



# Minutes

**Minutes of the Meeting of the St Nicholas with Bonvilston Community Council, on Monday 6<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at 19:00.**

**The meeting was held both at Bonvilston Reading Rooms and remotely in accordance with the Local Authorities (Coronavirus) (Meetings) (Wales) Regulations 2020.**

**Present:**

Cllr I Perry (Chair), Cllr P Moss, Cllr J Griffiths, Cllr S Clarke, Cllr Sims (items 1-4)

From 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools, Vale of Glamorgan Council: Nathan Slater (planning); Kelly Williams (delivery) (left at 19:39).

Residents: Nine residents were known to be present by Zoom.

## **1. Chair's welcome and introductions**

The Chair opened the meeting at 19:00, confirmed quorum, and welcomed Members.

## **2. Apologies for absence**

Cllr Brown; Cllr Hunt; Cllr Curien; Cllr Rawson.

## **3. Declarations of interest**

None.

## **4. Consideration of Pre-Application Consolation to the St Nicholas Church in Wales Primary School**

The Chair informed the meeting of a representation received from a Governor of the school. The issues raised by the Governor about the existing school included:

Generally

- Lack of accessibility for children with disAbilities, resulting in a child being unable to attend last year.
- St Nicholas is the only school in the Vale of Glamorgan with no nursery facility. This causes parents to choose schools away from their homes as they can start early and get a more prolonged education.

#### In relation to the little school

- the floor level inside is lower than the outside, meaning that water gets underneath the floor, rots, and is constantly needing to be replaced. The lower school teacher informed me that when they return after the Christmas break, they will have to risk assess the floor as on several occasions they have fallen through the floor.
- The building isn't watertight, and water runs down the walls and makes the paint blister and bubble.

#### In the main building

- There is a so called "radon gas cupboard", which is kept permanently locked, and a system of pipes that expel the gas from the building.
- There is water running down the walls
- Many of the windows, including all of the windows to the hall, are blown.
- There is no cloakroom - when pupils take their coats off there is nowhere for them to go.
- The central heating is running on one pump. There is no budget to replace it as the school has been designated to be rebuilt since 2019. The heating is either on, or off. There is no temperature control.
- The school administrator works in an office that has the main computer server within it. This is a cramped space, within a thoroughfare, which has high levels of CO2 due to the machinery. It is not a healthy workspace.
- The school gym is now being used as a classroom.
- There is no means of assessing the flat roof to prevent leaks.

#### Geoff Howell (MAR Governor) informed the meeting that:

- School not fit for purpose
- Worst school in the Vale of Glamorgan, bar one, for condition and carbon footprint
  - The roof leaks
  - Boiler is unreliable
  - Floors need regular repairs
- The Vale Council has a legal responsibility to provide education in a clean and safe environment.
- School designed for local area
- Same size as existing, plus a nursery
- No changes to the village infrastructure



- Parking would be provided within the new school
- The children need the school now.

Nathan Slater (21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools, Project Officer):

- Plans are currently in draft for comment and amendment
- There are timeframe restrictions
- Public provision has been recalculated
- Overall capacity changed from 126 to 138, including a nursery year
- There are 24 part-time nursery places (12 morning, 12 afternoon)
- One nursery teacher will be employed, and three part-time assistants.
- Plant areas consolidated to one area, close to the plant room
- Bin store moved further into the site
- The smaller school will cost less to build than the school originally proposed

Discussions covered:

- The poor state of the present school. Residents agreed that a new school is needed, but the aesthetics, and location of the school remain issues – along with traffic, and the resulting obstruction of the highway.
- Proximity of bin store to private residence – potential for odour and other problems.
- Size and appearance of tanks – volume needed to meet fire and safety regulations. Residents would like tanks buried. Cost issues in doing this.
- Vale Council trying to minimise carbon in the construction of the building.
- There is some inflexibility in what the Vale Council will offer as there is a design they wish to stick to for all schools to minimise costs.
- Design of the school – described as “disappointing”. School rotated at 90 degrees so kitchen dominating the frontage. Site too narrow to enable school to face the street.
- Long and narrow site difficult to develop.
- Southern elevation of particular concern – materials, lack of windows. Described as looking like an “industrial unit”. Another resident added that, “the aesthetics fail, the height of the building fails the Conservation Area restrictions”.
- Height of the hall of concern. Would provide facilities the school wants. For a sports facility, could be used by the school for football and badminton – and potentially be residents. Because of the standard model design, reducing the



height not normally considered due to the facilities the school want to offered. Proposed hall height to Welsh Government building guidance.

- Schools evolving from previous schools. The Vale Council have established that the design of the school works from educational perspective, and can be delivered. Materials and environmental performances are refined for each new school. Complete new design would take money from the overall pot for the new building. The proposed school is a standard design, minimising design fees – maximising the money to be spent on delivering the school.
- “One size fits all approach” raised and criticised by residents.
- Land holding. Caveats on light and air were raised by Cllr Clarke , who’s reseaching the issue.
- Mistakes shouldn’t be repeated for the sake of small budgets.
- Critisisms made about lack of consultation with residents at an early stage of the development process on the location, viability, design, aesthetics, and traffic of the school. Resident raised concern that people from outside of the community had had far greater influence that residents over the decision-making process. Resident says there’s now a lack of trust in the Vale Council.
- A new school on a different site would not have the same constraints. Resident said that if this is not the right site, this isn’t the right solution.
- Traffic situation described as “unbelievably difficult”. The present voluntary one-way system causes problems for neighbours/residents. The one-way system utilises a single-track road, that is blocked each afternoon by vehicles waiting to collect children from the school. Residents complained about the pollution from queueing traffic. Infrastructure not coping with the existing traffic, queues back onto the A48.
- Community expected to bear the externalities of the school, with no clarification on potential community use of the school.
- New building on existing site is cost effective, and there’s a principal of educational use. Llancarfan moved to larger site, but site available. Significant cost with an alternative site.
- Can pupils be bussed in to the school? Nathan Slater to investigate the possibilities for a modal switch from private car to school bus for accessing the school. Residents enthusiastically supported the idea of a bus bringing children to the school as a means of reducing vehicular traffic. Perhaps as a condition of admission to the school.
- Additional money has been put into reducing the carbon footprint of the school
- Storage area for caretaker.
- A resident suggested that acoustic barriers could protect neighbouring properties from noise – particularly if the opening hours of the building were more than those of the present building.
- Lettings Policy. Opening times can be part of the planning decision. It’s 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools policy to deliver school with accomodation for the community.



- The two-way dialogue at this meeting between residents and Vale Council Officers was appreciated.

Members of the Community Council present at the meeting will put together a response to the Pre-Application Consultation based on the discussions at the meeting.

Cllr Sims left the meeting.

## **5. To consider the Community councils response to the Local Development Plan consultation**

Following a brief discussion, noting the length of the consultation documentation, and the amount of work that the Community Council is currently processing, it was decided to request an extension to this consultation and consider it in January.

## **6. Closing remarks**

Members and residents expressed happiness with the two-way dialogue with the Vale of Glamorgan Council at this meeting. The Vale Council had been receptive to comments and resolving problems.

8:51pm closed.

These Minutes were approved at the meeting of January 10, 2022



Cllr Ian Perry  
Chair

