

# Consultation Document Outlining the Proposal to make a Prescribed Alteration to Stiperstones CE Primary School

Published to all Interested Parties on the 12<sup>th</sup>  
March 2019

Consultation Period Concludes on the 9<sup>th</sup> April  
2019

**The Governing Body of Shropshire Hills Federation presents this document for consultation.**

**This is your opportunity to let us know what you think about the proposal. Please take time to read it carefully, attend a consultation meeting and have your say on the proposal. The outcome of this proposal will help to inform the final decisions that will affect educational provision for the children of Stiperstones CE Primary School.**

This paper contains:

1. An explanation of the proposal; the reasons why we are recommending the changes to education for Stiperstones CE School.
2. A response form for you to complete and return to us, letting us know your views.
3. Details of 'surgery style', meetings for parents/carers and the wider community that have been arranged to help the consultation.

### **Circulation:**

Parents and Carers

Staff

Children (via a simplified explanation)

Governors

Worthen with Shelve Parish Council

Chirbury with Brompton Parish Council

Myndtown Combined Parish Council

Local Shropshire Councillors – Jonny Keely and Heather Kidd

Philip Dunne MP

The wider communities of each school

School websites

Other local primary schools (to Stiperstones, Norbury and Chirbury)

Mary Webb School

Community College Bishop's Castle

Hereford Diocese – Andrew Teale / Sian Lines

Shropshire Council – Karen Bradshaw - Director of Children's Services

- Nick Bardsley – Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People

## The Proposal

**To make a prescribed alteration to Stiperstones CE Primary School, to educate all children on another site.**

### Which site would be used?

**Governors propose to transfer provision to the site at Norbury Primary School with the opportunity for parents to opt to have their children educated at Chirbury CE Primary School should they prefer.**

In a previous consultation document (22<sup>nd</sup> May 2018), proposing the federation of Chirbury, Stiperstones and Norbury primary schools, governors stated that unless significant increases to funding were identified by December 2018, to support Stiperstones CE Primary School, provision would be likely to transfer to either the Chirbury or Norbury primary school sites, with parents having the option to choose. The majority of parents stated that they would prefer their children to transfer to the Norbury site with a small number preferring Chirbury.

**Governors would encourage parents to visit both sites and make an informed choice. Chirbury CE Primary is a Church of England School, as is Stiperstones; Norbury Primary School is not. It is a Foundation school, with no religious affiliation.**

Governors are keen to stress that both schools have a similar ethos and both promote strong Christian values equally well. Both have similar links with local churches and both schools operate equally for families of children from any faith and of no faith. Both schools respect other faiths and the right to no religious beliefs at all. Discussions will be held with Hereford Diocese to ensure that the Christian character of education of Stiperstones pupils is not compromised.

Although the two schools proposed to receive children have differing OFSTED ratings, Chirbury – Requires Improvement and Norbury – Outstanding, both schools have been under the leadership of one headteacher since December 2017 (acting at Chirbury). This arrangement became permanent in July 2018. A single governing body and one Federation Headteacher has operated Norbury, Chirbury and Stiperstones primary schools since July 2018. **Governors firmly believe that the education offered across the Federation is now at least good, with much that is outstanding across all three schools. In April 2019, Busy Bees Nursery will become part of Chirbury CE Primary School, further enhancing provision on this site. Children at each school within the Federation will receive similar opportunities in all aspects of their learning.**

**Important: This is not a proposal to close Stiperstones CE Primary School.** Depending upon decisions made, positive changes to provision for our children will probably go through several stages. Whilst no assumptions should ever be made, it is the intention of governors to take further steps in the future to amalgamate Stiperstones and Norbury Schools, forming a new much stronger school, to secure outstanding education for future generations of children from Stiperstones, Snailbeach, Norbury and surrounding areas

## Why Now?

Since the formulation of the Federation, savings totalling tens of thousands of pounds have been made, which in turn, have led to significant investment and improvements at Stiperstones. This in turn has led to an OFSTED judgement on 27<sup>th</sup> June 2018, of “Good” with “Outstanding” in Personal Development, Behaviour and Welfare. However, as predicted, the income for coming years at Stiperstones is not sufficient to maintain these high standards in the future. Although the funding gap has been narrowed, latest budget setting plans for 2019/20 show a shortfall of around £25,000.

This would lead to setting a deficit budget, which is not allowed under current financial rules for schools, unless governors have a plan to rectify in future years. As future years would be even more financially challenging, this would not be possible. **As always stated, governors and managers firmly believe that children have only one opportunity at education and deserve excellence. Without making cuts to current provision, it would not be possible for education to remain as it is now. In recent times, the children of Stiperstones have enjoyed excellent opportunities and we wish this to continue and to improve further.**

Changes to the way that we run our schools will secure excellent provision for all children of the Federation. Governors have a vision for the future which aims for outstanding education and opportunities for all children. Our aim is for four classes on both the Norbury and Chirbury sites, accommodating between 100 and 120 children in each site, which we believe would retain the small school ethos, whilst ensuring sufficient funding to maintain excellence.

## Who Will Make the Final Decision and When?

Although this proposal has been made by the Governing Body of Shropshire Hills Federation, in consultation with the Local Authority and Hereford Diocese, the final decision will be made by Cabinet of Shropshire Council. They will take into account your views; our financial and educational planning; and the impact upon other local schools. Cabinet will make their final decision on 22<sup>rd</sup> May 2019.

## What are the benefits?

Governors believe that the benefits of working on one site (Norbury, with the option to attend Chirbury) are numerous and are already being felt by children:

- Financial security allowing us to concentrate on outstanding education in the future.
- Stiperstones catchment would have the benefit of full-time nursery provision, currently only available at Chirbury and Norbury.
- Improved efficiency of non-teaching staff and management, ensuring more of our budgets are spent directly on teaching and learning.
- Ability of governors to recruit and retain high quality teachers and support staff.
- Working on one site means a greater number of staff, allowing for: improved professional development; improved continuity in cases of staff illnesses etc; improved efficiency; and greater opportunities for extra-curricular activities for children.
- Improved resources for all children to access the curriculum at the highest standard.
- A wide range of off-site visits and residentials, which provide practical learning for children. Shared costs allow exceptional opportunities and we believe that these improve life chances

for all children. Residential opportunities include trips to Borth, Llangollen, London, New Quay and Normandy, from Year 2 to Year 6.

- Improved sporting opportunities.
- Improved creative opportunities such as music lessons, theatre trips and opportunities to perform.
- Improved social interaction and opportunity to make friends.

## What Needs to Happen to Provide Necessary Accommodation Space at Norbury?

In order for this proposal to be realized, the governors of Shropshire Hills Federation will need to build one extra classroom on the Norbury site. This will consist of a purpose built Nursery and Reception unit for a maximum of 30 children. We will also need to refurbish one classroom to accommodate Years One and Two. Full planning permission and the majority of funding is already secured for this, but the timescale to deliver the provision is tight. We will not be able to award the contract to build the classroom until Cabinet has made its decision. However, we aim to have everything in place ready for if the decision is favourable. We will then aim to complete the building and refurbishment work by mid-August 2019.

## When Might Children Move Site?

**We want to ensure that everything is perfect and ready for outstanding education before we transfer any children. Therefore governors propose to continue provision on the Stiperstones site until at least the end of December 2019.** Whilst we would prefer to begin at the start of a new school year, if there should be any delays in the building, this would cause uncertainty. Governors will endeavour to make the transfer as smooth and as quickly as possible, as delays will cost valuable resources. However, we are dedicated to excellence and should delays in the building process occur, we may choose to remain on the Stiperstones site beyond January 2020, until all facilities are properly in place.

## How Will Children Travel to the Norbury Site and Who Will Pay?

Children will travel to the Norbury site by minibus from either near to their home address, if currently entitled to free transport, or from Stiperstones CE Primary School if they are not. All current pupils at Stiperstones CE Primary School will be provided with free transport to the Norbury site. Parents electing to send children to the Chirbury site would be entitled to free transport either if in Chirbury CE Primary School catchment or if Chirbury is their closest school. Under the proposal for the prescribed alteration, Shropshire Hills Federation will be responsible for transport costs to Norbury. The Federation has allocated funding within budgets for at least the next three years to lease two brand new, high quality minibuses which will accommodate 32 children in total. These buses will be used for many purposes and we will decide after Cabinet make their decision whether we provide transport ourselves, or sub-contract it to Shropshire Council.

The shortest distance from Stiperstones CE Primary School to Norbury Primary School is 6.9 miles. By minibus it takes 15 – 20 minutes. The route is very hilly and unsuitable in icy conditions. We would need to use a longer flatter route. Safety will be paramount at all times.

Through our existing close relationship, Stiperstones and Norbury have been running minibuses on a regular basis for the past year and have not experienced any problems during this time. On rare occasions when weather proved too dangerous to travel, other arrangements were made and this may be possible in the future.

### **What Would Happen to the Stiperstones Building?**

This is a complicated issue. The building is held in an educational trust by the founding site trustees. It is what is known as a “reverter site”. This means that neither Shropshire Council, nor Hereford Diocese own the site and should it stop being used for its intended purpose, it is handed back to the original trustees or their descendants.

### **How Would the Proposal affect School Admissions?**

The proposal does not affect school admissions in any way. Stiperstones pupils would remain on record as such. The same admission policy would apply. Admissions to Mary Webb School would not be affected in any way and our close relationship with Mary Webb would continue. In future, if Stiperstones did amalgamate with Norbury, the catchment areas would be reviewed. We have requested that the two catchments would remain as they are and be joined together to ensure all parents are entitled to the exact provision that they would have under this proposal. In future we propose that children within Mary Webb catchment would remain so and be entitled to the same admissions and transport rights as they are now.

### **How Would the Proposal Affect Other Local Schools?**

Providing additional accommodation space on the Norbury site should not have any negative impact upon other local schools, as all of the additional places are proposed to be taken up by existing children of the two schools. A small number of children in the catchment area of Long Mountain CE Primary School currently attend Stiperstones and we presume that they would wish to remain within the Federation. Parents of current pupils who live within Chirbury CE Primary School catchment, may also choose either site. Any future proposed amalgamated school would not seek to attract children from other local schools and governors value our positive working relationships with these schools for the benefit of all children.

### **How Would the Proposal Affect Staff Members?**

Decisions affecting members of staff will not be able to be made until governors are aware of the numbers of children who will transfer to the Norbury and Chirbury sites. If the proposal is successful and sufficient numbers of children transfer, it is likely that one full time additional class will be formed at the Norbury site, requiring one additional full time teacher plus additional teaching support staff. In addition, dependent upon numbers in each year group, it would be likely that additional teaching support staff members may be required in other areas. Dependent upon numbers, it would be likely that additional administrative staff, catering and cleaning hours would be required.

When considering staff transfers, preference will be given to members of staff from across the Federation with existing permanent contracts, who can successfully fulfil the criteria for each post.

## **How Will the Proposal Affect the Community?**

Governors are very aware that Stiperstones CE Primary School is a very important part of the local community and will make every effort for it to remain so. If the proposal is successful, governors would endeavour to ensure that once the two schools are on one site, school events such as church services, performances, concerts, sports activities and community events etc, will continue to take place within both communities and that, where possible, provision will be made for both communities attend all events.

## **How Will the Proposal Affect Traffic and Parking at the Norbury Site?**

At the Norbury site, there is a staff, parent and visitor car park and on road parking outside of the school. There is a newly installed school warning light system in place to calm traffic from both approaches. One minibus and one taxi currently provide school transport for entitled pupils. As the school will provide transport for children from Stiperstones to Norbury, it is not envisaged that any significant increase in private cars will occur. However, there will be additional minibus transport and consideration to this will need to be made on the Norbury site for minibus parking.

## **How Will the Proposal Affect Access to Breakfast and After-School Clubs?**

Stiperstones CE Primary School does not currently have a breakfast club as it is not currently viable. Under the proposal, parents would have access to breakfast club from 7:45am Monday – Friday. Parents would need to provide their own transport for this. A full range of after-school clubs would be available, Monday – Friday until 4:30pm. Parents would be responsible for transport after clubs, but dependent upon numbers and availability, governors would consider the use of school minibuses to reduce environmental impact and provide help for parents. After-school clubs provide excellent learning and social opportunities and wherever possible, governors will seek solutions any situations which make access difficult.

## **What Will Happen About School Uniforms?**

If the proposal goes ahead, it is expected that children who transfer to the Norbury site would continue to wear the Stiperstones School uniform. If, in the future, governors decide to apply to amalgamate the two schools, it is likely that one new school uniform would be proposed. Measures would be put in place to phase in any proposed changes to prevent unnecessary costs and waste.

As of 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019 there is currently no school uniform at Chirbury CE Primary School. However, also from 12<sup>th</sup> March 2019, a consultation has been launched at Chirbury regarding governors' proposal to introduce a uniform. Should governors decide to introduce a uniform at Chirbury, it would be expected that children transferring from Stiperstones would wear the Chirbury uniform. However, to prevent additional costs or waste, it would be reasonable for children to continue to wear the Stiperstones uniform for as long as parents wish.

## How Do I Find Out More Information, Before I Make My Decision?

During the consultation you will have the opportunity to ask questions and governors will try to provide as much additional information as they can. You can do this in person at community or staff consultation meetings (dates shown below). You may also email or write to governors (details shown below).

## How Do I Let Governors and Shropshire Council Know My Views?

Once you are sure that all of your questions have been answered, it is vital that you make governors aware of your views, as they will inform Cabinet's final decision. Please complete the form attached to this document. All members of the community are able to submit their views but anonymous or unsigned forms will not be accepted. If both parents from each family share the same views, please could both sign the form? If parents have different opinions, please request an additional form from the school office.

## Current Numbers on Each Federation Site

School	Age Range	Number on Roll
Chirbury CE Primary School (Including Busy Bees Nursery)	2 -11 Years	73
Norbury Primary School and Nursery	2 Years 9 Months – 11 Years	78
Stiperstones CE Primary School	4 – 11 Years	35

## Timeline for Proposed Prescribed Alteration:

12 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	Consultation period begins.
18 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	Staff consultation meeting 4:00pm at Norbury School
19 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	Drop-in consultation meeting 3:30-6:00pm at Stiperstones CE School
20 <sup>th</sup> March 2019	Drop-in consultation meeting 3:30-6:00pm at Norbury School
9 <sup>th</sup> April 2019	At 12:00 noon, consultation closes.
10 <sup>th</sup> April 2019	Presentation of responses from public consultation to all governors.
22 <sup>nd</sup> May 2019	Proposal and views of communities and governors presented to Cabinet.
June 2019	If proposal approved, building of additional accommodation space at Norbury site to commence.
January 2020	If proposal approved and subject to completion of new accommodation space at Norbury site, Stiperstones children to transfer to either Norbury or Chirbury sites.

## How do I respond?

The governing body of Shropshire Hills Federation would really like to hear your views. If you have any questions or comments please let the governing bodies know by the deadline of 12:00 noon on Tuesday the 9<sup>th</sup> April 2019.

You can share your comments by:

- 1) Completing the attached questionnaire or writing a letter and sending it to one of the following addresses:

**School Alterations, Stiperstones C of E VC Primary School, Snailbeach, Shrewsbury. SY5 0LZ**

**School Alterations, Norbury Primary School and Nursery, Norbury, Bishop's Castle, Shropshire. SY9 5EA**

**School Alterations, Chirbury C of E VC Primary School, Chirbury, Montgomery, Shropshire. SY15 6BN**

- 2) By emailing your comments to any of the following:

[s.lennox@chirbury.shropshire.sch.uk](mailto:s.lennox@chirbury.shropshire.sch.uk) (Chair of Governors)

[head@norbury.shropshire.sch.uk](mailto:head@norbury.shropshire.sch.uk)

[heather.kidd@shropshire.gov.uk](mailto:heather.kidd@shropshire.gov.uk)

[admin@stiperstones.shropshire.sch.uk](mailto:admin@stiperstones.shropshire.sch.uk)

Responses will then be shared with the governing body, Shropshire Council and Hereford Diocese.

# RESPONSE FORM

**To make a prescribed alteration to Stiperstones CE Primary School, to educate all children on another site.**

**Responses must be received by 12:00 noon on Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> April**

If both parents from each family share the same views, please both sign and send in one form.  
Should views differ, please request an additional form.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Signed \_\_\_\_\_

Should you require a response, please complete your details below:

Phone number:

Email:

- 1) I am a: (please tick box as appropriate)

Parent/Carer of a pupil at Stiperstones CE Primary School	<input type="checkbox"/>
Parent/Carer of a pupil at Norbury Primary School and Nursery	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of staff at Stiperstones CE Primary School	<input type="checkbox"/>
Member of staff at Norbury Primary School and Nursery	<input type="checkbox"/>
Other interested party (Please state).....	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 2) What is your view of the proposal to educate the children of Stiperstones CE Primary School at Norbury Primary School and Nursery, with the option to choose to send children to Chirbury CE School?

I/we support the proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>
I/we do <u>not</u> support the proposal	<input type="checkbox"/>
I/we am/are not sure	<input type="checkbox"/>

- 3) Please share any comments that you may have about the proposal (Use overleaf if required).

Please send your response to any of the three schools, details above. Please note that your responses will remain confidential to the Governing Body.

Thank you for your response,

The Governors of Shropshire Hills Federation.