

Minutes of Meeting with School Council of Dolau Primary School

Date	Thursday 10 th October 2024
Time	13:30
Mode	Face to Face

Attendance		
Name	Initials	Title
Gaynor Davies	GD	Director of Education and Inclusion Services.
Andrea Richards	AR	Service Director 21 st Century Schools and Transformation.
Sarah Nicholls	SN	21 st Century Schools Officer.
Richard Bowen	RB	21 st Century Schools Officer.
Bethan Gannon	BG	21 st Century Schools Officer.
Nia Pugh	NP	Acting Headteacher of Dolau Primary School .
School Council Representatives	N/A	School Council of Dolau Primary School.

1. Welcome and Introductions

Officers in attendance introduced themselves to the School Councils and thanked them for attending the meeting. The School Council introduced themselves.

2. Consultation Overview

GD provided the School Council with an overview of the proposal being made and the consultation process to be followed, as set out in the Consultation Document.

3. School Council Questions

The School Council of Dolau Primary School were invited to ask questions and makes comments. The questions and comments made are summarised in the table that follows along with their response, where necessary.

Number	Question	Response
1.	Will the yard have sports line markings on it?	Yes, there will be sport markings on the yard.
2.	Can we do our football training on the sports pitch?	Yes, of course. The sporting facilities can be shared between both schools and also with the community. There will be a footpath between the schools to allow for easy access.
4.	Are our sports' teams going to be the same or will they be different because we will be in different schools?	This will be up to the school staff. There are many options available as a result of the ability to share sporting facilities.
5.	You are looking for there to be more Welsh speakers, but taking away the Welsh medium pupils from Dolau Primary School will mean less opportunity for the English	All schools in Rhondda Cynon Taf (RCT) look at the importance of using the Welsh language, even our English medium schools. There will be

	medium pupils to speak Welsh (at play time or when practicing with friends).	opportunities for English medium pupils to continue practicing and using Welsh, but we acknowledge that this is a good point to raise.
6.	Will we have lessons in the other school if we use the new footpath?	It will be up to the Headteachers as to when the two schools will come together or use each other's facilities.
7.	What will the school uniform be for the new school?	This has not been decided yet. School staff and pupils will have a say in this decision. We have even had pupils to design their school badge in the past.
8.	This is a good idea because a Welsh medium school would be a better place to speak more Welsh.	This is an important point. The proposal looks to increase the number of Welsh medium pupils.
9.	Will there be any English lessons in the new school?	Yes. Welsh medium schools also have English lessons so that pupils can improve their skills in both languages.
10.	This proposal would mean changes for Dolau Primary School. Will we have to change our school anthem because it's in Welsh?	The proposal doesn't mean that there cannot be any Welsh in Dolau Primary School. Dolau Primary School could of course still have a Welsh school anthem if the school wanted to.
11.	Have you considered the impact of the proposal on local traffic?	Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council (RCTCBC) will make assessments focusing on the access to the community and the safe routes that pupils could take to get to school (either by walking or cycling).
12.	How many classes are you planning to have in the new school?	There will be 16 classes in the new school (plus two nursery classes).
13.	Will there be a swimming pool in the new school?	No.
14.	This is a good idea because more pupils will mean we can make new friends.	Noted.
15.	Would Welsh medium pupils have to go to the new school, or could they stay at Dolau Primary School?	The proposal is asking for people's views at this stage. Parents/carers and pupils will have a choice as to which school to go to, but the new school would be Welsh medium only, and Dolau Primary School would change to be English medium only.
16.	Will RCTCBC plant more trees if you remove any to build the new school?	Yes, there will be lots of planting on the new site. The building contractor will also be doing lots for the environment outside of the site.
17.	If pupils have younger brothers or sisters, will they have to go move to the new school as well, or would they stay in Dolau Primary School?	If Dolau Primary School changes to an English medium school, it wouldn't be dual language any longer. This means that all Welsh medium pupils will go the new school if the parents/carers

		choose to continue with Welsh medium education.
18.	I agree with the new school idea because of the new houses, and it will be good for the community.	Noted.
19.	Would there be any road crossings for pupils that walk to school?	Safe walking routes to school will be looked at to see what is required. Safety is important. Pupils could walk or cycle to school and there will be cycle storage at the new school.
20.	How much of the opencast will you knock down? Many people use it.	As new houses are being built, it's likely that a lot (if not all) of the opencast will be used in some way by the development. The school will only take up a part of this.
21.	Will you get rid of the lake at the opencast?	Some of the lakes will have to go as they will be under the new school, but there are areas that won't be touched by the new school. the building contractor must make sure to look after any wildlife/animals that are there to protect them from the development.
22.	Will you knock down the local football pitch to put the new houses?	It is our understanding that the houses will go on the opencast site.
23.	Will there be gates to go and use the new facilities, or will they be open to anyone?	The facilities will be secured by a gate, but the school have control over any community use.
24.	The plans mention bats and reptiles – will there be bats on the new site?	There will be bat boxes, hedgehog houses etc. on the new site. We are trying to protect as much of the wildlife and nature as possible.
25.	We should have more streetlights and smoother pavements.	Noted. The comment will be passed to RCTCBC's Highways Department.
26.	Can people still walk through the opencast to get to the filming studios?	It's likely that a lot of the opencast will be developed over time because of the new houses being built. There will however be parks and other community facilities that local people can use and enjoy.
27.	I agree with the proposal because of the number of houses being built. More pupils would join Dolau Primary School, and it would become too full.	Noted.
28.	Are there enough places in other schools in the surrounding area?	This is something that is constantly monitored. RCTCBC has a statutory obligation to ensure there is enough capacity in our schools to meet the need/demand so we will make sure there are.

29.	Will there be gravel and a pitch on the yard in the new school?	We try to avoid gravel as it can hurt if you fall. We try to look at other surfaces that will allow water to go through, like the all-weather pitch.
30.	Could we use the new path between the school to walk to school instead of going by the road?	This may be difficult as it won't be public footpath. It will be a footpath for use during the school day.
31.	Separating English medium and Welsh medium is like separating melted ice-cream. It will separate friends.	Friends are important. We hope that there can be close relationships between the two schools.
32.	Will there be an outside climbing frame in the new school? There is one at Dolau Primary School.	This will be a decision for the new school to make.
33.	You are spending £15 million on the new school – will this all go on the school or will some of it be saved for special things for the school (like the school disco etc.)?	All of the £15 million will go on building the new school. Schools have their own budgets to use for things like school discos.
34.	Will the new school impact other school budgets in RCT?	No. The housing developer will contribute to the cost of the project, as well as RCTCBC and the Welsh Government.
35.	I recommend metal benches for the new school because wooden benches get too wet.	This is a good idea. We like to use things called 'buddy benches' in some of our new schools, and these can be made from recycled plastic.
36.	Will there be a charity sponsor for the new building?	The builder does something called community benefits. This could include supporting local charities, and the school will be able to give an input as to what the community benefits should be.
37.	Will there have to be a new football/rugby kit for the new school?	Yes, this is likely. The new school will be able to decide what their school uniform and sports kits will be.
38.	Will there be any help for pupils with special needs?	Yes, of course. RCTCBC will ensure that pupils get the help they need for any additional learning needs that they have.

4. Closing Remarks

The School Council were informed that they will be offered the opportunity over the coming weeks to reflect on the questions and responses provided and submit additional feedback.

The School Council were encouraged to participate in engaging in the consultation process through completing the online survey or putting comments in writing to schoolplanning@rctcbc.gov.uk.

All attendees were thanked for participating in the meeting. Meeting closed at 15:00pm.

Pupil Engagement - 'Have Your Say' Exercise

As part of the engagement exercise with the pupils at Dolau Primary School, all pupils were given the opportunity to 'have their say' by writing down their comments, questions and views, in relation to the proposal.

The comments and views from this exercise are recorded into general themes as shown on the table that follows, along with a photograph depicting an example of one of the 'have your say' exercise boards. Lots of the comments were discussed in the meeting with the School Council.

Comments
We learn more Welsh in Dolau Primary School as it is dual language.
Welsh pupils should choose if they wish to leave.
Split friendships.
Waste of money.
Don't think the new school should open – Dolau Primary School stands for Welsh.
Why Dolau Primary School?
Not fair on Welsh pupils.
It's a great idea!
If we split, we have more opportunities to speak Welsh.
Younger pupils will not be able to experience the school experience that we have.
I don't want to change schools!
Welsh pupils should choose if they want to stay and still learn through Welsh.
New school would benefit both languages.
It will be great for a new Welsh school/new facilities.
What about the wildlife/animals?
Dolau is unique being Welsh and English.
I like the idea.
Welsh pupil parents/carers may want to keep their child at Dolau Primary school and then the Welsh classes will not be full.
I don't want to be forced to leave a school I love.
My whole family has been to Dolau Primary School like this. I'd hate to see it change.
I would like it, so we were separate languages.
Dolau Primary School is special the way it is – why spoil our school.

**PUPIL ENGAGEMENT
NEW SCHOOL PROPOSAL
HAVE YOUR SAY**

The proposal is to build a new school on land behind Dolau Primary School. This school will be Welsh medium and will be large enough for 480 pupils plus nursery.

If this proposal happens, Dolau Primary School would become an English medium school and pupils in the Welsh department of the school would move over.

Please take a sticky note and place it in the box below to let us know what you think about this proposal. Your views are really important to us!

am y cynning yma. Mae eich barn yn bwysig iawn i ni.

1. Why not have a new school? (Iain-C)

2. Why not have a new school? (Freddie-C)

3. What will happen to all the green space we have? (Freddie-C)

4. What will happen to the teachers? (Ewan-C)

5. What will happen to the pupils? (Freddie-C)

6. What will happen to the pupils? (Freddie-C)

7. What will happen to the pupils? (Freddie-C)

8. What will happen to the pupils? (Freddie-C)

9. What will happen to the pupils? (Freddie-C)

10. What will happen to the pupils? (Freddie-C)

11. What will happen to the pupils? (Freddie-C)

12. What will happen to the pupils? (Freddie-C)