

HUNGERFORD TOWN COUNCIL

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Minutes of the **Extraordinary Meeting of the Full Council** held on **26th February 2014 at 7.00pm** in the Corn Exchange Complex, Hungerford

Present: Cllrs Crane, A Wilson, M Wilson, Podger, Bumbieris, Thompson

Also present: Clerk, Deputy Clerk, District Cllr Podger; Leader of WBC, Gordon Lundie; Chair of Governors, HPS, Neale Marney (NM); Parent Governor, HPS, John Shatford (JS); Chair of Governors, Hungerford Nursery School, Nick Furr (NF); Headteacher, JOG School, Sarah Brinkley (SB); Tina Harrigan-James and Sarah Flarey from HEAR(Hungerford Education Action Response); Geoff Adams, Adviser; John Garvey, Newbury Weekly News; members of the public, Jan Giggins and Doris Colloff

- 1. Apologies for absence:** Cllrs Benneyworth, Hudson, Harding
- 2. Declarations of interest:** None
- 3. Propose response to education consultation.** Cllr Crane notes the urban and rural differences affecting the funding of JOG and would wish to support a change to the funding to help JOG. The work done by HEAR is significant. Nick Furr pointed out that the responsibility strategically lies with the governors, not the head teachers, and has a strong dialogue with WBC. Sarah Brinkley welcomes open conversation, cohesion. The 3 heads are committed to improving education and S Brinkley has had the opportunity to talk about educational values. Cllr Crane believes the interest of children is paramount. Neale Marney (Primary) did not wish to comment. TH-J – felt the education plan was vague in specifications. HEAR has over 400 members on facebook, has put together a Mission Statement, held 2 evening consultations and has spoken with all 3 heads. 95% are not in favour of plan. HEAR decided to look at alternatives and met with Irene Neill. They need more time to consult and are putting a report and alternatives together.
Cllr Crane is totally opposed to 4 year olds on the JOG site. WBC only provided one option so HTC have put together options. These include the need for smooth transition from one school to another. Cllr Crane thinks 2 primaries will end up splitting the community. The cost to build one classroom at the Primary was £500,000. On this basis £2.75m is not enough for the proposed project and a sum nearer £6m would be required. HTC options suggest a middle school. Can this route be explored in more detail? Another year is needed to look at alternatives.

NF in response; Additional time, sensible but maybe unnecessary; £2.75m is all the money that is available. He believes all options are on the table.

The Primary school would be very unhappy about losing their year 6 as the younger children look up to them. SB said she had visited some good models and shocking models of all-through schools. Cllr Crane does not wish to give in to lack of funds. HEAR will support head teachers and back their views and Irene Neill has advised further consultation is likely. NM- advised money has not

been forthcoming for many years. JOG serves more than just Hungerford and does a lot of work with other village schools. SB saw St Gregory through school done on this basis. Cllr Thompson advised we need more time. SB has outlined views in CHAIN and wants JOG to be a school of choice. She says the 6th form is not a defining factor in parents choosing schools and she is focusing on raising achievement.

How do we measure the right level of education for HPS if it consists of only Key stage 1, as SATS would be at middle school? 4 year olds would be isolated. How would this work?

SB advised the 4 key areas for spending money at JOG are. 1. Double the size of the library and revamp the small hall. 2. Develop the 4th quarter of the Science block. 3. Improve art department with a glass pitched roof. 4. Outdoor learning space. JOG is attracting a good calibre of staff.

Whether the all through school goes ahead or not SB would do all of the above improvements.

District Cllr James Podger said we need more pupils for JOG and more primary school places are needed. HPS have 2½ forms of entry and they can't stretch any further. He wants everyone's ideas but WBC will make the decision as they are the education authority. JP says it can't go ahead if the heads don't want it. NF says decision lies with the governing body. Gordon Lundie says the plan is politically dead but can't say for certain. The £2.75m is only available for this plan, The Head teachers don't support it. The Primary school is against the HTC plan. He needs a plan to be brought forward by community/governors. If we find a plan that is feasible it is his job to find the money to support it. The £1m left over money for revenue support and capital expenditure in next 12 months still stands and JOG will receive this.

Surely this falls under the title, Primary school pressure – Jan Giggins asked where the money is to support this? WBC advised there are not basic need pressures in Hungerford but there are in Newbury.

JS - If we are not building 500 houses and there is not an increase in population, it is a blip and numbers will go back down. GL – Numbers will come from Newbury. WBC will provide revenue support of £200/300K over the next 3 years.

Meeting closed.