

Proposed reorganisation of rural and small schools in West Sussex Public Meetings

School: Clapham and Patching C of E Primary School

Venue Date Time: The Angmering School
12 February 2020 18:30 – 20:40

Attendees:

Neil Hart, DL, Chair and Facilitator (NH)
Nigel Jupp, Cabinet Member for Education and Skills
Deborah Urquhart, Local Member for Angmering and Findon (DU)
Paul Wagstaff, Director of Education and Skills (PW)
Graham Olway, Head of School Organisation, Capital Planning & Transport (GO)
Trevor Christin, Director of Education, Diocese of Chichester (TC)
Lesley Hurst, Assistant Director of Education, Diocese of Chichester (LH)
James Richardson, Project Manager (JR)
Pan Panayiotou, Head teacher, Worthing High School. (PP)
Helen Moules, Admission Manager, South (HM)
Tracey Dunn, School Planning Officer (South and West) Note taker
James Croft, Project Support Officer, note taker

Approx. 95 parents/carers, members of the public, teaching staff and governors including Miss Jane Jones, Head of Clapham & Patching C of E Primary School

Neil Hart opened the meeting introducing the panel and explaining the structure of the meeting.

Nigel Jupp introduced himself explaining the purpose of his attendance at the meeting was for listening purposes only to draw his own conclusions.

The presentation started at 18:40.

Comments were invited from key members of the school or community before the floor was opened to the audience to raise their questions.

Questions/Statements		Responses	
Chair of Governors	<p>Feels like we have been run over by a steam roller actually. I do have a couple of questions actually, one being the capacity of the school, based on the published admission number of 8 does mean we have a capacity for 56 pupils but we have been taking more than 8, we have been taking 9's and 10's and the capacity of the school when we are talking about our plans to acadamise would be 67, which is the capacity of the buildings so to say that the capacity is 56 is wrong. 67 is a large number in a small school and that is our intention to grow, we were already, after the 12 questions were shared with us in October 2018 looking to grow to 61 and the three year financial plan that we originally put forward we were basing this on 63 and therefore the school would have been far more viable than the current position it is in. We have inevitably been losing pupils since last summer when this whole process of consultation began, so the question really is why is the information that was sent out not run passed the Head Teacher or the Chair of Governor's before it was put in the public domain. It's exactly what happened last July and as I said many times before it was only when the head & I went to the diocese and the board of education meeting that we found out the information was in the public domain anyway, but that's history now. The second thing is we keep learning new bits of information as this process goes forward for example the question of when the Regional Schools Commissioner (RSC) will or will not allow us to academise. It now seems that the whole consultation process has to be concluded before this so what is that date for the RSC to consider our worked up proposal to academise. The diocese board of education are currently considering our application. I do understand that Mr Wagstaff has received the plans from Pan, the Head Teacher of Worthing High, although no response has been received. The other thing I want to say is under the government's recommendations about rural schools there is a presumption against closure. One of the things it clearly says is that anybody i.e. the Local Authority (LA) when looking to close a school should encourage and support the other options and I would like to say as chair of governors that apart from being talked to and told things are happening, I don't think the school has received any particular</p>	GO	<p>I will try to respond to those points, firstly the net capacity is calculated by using a Department for Education spreadsheet based around the numbers of children coming in to the school (its published admission number) by the number of year groups it offers so $7 \times 8 = 56$. That is the DfE calculator for the net capacity of the school is. David is right that in the past the school has taken in more than 56 pupils. That could have been for a variety of reasons. Paul will cover some of the other points raised but can I respond to the point about the federation guidance. We have had a lot of discussion with governing bodies across west Sussex regarding federation and we issued in June/July last year guidance to every school, the clerks of governors and chairs of governors as we wanted everybody to be aware of this information. We are also aware that the Church of England diocese has been promoting the discussion about governance with other schools and we have been working with them and with other bodies to look at how we can get the information out there but it is not for West Sussex to say which schools should federate or with who. That is very much an individual decision of the schools governing body.</p>
		PW	<p>I'd like to pick up the points from the RSC and around the process of academisation. I would just like to read an extract from the letter from the RSC. "Our position is that we will not issue an academy order to the school while the L.A. statutory process to consider school closure and viability is ongoing To do</p>

	<p>support from the L.A. about how we might go about academisation. There have been documents issued but I've attended governors meetings and I've attended a meeting at County Hall with the previous Director of Education where several governors there said there at an open forum, how do we go about the process of acadamisation or federation and we were told "there were documents that could be sent out and then you just get on with it". That's what all of us have had to do. Now, fortunately for Stedham they apparently are now going to federate with Harting and I think the L.A. are going to agree to that. We considered federation but we didn't get very far with that as we don't really see the benefit of federating with another school in our locality but we now have a very firm proposal from a local trust and this was put to the diocese. At the scrutiny committee in January there was a very clear view that we should be allowed to pursue that option through to its conclusion before the question of closure was considered. In other words closure should have been taken off the agenda to give us that breathing space required. It's a very firm proposal, there were several people from here and others watched it on the television, from the steering committee at County Council stood up and said "It's about time this Local Authority did things properly. It annoys me that when in this building I said something that the Director for Education now likes to quote in every single document he sends out that I said "no change is not an option" I was saying that in answer to parents that we need to do something with this school, we need it to change, we need it to grow and that is quoted back at me in a very negative way and that really just doesn't help. So I know the Head Teacher has some comments and questions that she would like to make and I would suggest that you agree Mr Moderator and you let the Head Teacher speak next because she is heavily involved in this if not more so than me because her job and her staff, who are all here, their jobs are on the line.</p>	<p>so would risk undermining the L.A. process, effectively giving the schools an option to exempt themselves from the process by expediting the route to become an academy'. The Trust that is involved has equally had a letter from the RSC, which was copied to us, stating that they would await the outcome of the consultation before they would take any representation for an academy order to be considered. They want to make sure that this school goes through this process first and that the school is seen as being viable into the future. The RSC would not want to academise schools that will not be viable into the future.</p> <p>The other issue that was raised which is linked to the capacity was the decline that the Chair of Governors refers to since last summer. It is important to note that in relation to the school numbers in 2017/18, 15 pupils left the school in year and 12 joined. In 2018/19, 17 left in year and 14 joined. This does not include those children who leave at the end of Year 6 to move to high school. In this year we have only see 3 children leave. Therefore, the declining roll linked to the consultation process is inaccurate. It doesn't tell the whole picture of the high level of mobility at the school in recent years.</p> <p>GO We are very much aware that there is a presumption against the closure of small rural primary schools. In the guidance that is available from the DfE, it does not state that a school won't close. What it does require us</p>
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John Kelly Parish Council	<p>The social impact of closing the school would be enormous in the village. It has been here for 207 years and hasn't had to close yet and with a good Ofsted report I don't see a reason why it would have to close now. As a village it plays an enormous role. There are all age groups right across the village, the children come up and use the woods, their exposure out in the woods to the wildlife and nature. They won't get that in a town. They will have to be bussed out which isn't exactly a wonderful way to go. We are supposed to be teaching them not to use transport. We have got the situation where there is some inter-financial dependence between the school and the shop. We struggle as a village to keep organisations open. We are running</p>	Comments noted.

	<p>out of volunteers. We have an ageing population and predominantly there isn't much to draw younger families to Clapham. This proposal is going to have an impact on us. To survive as a village we have got to get young families to move in. What do you think closing the school is going to do to us?</p>		
Local Resident	<p>The impact on the children of this school is going to be devastating if this school closes because a number of the children have special educational needs. They either have an EHCP or have identified special need. Their parents have sent the children to this school because it's a small school, a caring school that can cope with these children. If these children have to leave this school and go back to some of the schools they have come from, it's going to be devastating to them and devastating for their parents. You need to consider that in your overall proposals.</p>		Comments noted.
Head Teacher	<p>In the first document that went out you claimed small schools could not deliver the new curriculum under the Ofsted framework. You also said that small schools could not attract high quality teaching staff or other staff. You also said we couldn't balance the budget. None of that was fact. It was all opinion and conjecture and you put it into a proposal document. In November 2019 we were Ofsteded and we were good. Our curriculum was good and our teaching was good with aspects that were outstanding and actually we've balanced our books and actually this year we have a small surplus. However not a lot has been learned from that conjecture and opinion in your proposals. The proposals this time say that although the latest Ofsted judged the school to be good, sustaining this with the limited staff and resources available would be extremely challenging. Once again, that is not a fact its somebody's opinion and conjecture. Now to be factual it says we have 33 pupils within the catchment area and only 4 go to our school. Now I sat with the parish council yesterday afternoon and went through those with a fine toothcomb and came to the conclusion that the majority of them, by this I mean about 25 of them, are secondary school age so that is misleading information that you are giving us. This document also talks about St Margaret's</p>	PW	<p>With regard to the numbers of children in the area we have to say how many children there are and the point around the number that are secondary aged, our figures point to the lack of primary age pupils within the catchment area and I think this further illustrates the concerns we have that there are not the primary numbers in the area of the school.</p>

	<p>school, now I've spent a lovely couple of days with the head of St Margaret's and he categorically says they are in the very, very early stages of development, if anything was to happen to this school, they are in consultation with their parents and the governing body and as a result of that it has been included in this document and that's not right. Last week I had an independent education adviser come to the school to ensure the standards of the school were maintained as you can understand this is a difficult time for us and you can never be complacent and he found excellent teaching staff with aspects of outstanding. Once again in this document if I go back it says the resources available to the school due to low enrolment will be extremely challenging. Today and yesterday I had phone calls from locality Head Teachers. I do not blame parents in the least, but there will be at least 8 children leaving the school in the next couple of weeks simply because they are looking for places. It's a self-fulfilling prophecy. Finally a member of H.R. came up to meet my staff yesterday and they are all at risk of redundancy, now what am I supposed to say to my staff they are working in a good school with outstanding teaching dealing with diverse children and what do I say to them, you're closing that school. I suggest to you West Sussex that you learn lessons from this process and when you do it again you do it better and if you chose to close this school then shame on you.</p>		
Parent	How many houses in the area we can't include sheep.	PW	We do understand the point and share these concerns that there are not the children living in the area. This reinforces the point we make that viability of a school includes providing high quality education and drawing children from the locality
Parent	If the catchment area contains a lot of fields why don't you change the catchment area to include the new housing estate in Durrington where you aren't going to build a new school for at least 5 years.	PW	This isn't a catchment area that we have recently drawn. It has been the catchment for the school for a long time. To change this catchment area would require us to change the catchment area for neighbouring schools

			and any change could similarly create additional pressures on those schools.
Parent	Where are the women representing us in education in West Sussex – where are the skirts?		
Parent	People drive past this school to get to their catchment school I live 1.1 miles away but my catchment school is over 2 miles away from where I live.	PW	The catchment area has been there for a long time as I have already explained. I agree that the area within the catchment is broadly rural and there are other small schools that have rural areas as their catchment. They equally may not be able to sustain a school roll from their own catchment if the borders of catchment areas were redrawn to accommodate Clapham and Patching.
Dianne Hunt	I understand the new estate in Angmering has East Preston school as its catchment area. Why does that have to be the case? Why can't you extend the catchment so it covers includes Clapham and Patching school.	GO	Catchment areas do tend to be fairly static and as we have heard this one has been in place for quite some time. To change a catchment area does require us to consult with other schools. To take children out of a particular catchment area if catchment borders change is also an emotive issue and we could well be facing different challenges. The catchment areas are what they are to try to reflect the need for the school in years gone by. In terms of new housing development in the area but currently we are not seeing the numbers of children coming from those developments filling the schools.
Parent	I've been asked to ask this question. Not many people here are convinced that West Sussex County Council have made a strong enough argument for closure. It seems fairly obvious and I think that's in the Ofsted information, that the case for closure has to be robust. You guys are helping. My question is what are the benefits of closing Clapham & Patching school, that's my main question and if		Comments noted.

	<p>this really is genuinely about improving education for our children and the children that are going to come to Clapham & Patching in the future, another 100 years I hope because I remember 1976 when this all happened before and they tried to close the school. Our children are currently at a good school and will be looking for places that don't exist. Children will end up at schools that require improvement. I realise it might be beneficial for West Sussex County Council to close our school, but I would like to know why and what you think the benefits are please, particularly as we have a chance of academisation.</p>		
<p>PAN HT Worthing high</p>	<p>We are having to do things appropriately and I appreciate this is a difficult meeting. I'm here to put our perspective on where we are now in discussions with West Sussex and the diocese. We are putting together a working group, David, Jane, Paul & the West Sussex team are all working together. We the Trust have carried out our due diligence. We have a viable solution from the Trust's perspective. It's a process we have gone through and we believe it is a solution that is workable and we are currently having discussions on how to make it more viable. To reinforce Mr Wagstaff's comments the decision has to come and also be supported by the Local Authority. I'm here to try and ensure there is a balanced viewpoint and we will work really hard to try and make things work from the Trust's perspective and work for Clapham & Patching to be viable. Make no mistake if we didn't think there was a viable solution I wouldn't be here. We also have to manage your expectations as there is a long process to go through. Also to reinforce what Mr Wagstaff said, the letter from the RSC is very clear any decision has to be supported by the Local Authority and we understand that as a trust we will work very hard to make that happen.</p>		<p>Comments noted.</p>
<p>Parent direct to you Graham Olway</p>	<p>You use the phrase "we import our children" that's really inappropriate. I imported my children to Clapham & Patching and they have a really balanced education. You are closing down a good school that is important to the community. People do not import their children they choose a school for their children and given that</p>	<p>GO</p>	<p>I'm not prepared to comment on your views on children's services but what I will say is that if you don't appreciate the use of the term import I will withdraw that point. What I will say is we are seeing there are 44</p>

	<p>map which contains the catchment which as we know is largely fields is it any wonder that children's services in West Sussex is inadequate.</p>		<p>children from outside the area coming in and I think you've illustrated one of the points that we are keen to understand, and that is the impact on the community should this school close. So far, we have not heard enough. We need you to tell us what you think the impact of closing this school would have on the community.</p>
<p>Parent</p>	<p>What are the benefits of closing our school for the children the community? We provide a massive reservoir for kids in the local community. They start off at Whytemead, Laurels, Hawthorns or Lyndhurst and they haven't got on in those schools, by word of mouth, they find Clapham & Patching as no-one gets it. As part of their catchment area the schools in the Worthing area are benefitting from us because we are providing them with a relief from those children those schools can't cope with our children. They are full to capacity and they have specifically stated that they don't have capacity for any more children with special needs. That's what they say and I'm sure its not really allowed but that's what they are saying. The other thing is you still haven't told me what the benefits are of closing our school. We know what the benefits of our school are. We know there are benefits to the community. We haven't got a post office, and the church relies on our children to be there. Its obvious what the benefits are to the community otherwise it will just be an old age housing estate.</p>	<p>PW</p>	<p>I have heard many points throughout the evening so far. One in particular relating to the staffing in the schools came up I believe. Our H.R. team visited the school only yesterday to talk about the options that could be available to staff. When we have undertaken similar processes when schools have faced closure or been re-structured, we have worked closely with all of our schools to ensure that wherever possible, people can be redeployed. Should the school be recommended for closure there will be a support network for all the staff to try to find an appropriate alternative position for them. The issue is being raised about available places in schools. Currently there are 1720 spare places across the schools from the areas from which your children come from and 75% of those schools are good or outstanding. 77% of those schools, if you look at their Ofsted reports, particularly mention the strength of special education needs and how children's needs are being met well in the schools. Those schools which are Requiring Improvement still have many positive features. It would be wrong to suggest that schools are wanting children removed from their school because of their</p>

			needs and incorrect to suggest that Clapham & Patching is an incubator being used to take their problems away. Schools with spaces across the south coast from Worthing to Chichester have positive outcomes and many with very strong provision for SEND as identified by Ofsted.
Parent	<p>Basically Mr Wagstaff got the same email that I did from the RSC and he has quoted word for word the email I received. I'm a bit frustrated that at the cabinet meeting Mr Wagstaff said, and I'm quoting this from the webcast, its not the LA's decision whether the school academises but it clearly is what you have been discussing with the RSC. You are also talking about importing children from out of area and we're talking about children with special needs. Sorry, but I'm so frustrated. I've spent 8 years supporting parents and carers of disabled children I have 3 disabled children myself. I moved her to Clapham because she was failing in a one form entry school. She has autism with anxiety. She was dragged off me for two years to go into school. I've phoned several of the schools that are on your spreadsheet and they have been honest with me and told me they can't meet her needs, so where does she go in September. This school is perfect for these children and its helping the wider community because those children aren't struggling in mainstream schools. What you need to look at is why Clapham works so much better for our children and support the academy option.</p>		Comments noted.
Parent	<p>Elaborating on what others have said catchment, places etc. regardless where they are, they are not there for every child. I spoke to my catchment school which for us is The Laurels. I looked around when my son was due to start and thought it was quite a nice little school. However, they said even back then they wouldn't be able to meet his needs and having spoken with them recently that is still the case. He has an EHCP with the school and essentially he needs to go to a school with a speech and language unit. I have rang the local school with such a unit and have been to look around I have made it</p>	PW	<p>I know we've heard a lot about SEND and EHCPs tonight and at the previous consultation. When I visited the school a little while ago I heard about how difficult children's lives have been in terms of their particular needs. A child's needs don't necessarily remain static which is why there is an annual review of the EHCP, to see if anything needs adding to the EHCP in</p>

	<p>very clear that he will not be moving schools unless our school was to shut and even then its questionable if I send him to that school or not but I thought I'd keep an open mind. The school have said because the exact wording is not on his EHCP they would not be able to take him. He has a severe speech sound disorder he is the perfect candidate for a Speech & Language unit but he can't go, so if he can't go to his local school because they can't accommodate him and he can't go to a speech and language unit which you would think would be perfect for him, where is he supposed to go? If he gets ripped out of a school who is accommodating his needs he has come on leaps and bounds and he is learning way beyond our expectations, where is he supposed to go? Others can't even match let alone exceed what this school is doing for him here. Can't match what this school is doing. Not only that if the worse came to the worse he may have to go out of County, why should he have to, why should the siblings of these children have to be uprooted every day for the journey for these children? Not just our children but future generations as well.</p>		<p>relation to their needs or if the provision they are receiving needs to be looked at again. With an EHCP, if they require more support it is discussed annually at the review and the child's needs are assessed refined, altered or added to. We have 214 children on EHCPs educated across the schools I have mentioned where we currently have spare places and where Ofsted considers the schools provide well for SEND pupils. The work they do is outstanding to secure their future and also to provide the appropriate support.</p>
Parent	<p>Can I talk about head of Palatine school which is a special school. I'm a mother of three children that attend Clapham & Patching school. My middle daughter has an EHCP she has additional needs. The head teacher of palatine came last week to visit my daughter in the school. She rang me yesterday and she basically said, well she sits on the fence and says, she probably couldn't be able to offer a space for my daughter as she feels everything she needs is being met at Clapham & Patching. She says there is nothing more Palatine can offer her that Clapham & Patching and the wonderful teachers are giving her. So I asked her what if the worse happens and the school does close and she said "you are just going to have to hound SENAT". Now the SENAT Team are meant to be sending out a letter about providing help and support, well I haven't received anything for my daughter. I have also visited mainstream schools, believe me I do not want to move my children but as parents we need to get information from other schools I visited Chesswood actually and the head said he already had 10 -15 with EHCP and eight children are applying for an EHCP at the moment so basically if I wanted my</p>	PW	<p>From the Local Authority's perspective, there is provision across the area. We have 214 children with EHCP's. 75% of schools with Ofsted good or outstanding where provision for special education needs is deemed to be very strong and children are making very good progress in thriving communities. We also have specialist support centres across our mainstream schools where additional access to specialist support is available. We have children that are well supported across a number of schools. It would be unfair to say no other school could support the child.</p>

	child to go there he would want full funding from SENAT as he couldn't meet the first 20 hours because these children's needs are so high. He said the majority of schools in the area would all be the same, they want full funding for an additional teacher if they have to take any more children with EHCP's.		
Parent	I live in Durrington takes 5 mins to get to Clapham & Patching 9 minutes to get to Laurels which is my catchment school. If my daughter has to go to a special school she will have to have transport to get there as I couldn't physically get my other children to other schools and her to another school, I couldn't do it. Why should my daughter have to go on a journey to a different school, I'm losing my hair because of this I'm so stressed.	PW	May I go back to your comment regarding meeting the head of Palatine, which is a special school for children with more complex needs. I think what the head may be saying is that, in her opinion, your child's needs are being met in a mainstream school and she doesn't necessarily need a place in a special school.
Parent	No What she is saying is Palatine is a bigger school and Clapham & Patching is better for her because it is a small school with a nurturing environment and wonderful teachers and her needs are being met.	PW	I understand about the nurturing they get in this school and providing a nurturing environment is not something that is unique to small schools. Many of the schools across the area that are recognised as being nurturing places by Ofsted are larger schools.
Parent	Paul, wake up and get excited about our children. There is nothing wrong with a little bit of emotion when a little tiny child in reception or year 1 goes into school and failed and they feel bad because they have failed their first experience of school. They look for somewhere else and they hear on the grapevine there's a great little school just north west of town they can send their child to. The school is small, there is a small group of teaching staff and the playground is small and the assembly hall is small when they sit down to dinner everything is small, they are not in a separate annex or wing they are not just included in school life they are welcomed into school life so the special needs kids play an integral part in school plays and other activities they are very special children that enlighten the whole experience of everybody in the community because they are being looked after and they excel not just to a point where they are being tolerated. So you've had too many beta blockers tonight		Comments noted.

	because I see no passion about education in West Sussex from you. I see you following some kind of dictate from somewhere else because you won't listen. We want an academy with Worthing High because with their ethos they understand us whereas you guys, you should be helping us we are a great school stop closing us down.		
	If you get the information from the lady who has spoken to the head of Palatine, why don't you go and speak to them directly. Mr Jolly doesn't want any more special needs kids.	PW	I recognise that for many parents Clapham & Patching provides that small nurturing environment. What I do want to say though it is not just small schools that provide that nurturing environment. We have many schools in the area that do provide the same care and nurturing for their children with additional needs as you are wanting for your children.
Resident	I'm a Villager in Clapham, its been mentioned during this meeting that there hasn't been much support for the school from the village. Tonight I handed in a petition where I have got over 60 signatures in support of the school. There are many more villagers here tonight who also support the school why not raise your hand so we can see how well the school is supported. (15 hands went up) we love our school and want it to survive.		Comments noted.
Parent	My temper is a little bit riled tonight so I will try to be as calm as possible. The misinformation that has been put up tonight has already been picked up so I'm not going to go there but I have two questions and I would love to add something about the impact on the local community. My children are from the local community. You have no idea of the impact that moving my girls from this school is going to have, no idea. For my first point I would like you to answer a question I've read the documentation that you have attached to this consultation and the first thing I wanted to raise from that was you have stated quite categorically that you understand in the Q&A's the SEND needs of our children. Well I speak for everyone here tonight and we don't feel that you really do so can you please explain to us your understanding of the needs of our children. That's	PW	Picking up on a couple of those points particularly "how well do we know the needs of our children". I think I recognise and certainly, at the last meeting we had in the Autumn term and on my visit to the school, from your comments tonight, and also the children's stories that have been sent to the Chief Executive, I've got a clear flavour of individual cases and the challenges some of the children have. Our SENAT team have been working with those children with special education needs on EHCP's and certainly as a school, we've had discussions with the school

	<p>question number one. The other thing that I would like to raise which goes back to what the chair of governors was saying was that in the government guidelines for the protection of small schools there is a presumption for a rural school remaining open. One of the things that they actually put in writing in that document is academisation so perhaps my understanding may be wrong here but its seems like West Sussex County Council have a lot of say in that. Why was academisation not put on the table to start with. Now I appreciate you're not the ones who make the decision but that isn't really something that you've supported and my actual question on that is the decision at cabinet. The wording had to be changed as our excellent clerk picked up that the wording hadn't been published properly, the wording was to support the academisation process, alongside, for some bizarre reason which I really don't understand, the closure nonsense. I would like to know in concrete steps not waffle but how is West Sussex County Council supporting our school to become an academy because it really doesn't feel like that is happening. Now I appreciate we said about viability and all the rest of it but as our Head Teacher has said, we have got extra pennies in the bank, we've got the most amazing incredible staff who you are doing an injustice to and never mind our amazing children, never mind our school community. And one more thing on the impact on the community this school is part of the community in a way that you don't really seem to understand and I'm not sure that you can. It is involved in going up to an old people's home you don't understand how beneficial this inter-generational interaction is. I can tell you from speaking to them myself, as I went there with my son, how much they value having the kids come up from the school they really look forward to it, it's a highlight to them and the children are involved in that, they go up there and sing to them at certain times of the year. Its what helps keep our churches alive, our churches would disappear without them we have two wonderful churches they are used for services for all sorts of things and as a village we consider all of these mums & dads, all of the children a part of our community because we involve them in community events. Now I am sure you are aware of this Mr Wagstaff because you were at a meeting at the school, I'm part of the fund raising group that's has</p>	<p>PP</p>	<p>regarding the funding to recognise the challenges and have provided additional funding to support special education needs over and above that the school would normally be given. I don't underestimate the issues, but I don't know every specific child's individual needs in the level of detail you as individual parents know. We do understand that some of the needs of the children in the school are complex. We have made the point that SENAT will be working with those parents of children who have got EHCP's to help them find an appropriate provision should they need to. For those children who have special needs who have not yet got an EHCP our specialist teacher support team will be working with those parents over the course of this term to look at alternative provision that would meet each child's needs. I do recognise as we go through this next term more information and more detailed conversations with the parents will be taking place to make sure that, should the school close, parents have the support to find alternative provision.</p> <p>We've mentioned about the academisation process. It is not the Local Authority's decision as I'm sure that Pan will confirm. It is a decision made by a head teacher panel that meets to decide whether a school can academise. It is not the Local Authority's decision.</p> <p>I've got to be fair to you Paul and be really honest and say that the Head Teacher panel that will meet to reflect on the application will take its steer from the Local Authority.</p>
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	<p>given money to the Parish Council for a children's play park that will be put in to our local recreation ground and we have put years of work into that. The Parish Council have put incredible amounts of work into that and we need the children from the school to come and play and when they come and play there the parents can come along to our café which they will help to keep alive for the rest of the community for the people who have been cut off because there is no bus service there is no interaction if they can't drive they can't get anywhere, so they will be supporting that and helping it to survive providing a social outlet for people who are very lonely and I can tell you right now when I was on maternity leave I found that to be a valuable asset.</p>	PW	<p>To balance the argument, the RSC has made it very clear that they will not intervene with the Local Authority's decision which is why we must work closely together to look for a viable solution.</p> <p>I agree we must ensure the school is viable into the future and that is one of the reasons why we have to consult to be able to say to the RSC whether we feel the school is or isn't viable into the future. Picking up on the other issues mentioned about the community, the impact and the integral part the school plays within the community. I think there have been some very strong expressions made this evening about how the community values the school and how the school and community work in partnership together. I would hope that those messages are clearly logged, because the impact on the community is a key feature in terms of looking at the presumption around whether a school should close. We need to hear from the community what any changes would mean to the community.</p>
Maggie Wright Resident	<p>I'm a villager a local resident and I am a foundation governor of the school which means I represent the church on the governing body. We've heard a bit tonight about the community. The children from the school are valued from the churches point of view, Christmas, Harvest Festival, Easter, someone asked tonight if we want a donkey for the Easter Parade. The whole community gets together to enjoy these things we have an autumn fayre, summer fete that all the villagers go to, we have carol singing at the old peoples home that has already been mentioned there is also the old peoples dinner that the pupils go and sing at. My mother is 92 a resident of the village all her life, she's had grandchildren at the school she has a great</p>		

	grandson who wants to go there in September 2021 and I don't think he can he also has a younger brother who will go the year after that, there is a future for our school, we have to believe it, we have to follow this passionately. 44 children come to our school from out of the catchment area. They cannot be wrong.		
Parent	<p>There are loads of points I too wanted to make but they've kind of been made already. But I just wanted to say I'm one of those parents who brings my child to this school and I want you to look at my child because he is not a statistic. He is a little person. He's in the photograph 4th seat along. He's the one with his tongue sticking out and I promise you when the photo was taken he didn't know he'd be facing the Director of Education for West Sussex, but that's my little boy. He was adopted from your care at 11 months old and he started his school career at East Preston where as a 4 year old he was an inconvenience. So when you say there are lots of good schools with good Ofsted reports that could take our children, you probably do have lots of good schools, I couldn't say East Preston is a bad school but they couldn't accommodate my child he was just an inconvenience. When he went to Clapham & Patching he was "Bobby" and that's what's important. I don't mean to be rude to you gentlemen but you look, act and stand like the people you are just bureaucrats, you may as well be in a big building in Whitehall as in Chichester, these little people need to be cared for and the decisions that you are making ignores their needs.</p>	GO	<p>I am conscious of time, the gentleman has made a very impassioned statement about his child and that's a lovely point to hear because what we are saying, and I appreciate we may be at different points on this, but our rationale behind this is to do the best for all of the children which is why we are consulting on the option to close. We've answered the questions about academisation. We've answered the questions about SEND. There are some leaflets at the front, which are providing advice to parents. You must appreciate Paul and myself can't give every single answer to every individual case, but we do have a team of people that are able to deal with that. It does say very clearly there the role of the SENDIAS service is to ensure that all parents children and young people have access to impartial information advice and support so they can make informed decisions relating to their SEND. If you don't want to hear, or like what Paul and myself are saying, there is an independent provision there that will help and support the families, it's the same for families of children who don't have SEND, we've already put on the slide there about support should the school close. We are here to consult, we are hear what you are saying and I think we have had quite a bit about the community impact, I would like to stress that</p>

			again I would dearly love you to be putting those points and responding through the online survey.
Parent	<p>I want an answer to my question please I've been waiting all night. I have one burning question for you gentlemen OK, you say know the needs of these children and believe me I am not leaving this school if I don't have to my children are very happy where they are. Two of my children, if you take a look at these two chairs at the end they have a life limiting disease OK, their lives aren't looking as glossy as probably your children those children also have issues with cross infection, so four of the schools are already off the radar because they can't be with the other children that have certain diseases or something similar or the same. So where do I go with those, because if four schools are off the radar because they can't mix with other children, there are three schools that have already told me outright they can't accommodate my children. They haven't got the resources to help them catch up. For example Zachary was off school for the best part of eight weeks last term. A larger school can't help him catch up we know, we've been there we've tried and failed miserably believe me. Following from that these schools are saying to me the reason they can't take my children is because these children are going to put the resources they have under too much pressure, so that's eight schools off the radar completely as there is another one where we came from and I wouldn't send them back there. its disgusting. They've been under observation for awful things, its not happening, why you're not shutting them down instead of us is beyond me. Bearing all that in mind a) where do the children go b) would you rather see them in home education because I don't think you would and that's my point.</p>	GO	<p>I have said many times that West Sussex can offer support for children with EHCPs or those who have additional needs but don't warrant an EHCP. We have to continue to say that its stated in the booklet. Our line on that hasn't changed. The Lady's point at the back about 'can I have a place where I want', we've said already tonight that in terms of the process that should the school close, there is the opportunity for all of the parents to have a conversation about a particular school. No one is denying you the opportunity to apply to any school. Anybody is able to apply to any school. There is a process that you have to go through. It's a national process. You cannot just go to wherever you want. You apply to any school you may wish you child to go to and your application would be considered. Your choice about home schooling is entirely up to you.</p>
Parent	<p>If you are going to close our school and deny our children education are you going to give them priority to choose the school that I want my children to go to because I should have priority your denying them this fantastic school so I should then be able to say "I want this school" and you should give those children priority to attend whatever school we as parents decide they should go to.</p>		

Parent	I'd be really worried about children from our lovely school being isolated and lonely in a home school environment because I think quite a lot of people here, especially those whose children do have complex and medical needs, are considering home education. They really need this school as they are not going anywhere and they are considering home education and for a child with a life limiting disease that's their social life gone.		
Parent	My son has an EHCP and I have been very lucky I have had a lot of input from SENAT they have been very kind and working very hard to help us find an alternative school whether they are normal mainstream schools special schools or with a special unit. There is one that we now have to hope has space for him so he is a lucky one. So I'm just wondering about the other children there are at least four or five that I know of who probably need EHCP's if they leave this school, they won't be in place in time. Also if the LBAT and social and communication teams are supposed to be supporting these children, I would like to understand how, because they are advisory teams they don't have any power. They don't have the capacity. They are already completely overwhelmed so could we please have a bit more information about how these children will be supported by those two teams.	PW	I would just like to pick up on the point from the lady who says she has not had any contact from SENAT, if you would like to give me your details after the meeting I will ensure these are passed on and I would like to apologise on behalf of SENAT and will escalate to see why that has not been happening. It is well known and has been expressed here this evening there are some children who have not yet got an EHCP and are on the journey to maybe getting an EHCP in place, or are being supported with SEND plus in school. There is a team of specialist teachers who will be working closely with parents of those children who don't yet have an EHCP over the course of this term to find an appropriate provision and, if it requires, movement on an EHCP. As you will know, there is a wealth of evidence needed to be collated as part of the assessment process. It may be that much of that information has already been collated and drawn together by the school. Certainly the LBAT team and Specialist Teacher team will be supporting parents over the course of this term to make sure those children's needs are understood so they can make sure the right kind of provision is there for them.

Parent	You gentlemen who are paid over £100K a year, I think the very least you can do is stay until at least half past eight there are only three questions left, mine, this lady next to me and one at the back that you still haven't got to that you promised could speak ages ago.		
Parent	The villagers, can they get a paper version sent to their address – like I get a letter saying the train lines going to have work on it. As they are elderly not everyone uses computers.	GO	We can make more paper copies available we are not wishing to stop people from responding. I think we have said at various times tonight that we are encouraging people to respond. I very much take your point that not everyone has access to a computer. It would not be sensible for us to post it out as we don't have the names and addresses of all the local residents. We can ask the Head Teacher if the school would be prepared to allow people to go to the school to collect a copy.
Parish Councillor	As you are wrapping up so quick I have two points to make you wanted more information on the impact on the community, Family members and parishioners work at the school and they are being consulted about redundancy. That will have a massive impact as that person also does a lot of work at home with their family so you're not going to help them at all, that's a whole family there you are not going to help. The other thing is you can't change catchment without consultation with schools but you are changing the catchment area if you close this school, so therefore have you already done your due diligence and done your consultation ready for the day when you want to close this school.		
Local Resident	I will just carry on unless anyone else wants to say anything. I'm a villager and I think you've got something really good in this community. I moved to this community in November and thought what a wonderful community. Why spoil something that's really good		

	<p>I've got a child in secondary school that has special educational needs. I've fought for 3 years and finally he's doing his GCSE's and he is getting support. I've just remembered it seems that small schools as Tim Farrant said today in parliament, small schools are being punished for the fantastic work they are doing with special educational needs children and everyone else. You know the high flyers as well. They are being punished because of the reputation they get for being a caring and compassionate community which we have at Clapham & Patching School and they are being punished because they are not seen as being financially viable. Its just nonsense, we've proved that its nonsense haven't we.</p>		
Parent	<p>Mr Wagstaff can you look at the kids they want to speak to you. This is the one with the life limiting condition by the way.</p>		
Chichester resident	<p>I've imported myself here this evening across the border from Chichester. You may know in Chichester we are in a very similar situation as you with Rumboldswyke school, what I register here tonight is very much the feeling over there, there is a complete lack of trust in the community in West Sussex and West Sussex schools. Now what you may not know about Rumboldswyke is that Mr Wagstaff wrote to the school in June stating "we aim to close this school by the end of the academic year". That was before we had any kind of consultation we are feeling very hard done by. I would love to be able to trust West Sussex and I know Mr Jupp came here to listen tonight but maybe he would like to explain why he went around at the beginning of this consultation process telling people he was honoured to be regarded as the decision maker but he would actually be guided by his colleagues. When his colleagues from the scrutiny committee asked him to treat these schools a bit more gently, he did not.</p>		
Parent	<p>I have two points you haven't answered the ladies question about what the benefit to West Sussex in closing this school, I would be interested to know that and I'm sure other people would be too.</p> <p>Because if there is no benefit why are you doing this and the other</p>		

	<p>point is for Mr Wagstaff and I want to talk about the statutory process for children with special educational needs. He stated that there is a wealth of information that has to be gathered as part of the process of obtaining an EHCP. That is not quite the case and maybe he would like to explain what the legal test is for an assessment, or would you like me to. The legal test for a statutory assessment has a very low bar and that is the child or young person has or may have special education needs for which provision may need to be made in an EHCP plan and that is the legal test, that's just to reassure any parents who are thinking there are reams of paperwork that need completing and you don't need masses of information I know West Sussex demand that but that isn't the case I am legally trained you don't need all that documentation you just have to satisfy that test.</p>		
Pupil	<p>We would like to know as pupils from Clapham & Patching do you have a heart?</p> <p>And if you say that why are you trying to shut our school down.</p>	PW	<p>We wouldn't be here and we wouldn't be trying to get the very best for children across the county of we didn't have a heart.</p> <p>What we are trying to do is look at the provision longer term to make sure the school can provide for children not just now but into the future. So certainly when you ask 'have we got a heart?' I don't think there is anyone in this room who has not got a heart and both passion and understanding, and a desire to want to try and get the best for all our children.</p> <p>I am going to ask the children to sit down as I don't think its fair to put them in the firing line</p>
Parent	<p>They wanted to come, I didn't want them to. They begged to be here. Now look them in the eye.</p>		
Parent	<p>What does WSCC actually get out of closing this wonderful school.</p>	PW	<p>We do not gain any financial benefit from closing this school. The school itself belongs</p>

			to the church so the building itself and the resource around that if the school closes is for the diocesan authority and the church to decide how best to utilise the building in the future. What West Sussex gets from it is to ensure that our schools are sustainable into the future and that we make sure the provision is stronger across all of our schools.
Parish Priest	I do not have a question but I would just like to say it is not the church that is trying to close this school. It does a fantastic job, as somebody earlier said, for all children. All children have special educational needs. I am a former teacher. I taught for many years before I was ordained and all children deserve the best that they can get and this school gives those children the best they can get whether they are suffering from a life limiting condition, whether they have special educational needs of a different sort, emotional or behavioural difficulties, or whether they are (in inverted commas) "normal" children, exceptionally bright children. All of those children are treated as individuals and they grow, I've watched children in my time in this parish from reception through to leaving the school and I have seen the difference that they make.		
Parent	(to the children) You wanted to speak to them properly didn't you, and I don't think it was fair that this man here didn't let you finish. And the other thing I wanted to know is have you actually looked along the front row at all our children so you can see my Lily, right this one here is my Lily. These are her shoes. These are her sisters who's supposed to start in September. This is my little boy, who wants to start school here there are three sets of shoes on that chair. My grandson, my daughter over there, we are on your big map. We are on the edge. We face Clapham Woods the only way to go to school is to go to Clapham without having to go to Durrington and I'm quite sure most of the kids here don't want to go to Durrington 100%, but you stand there and I don't care if it takes till 10 o'clock, listen to these kids without him (NH) touching that mic or		

	putting his hands on our kids like he did a minute a go. I saw him shushing them away – right go on then kids		
Pupil	Well I've been to two different schools and none of them compare to this one so why close down this one when the other schools that I went to were not half as good as the one I'm at now.	PW	You say you've been to two schools, what I would hope is that all of our schools are providing the best. If its not worked out for you, we need to make sure that wherever you are, not just at Clapham & Patching but when you go to High School and when you go further into further education, that you get the kind of support that you need, what you require and what you want.
Meeting Closed 20:40			

N.B. These notes are not a verbatim record of the discussions but reflect the general tone of the questions and answers received during the meeting.