

The Bucks Herald

High-profile academic announced for uni's top job

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Could happiness be a new subject on the university curriculum?

The new man at the helm of the University of Buckingham is a high-profile educationalist and political historian, who co-founded Action For Happiness and introduced happiness classes into his last school's curriculum.

Sir Anthony Seldon was announced yesterday as the university's new vice-chancellor, succeeding Prof Terence Kealey, who left last summer to pursue a major project with The Cato Institute, based in Washington DC.

Sir Anthony, who was made an honorary graduate of the university in 2013, is a respected political historian, author and commentator on education and contemporary Britain, with a degree in PPE from Worcester College, Oxford, and a PhD from LSE, where he became a research fellow.

He has honorary fellowships, doctorates and chairs from a variety of universities, has written or edited over 35 books, including works on John Major, Tony Blair and Gordon Brown, and David Cameron.

He co-founded the Institute of Contemporary British History, is a governor at the Royal Shakespeare Company and is an advisor to a wide range of governmental and charitable institutions.

He is honorary historian of Downing Street, and his official history on it is published next year.

He is the son of economist Arthur Seldon, who co-founded the Institute of Economic Affairs.

Prof Ken Siddle, who chaired the appointing panel, said: "We are very fortunate indeed to have appointed an individual of Sir Anthony Seldon's standing to lead Buckingham through this next exciting stage of its history.

"The university, as it comes up to its 40th year, is poised for a very exciting new era of its development and we could not possibly have hoped for a more innovative and accomplished individual to take the university forward.

“There will be exciting times ahead at Buckingham over the next 10 years as we come towards our half century. “Buckingham was Britain’s first independent university, and the only one with a Royal Charter.

“With the medical school opening and a whole series of new developments in train, we will have a busy decade ahead.”

Lady Keswick, the university’s chancellor, said: “We are very pleased indeed at this announcement.

“Sir Anthony has transformed two large independent schools, Brighton College and Wellington College, and made each of them formidably strong institutions.

“He is also a distinguished academic in his own right, and pioneer in the fields of contemporary history, political science and positive psychology.

“We believe he has the mixture of leadership, innovation and academic track record to make the University of Buckingham one of Britain’s leading universities.”

Sir Anthony will be leaving Wellington College in August and moving to live in Buckingham with his wife, Joanna.

Joanna Seldon, herself an academic and writer, was diagnosed with an incurable cancer four years ago and this was the inspiration behind Sir Anthony’s latest book, *Beyond Happiness*, published last month.

Although Sir Anthony considered leaving full-time work because of his wife’s health, the couple have decided it is better for him to keep working full time, and Joanna looks forward to playing as much of a part in the life of the university as she is able to.

Sir Anthony said: “I am delighted to be taking over at the University of Buckingham, which my father, Arthur Seldon CBE, helped to found 40 years ago.

“There are many exciting developments already in train at Buckingham, including the new medical school.

“I am looking forward to building on the excellent work of Prof Terence Kealey and working with the outstanding staff to make it a truly pioneering academic institution.”