researcher at Imperial College, London exploring how to reduce the environmental impact of aviation.

“My research focuses on condensation trails (contrails), the linear clouds left by aircraft, which represent a huge proportion of the climate impact of flying. But because they only form in specific conditions, when the air is very cold and wet, we can often avoid creating them by flying higher or lower. I'm working at the interface between academia, industry, and policy. It's a different feeling, researching something with such a strong tangible effect.”



**Dr Zixuan Tang**

graduated in 2024 with a PhD in Engineering, during which she worked on the development of low-carbon self-healing fibre-reinforced composite materials as alternatives to traditional concrete.

“Materials like concrete are not as durable as we assume; they need ongoing maintenance, which has knock-on effects. Cement, a key component of concrete, is not environmentally sustainable, as its production leads to extremely high carbon emissions. Finding solutions for carbon reduction is something I'm passionate about. There are so many potential application areas for the new material. I'm really excited to see what might happen next.”

## The Campaign for Darwin College – your invitation to join us

Thank you for taking the time to learn about this exciting campaign. Darwin is a unique community whose strengths now reach back sixty years. We are hugely fortunate to be financially stable, well-managed and secure, and this campaign will allow us to build on strong foundations.

We ask you to join us in celebrating where we have come from and in enabling our vision for the future, ensuring that we stay true to the original and continuing mission of the College: to educate researchers, to provide a stimulating space to learn and think, and to find solutions to global challenges.

If you can make a gift, pledge a legacy in your will, or help us solve a global challenge, please join our campaign and help enable the education and scholarship that transforms the world.

To discuss how to make a gift, and opportunities for recognising your generosity, please contact Fiona Duffy, Director of Development.

[development.director@darwin.cam.ac.uk](mailto:development.director@darwin.cam.ac.uk)  
**+44 1223 336168**



“Darwin has established itself as a hub for intellectual curiosity and boundary-pushing. It has burnished its record of fostering interdisciplinarity.

The College recognises that postgraduate research students are the “engine room” of academic endeavour.

It is committed to creating an environment in which our leading academic talent can support, nurture and mentor our up-and-coming talent.

I would urge you to help us ensure that Darwin College continues to shine as brightly as it has over the past 60 years, and that you join us in supporting the new campaign for the future of Darwin.”

Professor Deborah Prentice,  
Vice-Chancellor, University of Cambridge



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