

HAMOND'S ROCKS

Published on **Friday 2 July 2004 16:17**

Songwriter and singer Tom Robinson and former ITN political editor Michael Brunson are backing a bid by Swaffham's Hamond's High School for specialist status in media and performing arts.

Tom Robinson, one of the most respected lyricists of his time, has promised to visit the Brandon Road school and work with some of the students later this year

He is writing a letter of support for Hamond's, which has invited local business representatives to the launch of its bid at Oxburgh Hall today.

The London-based star has written and performed classics 2-4-6-8 Motorway, Glad To Be Gay and War Baby, and co-written hits with Elton John and Peter Gabriel.

Hamond's head of science Alan Wright, who has known Tom from school days, asked him if he would support the school's bid. He agreed – and also promised to visit the Brandon Road school and work with some of the students later this year.

Michael Brunson will be at today's launch, where students will give samples of music and media performance. He now lives in Norfolk and recently supported an appeal to businesses by Swaffham and Litcham Home Hospice Support Group.

Hamond's assistant headteacher Paul Guenault, who has been instrumental in putting together the bid, said Tom Robinson had hoped to be at the launch but it clashed with a national radio show he does. Letters of support from well-known names carry a lot of weight when bids are considered, he said.

Mr Guenault, who teaches music and media, said the school also needs to raise a minimum 50,000 from local businesses to support its bid. If successful, it would then get a 100,000 grant from the Department for Education and Science.

This would go towards the capital costs of creating a multi-media performance and conference hall at the front of the school for use by students and local community groups, such as Swaffham Arts and Swaffham Players, he said.

Specialist status would also bring an annual grant of 126 per pupil – equivalent to 94,500 on the present school roll of 750 – for four years to provide technicians to man the equipment and run the new set-up.

"You get reassessed after four years to see if you met the original targets and, if you do, then it rolls on for another four years," Mr Guenault said.