
Genie's 'Public Information' newsletter

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Goring-on-Thames Parish Council Responds

Extraordinary Meeting of the Council to be called to consider concerns regarding the Goring CE Primary School's desire for a new school

The Goring-on-Thames Parish Council is aware that some parents of children at the Goring CE Primary School and others do not feel as if their desire for a new school is being heard, much less, being properly addressed. They are reacting to a proposal by a housing developer in which they have been promised a new school, at no cost to the school. Perhaps unsurprisingly, there are a lot of strings attached to that proposal that add to the complexity of the issue. The parents believe that the Parish Council and the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group are not reacting properly to what they feel, is a 'once in a lifetime offer'.

First and most important, the Parish Council has great sympathy for the parents' desire for the best possible facilities for their children and future children in the Parish, and indeed we share their desire.

After hearing about the campaign by the parents, and recognising that there is a great deal of missing information, two Parish Councillors sought to connect with the parents and to try to help forge a way forward.

After discussion with one of the parents in the action group, the Parish Council has agreed, in principle, to have an Extraordinary Meeting of the Parish Council on the subject of the school. The Chairman of the Council, Kevin Bulmer, and Cllrs Catherine Hall and Bryan Urbick are working to draft a proposed resolution for the Parish Council to consider at this meeting. The proposal to be considered by the Council is likely to be something like, "To consider the proposal that the Parish Council support the process to properly consider the options for the school."

At this Extraordinary Meeting there will be a Public Forum in which attendees can share their views. In

addition to the public forum, in order for the Council to be able to properly understand the issues and vote on the matter, it will lay out the details that must be considered, and the steps that must be completed by the school in order for any proposal to be considered. The Council will also present the various complications of the current proposal from the developer and the implications of delaying and voting against the Neighbourhood Plan. It is important that all Councillors and those attendees who are interested in the potential new school are made aware of all of the available facts. The meeting will not be about 'approval' of the plans put forward by the developer (the Parish Council is only one of many consultees in that matter, South Oxfordshire District Council is the decision-maker), but rather about supporting the necessary process so that a fully vetted proposal can be considered in the future.

This proposed resolution, if passed by the Parish Council, is separate from the Neighbourhood Plan, but does not rule out consideration in the next iteration of the Neighbourhood Plan, or even outside the Neighbourhood Plan altogether. It would lay out the key steps as they are now known that would need to be completed to get things started. Importantly, it isn't time-limited to the current, first iteration of the Neighbourhood Plan that is nearing completion.

Because it is August and many parents, Governors and the Head Teacher are away on holiday, we are trying to agree a date for this meeting in September and await feedback from the parents' action group on preferred dates.

For and on behalf of the Goring-on-Thames Parish Council

Colin Ratcliff, Clerk

clerk@goringpc.org

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