

**Minutes the Extraordinary Meeting of
Bronington Community Council held
at the Community Room, Bronington School
On Wednesday 26th April 2023 at 7.45 pm**

Present	Cllrs Ryan Adams, Sarah Birch, Sue Clarke, Anna Edwards, Rob Hill, Louise Lindsay, Ben Martin, Robert Millington, Steve Swinden Three members of the public
1 – Apologies	Cllrs Dave Evans, Mark Watson
2 – Declarations of interest	Cllr Swinden declared that he is a Governor of Bronington VAP School
3 – Bronington School	<p>3.1 Cllr Martin proposed an alteration to the format of the meeting whereby the Open Forum would take place as item 4 of the agenda. The aim of the current meeting would be to debate the proposed federation of Bronington Primary School and Madras Primary School with a formal vote to determine the Council's position taking place at the next meeting on 17 May Proposed Cllr Martin and seconded by Cllr Lindsay</p> <p>3.2 Bronington Community Council, together with other important local groups or individuals appear to have been omitted from the consultation process despite being legitimate stakeholders. The Chair of Governors of the Madras School and for the Federation process, John Griffiths, apologised to all councillors for this oversight. John Griffiths is to ensure the following community representatives are consulted:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Whitewell Parish 2. Tybroughton 3. Higher Wych School Charity 4. Simon Baynes MP for Clwyd South 5. Ken Skates AM for Clwyd South 6. Cllr Jeremy Newton County Councillor for Hanmer and Bronington 7. Cllr John McCusker County Councillor for Overton and Maelor South. <p>3.3 Cllr Martin gave a short presentation considering the factors underlying the proposal to establish a federation between Bronington Primary School and Madras Primary School. Although external factors can affect pupil numbers, similar reductions have not been observed in other local primary schools suggesting that internal factors played the major role in the reductions seen at Bronington School. It is concerning that on Friday 21 April the School's newsletter announced a further reduction in staffing due to budgetary pressures, whereby From September 2023 there will be three classes operating during the mornings but only two in the afternoons. Parents and other stakeholders are being presented with a binary choice of federation or no change; the potential for an alternative future for the school does not appear to have been satisfactorily explored.</p> <p>3.4 Cllr Millington expressed concern that the federation process may result in only the strongest school having a long-term future. The Higher Wych School closed following a similar federation with Borderbrook School.</p> <p>3.5 Cllr Swinden noted that the School budget for next year has not yet been determined. Cllr Martin commented that according to information from the Welsh Government, Bronington School receives £5,858 per pupil.</p>

	<p>Although the federation is presented as a cost saving measure, there may be initial financial investment required from both parties.</p>
	<p>3.6 Cllr Martin noted that consultation with the Chair of Governors of a neighbouring school had resulted in a suggestion that any alternative plan would be best presented directly to the Director of Education at Wrexham County Borough Council.</p> <p>Any proposal would need to be robust, fully costed and developed quickly.</p>
	<p>3.7 Councillors made the following observations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Recruitment of a Head with a 50% teaching responsibility would be impractical given the associated workload. 2. The Governing Body must be proactive and willing to provide support and assistance to any new Head. 3. The School has been in stasis awaiting a plan to move forward and address underlying issues within the School. 4. Several key questions highlighted in Government Guidance as underlying any proposal for school federation have been addressed. 5. The two schools affected by the proposal are extremely unequal in terms of numbers. 6. Federation of Bronington School could be the best available option, however, additional information is required to ensure that stakeholders are able to make a fully informed decisions. 7. There are concerns from other external stakeholders that federation would not secure a long-term future for Bronington Primary School. 8. Any alternative proposal presented to the Director of Education must be sufficiently robust to elicit a considered response. <p>Councillors agreed in principle to investigate alternative plans to secure the future of Bronington School. Proposed Cllr Martin and seconded by Cllr Clarke</p>
4 – Open Forum	<p>4.1 A parent of a pupil at the School told the Council that they had not received any information regarding why the School should federate, or what alternative options may exist.</p> <p>As a parent they are keen to enact a fast solution that could remedy some of the issues that the School currently faces. However, as a member of the community it would be desirable to enact a solution that also best ensures the long-term future of Bronington School.</p> <p>A lack of communication, together with uncertainty has affected the School's reputation resulting in a fall in pupil numbers, although an improvement has been observed in the short time that the temporary Head has been in position.</p> <p>The School needs new measures and federation may offer the best way to ensure a fast turnaround to increase pupil numbers and provide the best outcome for all children attending the School.</p> <p>It would be reassuring, however, if the Community Council could explore alternative options to help to determine whether federation is the best option.</p> <p>A list of pros and cons for each option would be helpful in providing clarity for both parents and the wider community.</p> <p>Given the potential for the School to run a temporary budget deficit, maintaining staffing numbers and employing a dedicated Head could be beneficial to the long-term future of the School.</p>
	<p>4.2 A second parent, who is also a member of the governing body for Bronington School, noted that as a former teacher they are familiar with the academisation process and have seen this enacted successfully;</p>

	<p>federation is not a permanent situation and could potentially be reversed in the future.</p> <p>Federation would provide Bronington School with the opportunity to move forward under new leadership; given the current pupil numbers, it is unlikely that the School would be able to afford to employ a full-time Head.</p> <p>There are several vacancies on the Governing Body and the ability of Governors to be present in the School routinely may be limited by other commitments.</p> <p>No alternatives to federation have been explored by the Bronington School governing body.</p>
	<p>4.3 A third parent expressed concern that further reducing the number of classes within Bronington School would preclude any future increase in pupil numbers.</p>

The meeting closed at 9.05 pm