

Community Consultation Meeting

St Mary's Westbury 13 October 2016 19.00

Present:

Joan Rowe, Governor
P J Ryan, Neighbour
Paul Cooke, Parent
Robin Passant, Village
Rita Waters, Westbury and Yockleton Newsletter
Alex Adams, Village Field
Jean Clay-Jones, Neighbour
Russell Jones, Past pupil
Sally Johnson, Chair of Governors
Jane Gill, Executive Headteacher
Chris Mathews, Commissioner for Education Improvement and Efficiency
Phil Wilson, Head of Service Delivery
Helen Woodbridge, Notes

Phil Wilson gave a presentation on the proposals which have been driven by governors. He confirmed that the Phillip Sell from the diocese had been invited to this meeting. The consultation had been launched on 22 September and will run for 6 weeks. Documentation is available from the Shropshire Council website or hard copy from the school. The plan is for the process to be complete by September 2017 or January 2018. There will be a final decision by Cabinet in March 2017. Views are being gathered from all stakeholders.

Sally Johnson advised that there are currently 38 pupils at St Mary's which meant funding for one full time teacher and one part time teacher. Governors had considered issues including performance, Ofsted, recruitment and retention of headteacher and decided that in the best interests of the children, consultation on closure of two of the three schools should proceed. This would enable children to be taught in classes with narrower age ranges. The children are enjoying this.

Jane Gill advised that there had been an immediate impact on learning and teachers are no longer having to manage too much. Fringe benefits were also being seen eg having enough players to form a football team.

Phil Wilson suggested that Cabinet members will be asked about visiting the school sites. Children's views are also to be sought. Early feasibility desk top work will commence.

P Ryan suggested that there was an issue with the where the bus parks on the narrow road and it is dangerous – he felt that using the Village Hall would be safer.

Jane Gill responded that the transport team have assessed this.

Phil Wilson agreed to check whether the Village Hall had been considered and on signage issues.

Sally Johnson suggested asking Community Support Officers to attend to assess traffic issues.

P Ryan thought that two houses in the village are currently empty because there is no school open in the village.

Appendix 3c

Phil Wilson suggested talking to the Housing Association to make sure they are aware of the current situation. He asked P Ryan to let the school have the details of who they should contact re this.

In response to a question re sick children, the headteacher advised that if a parent cannot collect a sick child, a member of staff will take them home.

There was a discussion about the field. It was confirmed that the greenhouses/buildings would remain. Sally Johnson spoke of the need to check with the Parish Council/planning to establish to route of the right of way/public footpath as the original had been built over.

It was confirmed that the pre-school would remain at St Mary's until Early Years provision is built at Worthen.

P Ryan asked if staff would continue to accompany children on the bus.

Jane Gill confirmed that this would continue for the time being.

Sally Johnson advised that there needs to be a system in place for advising parents when the bus is delayed.

Rita Waters asked about SAMDEV and plans for the site. It was confirmed that the building is owned by the diocese and they need to understand what can be done within the local plan. It is too early to have an indication of what it may be used for. It was thought that it may be too expensive to move the demountable.

Rita Waters asked for the consultation document referred to on the website. She was advised that hard copies are also available from the school or post office (more copies are to be taken to the post office).

Russell Jones asked if Stiperstones School (which had remained open after a consultation process) was worse off for staying open.

Chris Mathews could not confirm either way but could confirm that the strategic role of governors is to sustain education, not to keep schools open. He stressed that multi academy trusts will not sustain non-viable schools.

Joan Rowe spoke of the duty of care to staff.

Rita Waters asked why the Worthen site had been selected.

Chris Mathews confirmed that it was the biggest site and was geographically central, thus minimising travel times.