

# **Colwall Neighbourhood Development Plan Consultation**

## **Response on Behalf of Colwall CE Primary School**

Contact Details:

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The Governing Body proposes that at least one site within Colwall is safeguarded for educational use to enable a replacement school to be built within the village. This need has arisen due to the flooding problems that have affected the existing school buildings that caused the closure of the existing school in the summer of 2014 and the transfer into temporary buildings. Since then, the Property Services team at Herefordshire Council have undertaken an appraisal of options as to the future of Colwall School that includes:

- Addressing the groundwater flooding problems affecting the existing school
- Making the existing temporary “Portakabin” buildings a more permanent solution
- Building a new school (including an initial appraisal of possible sites)
- Closing the school in Colwall

Herefordshire Council have made the decision to reserve funds for a new school subject to a satisfactory business case being made and have instructed officers to progress this. An application has been made to secure national funding; whether any funding from this source will be forthcoming is not known. The purpose of this consultation response is to safeguard a site; ideally located on land adjacent to the Village Hall. The site is located on the Western edge of the settlement, North of Mill Lane. It is located closer to the bulk of the housing stock that is more likely to accommodate families living within Colwall than the existing school site and significantly is on the North side of the railway bridge that splits Colwall Green from Colwall Stone.

Highways advice has not been obtained, but initial impressions are that sufficient visibility splays as part of a highways access could relatively easily be obtained. Mill Lane is wider than many other roads within the village and is likely to have capacity to take the additional highway movements. The road is rural in character heading out of the village. Leading into the village, one side of the road has a pavement. The nearby highway junction with Walwyn Road (B4218) which is the main spinal road running through the village is also likely to be able to take additional traffic

movements. There will be the potential to create sufficient parking and to maximise the potential for non-car based transport to and from school. In addition, with the land being adjacent to the Village Hall provides the opportunity to develop the whole site as a Community Hub with facilities provided for and shared with other organisations.

The existing school site, together with adjoining Glebe land, is considered the next most viable after the village hall site. Benefits of this site include:

- that it is already associated with a school use
- has reasonable potential to be incorporated into the landscape
- has existing highways access
- has existing service connections (gas, electricity, water, sewerage etc)
- existing legal interests in the site held by Herefordshire Council and the Diocese, key parties involved with the responsibility for running a Church of England school.

The disadvantages of this site compared to the village hall site include:

- Known ground water and surface water flooding that has affected the site including the existing buildings – it is considered though that these problems could be alleviated or engineered out as part of a new development but would be more difficult to mitigate against for the existing school building
- Additional land would need to be acquired
- Limited road frontage making access to the site more problematic
- Shape and slope of the land away from the limited road frontage make construction and design more difficult
- Access across the Village Green is limited
- Location of site away from bulk of family housing and core community facilities increases reliance on car based journeys – car parking issues have been highlighted in historic consultation responses that have been received as part of the Neighbourhood Development Plan process
- Difficulty continuing education provision on a small site with narrow road frontage whilst demolition and construction works take place

It is suggested that the potential need to build a new school on the existing site (supplemented with additional Glebe land) is recognised in the event that building a school on the site adjacent to the village hall is not possible. The attached map has been annotated to show the land that is held under a temporary license. If the school is successfully rebuilt on another site, this site is unlikely to be required for use by the primary school and could then be considered for alternative uses.

We therefore ask that the limited locations within Colwall that are suitable for a new school are safeguarded from alternative development by the Parish Council within

the Neighbourhood Development Plan, at least until the proposed new school build is completed.