

**IMPLEMENTATION EXECUTIVE**  
**13<sup>TH</sup> MAY 2009**

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**OUTCOMES OF THE CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF WINGFIELD  
CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**Executive Summary**

The report details the recent consultation on the future of the school **Appendix A** which was carried out between March and May 2009. It details the reasons for the consultation, who was consulted, and options for the future.

The report also details the responses to the consultation, including a summary of the main responses and comments on some of those responses.

**Proposal**

That the Implementation Executive consider and approve either:

- (i) the closure of Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School; or
- (ii) the closure of Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School and its amalgamation with The Mead Community Primary School to form one school operating on both sites from 1 September 2009

That the Implementation Executive approve:

- (iii) the publication of a Statutory Notice to implement either of the proposals to close Wingfield School from 31 August 2009.
- (iv) the Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Development to make the final determination in this matter once the period of responses to the Statutory Notice has been completed and a further report produced.

**Reason for Proposal**

To enable Members of the Implementation Executive to consider fully the options considered within the consultation.

**CAROLYN GODFREY**

Corporate Director, Children and Education

Author: Julie Cathcart

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# OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF WINGFIELD CHURCH OF ENGLAND VOLUNTARY AIDED PRIMARY SCHOOL

## Purpose of Report

1. This report sets out the background to and the outcome of a consultation undertaken between 25 March 2009 and the 6 May 2009 on the future of Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School and determines which formal proposal should be published in relation to the school.

## Background

2. Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School was inspected by Office for Standards in Education (OFSTED) in June 2007 and placed in Special Measures. Since that time the governors and staff have worked hard to secure the improvements required to remove the school from the Ofsted category. The Local Authority and Salisbury Diocese have provided significant support. However the quality of education has not improved quickly enough and recent Local Authority and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Education (HMI) monitoring determined that overall progress since being placed in Special Measures is inadequate. This judgement is a clear indication that the school is unlikely to be removed from an Ofsted category when it is re-inspected later in the summer. It was noted in the report by HMI that strategic partners were in the process of reviewing the future of the school. This was recognised positively by HMI as schools are expected to have moved out of a category of concern within 24 months.
3. Despite improvement during the period of Special Measures, it has not been possible to secure a consistently high quality of education across the school. The Local Authority, Governors and Salisbury Diocese reviewed the situation and determined that there is still much to do to address the key issues of the Ofsted inspection report. In the light of growing financial challenges and a prime desire by all to secure the best possible outcomes for the children in the school and for future generations, it was felt that consideration should be given to a structural solution for the school.
4. It was agreed to consult on two options for the future of the school; Option 1 to close Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School or Option 2 to close Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School and amalgamate it with The Mead Community Primary School to form one school which would operate on both sites. A copy of the consultation document is attached at **Appendix A**. The consultation document details the reasons for the consultation, those consulted, options for the future and indicates how to respond.
5. The rationale for Option 2 is based on the existing partnership working which began in the autumn of 2008 with The Mead Community Primary School. They are a National Support School with a Headteacher who is a National Leader of Education. National Support Schools are recognised as having the capacity and ability to lead other schools out of their difficulties and effectively operate a school on more than one site. Experience at Wingfield confirms this

is the case and this model has demonstrated how schools and their communities can work together to secure improved outcomes for children.

6. Public Meetings were held for parents and other interested parties at both The Mead Community Primary School (30 March 2009) and at the Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School (2 April 2009). Separate meetings were held for the governors and staff of both schools on the respective dates above and the detailed notes of those meetings can be found in **Appendix B**.

### **Main Considerations for the Implementation Executive**

7. A key concern for the Local Authority, Salisbury Diocese and the Governors of Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School in entering into consultation is to secure the best possible provision and outcomes for the current pupils of Wingfield School and for future generations within the local community. It is recognised that children, their parents and the staff of Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided School along with other stakeholders need clarity regarding the future of the school from September 2009. In order to provide this direction before the end of the academic year the timeline for the publication of a public notice does not allow for the final report and recommendation to return to Cabinet and this is the basis for the recommendation of final determination in this matter to rest with the Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Development.
8. Details of the rationale for each option are within the consultation document in **Appendix A**. It should also be noted that currently Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School has 64 pupils on roll. The school has space for 84 pupils, with a Planned Admission Number of 12 each year. 8 pupils have registered to join the school in September 2009, 4 of whom are from the catchment area. It is recognised that Option 1, the closure of Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School, would result in the redundancy of staff, current pupils dispersed to other schools within the area and the loss of a rural school to its community. The consultation paper in paragraph 4.3 does recognise there is capacity within the other schools in the area to admit these pupils.
9. The opportunities and benefits of Option 2, the amalgamation of the Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School with The Mead Community Primary School to form one school that would operate on both sites from September 2009, are captured in section 5 of the consultation document in **Appendix A**. This option will allow a school to remain within its community supporting community resilience and cohesion. It would also avoid significant redundancy as the Wingfield staff would be subject to the Transfer of Understandings (Protection of Employment) (TUPE).
10. The Consultation Document asked those being consulted for their views on the two options. Of the 161 written responses received, the breakdown is as follows:

Support for Option 1 ~ The closure of Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School	Support for Option 2 ~ The closure of Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School and amalgamate it with The Mead Community Primary School
44	114
27%	71%

11. Clearly there is significant support for the amalgamation of the two schools.
12. Three responses (2%) either abstained or offered no overall view on the options. Six responses have been received since the consultation closure.
13. Option 2 gained overwhelming support from the Wingfield Community, especially from current parents, many talked of the impact the current relationship was having on their child's education and felt secure that the amalgamation would significantly improve things further. Many recognised the improved opportunity that being based on a small rural site but being part of a larger school could offer their children. Staff from both schools also responded in favour of Option 2 stating benefits to the children and new professional opportunities as their rationale.
14. Of those who responded in favour to Option 1 a number were from parents of The Mead Community Primary School stating concerns relating to the potential drain on resources within The Mead Community Primary School and concerns relating to the movement of staff, especially during the academic year. Another group of respondents who favoured Option 1 were other local schools, their prime rationale related to the existing capacity of pupil places within the area and the numbers of children within the immediate Wingfield Community.
15. As part of the consultation process meetings were held for staff, governors and parents/public. The results of those meetings can be found in **Appendix B**. The staff meeting at the Mead Community Primary School on the 30 March 2009 revealed overwhelming support for Option 2 with excitement generated in potential support of Wingfield pupils. The staff of Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary were fully in support of Option 2 at their meeting on the 2 April 2009 stating consistency and improved outcomes for the children as prime drivers for improvement.
16. The governors' meeting at Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School on the 2 April 2009 confirmed overwhelming support for Option 2. At an earlier meeting governors had expressed sadness at the situation, but recognised that a sustainable future needed to be secured for the pupils and that the school in its current form would not be in the position to secure the improvements needed. The governors' meeting at The Mead Community Primary School on the 30 March 2009 revealed good support for Option 2, the amalgamation with Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided School. However it was made clear that this support was subject to the necessary financial support being in place to secure the amalgamation in

order that they are assured there will be no negative impact on the pupils at The Mead; without this assurance they did not feel that they were able to support Option 2.

17. The parents/public meeting at the Mead Community Primary School on 30 March 2009 revealed very mixed responses to the consultation. Whereas the meeting for the public/parents at Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided School on 2 April 2009 was overwhelmingly in favour of amalgamation.

### **Environmental Impact of the Proposal**

#### **Option 1**

18. If Option 1 goes ahead the children of the village will have to be transported to alternative schools, increasing the traffic on local roads.

#### **Option 2**

19. If Option 2 goes ahead it will mean that local children will not have to be transported to more distant schools and therefore will have a positive impact on the local transport carbon footprint.

### **Equality and Diversity Impact of the Proposal**

20. If Option 1 goes ahead there will be a loss of a village school in the overall pattern of provision in the area. If Option 2 goes ahead educational provision within the Wingfield area will be secured and will continue to contribute to quality of life for the Wingfield community. The provision of high quality education in Wingfield will maintain the diversity of educational provision that is available to the wider community.

### **Risk Assessment**

21. At the point of writing this report, (the last opportunity to amalgamate or close Wingfield for September 2009 due to the statutory notice period) a number of key factors in relation to each option have been assessed:

#### **Option 1**

- (i) Discontinuity in the educational experience of pupils currently at Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School.
- (ii) Loss of a village school with a detrimental impact on community cohesion.
- (iii) The financial costs related to redundancy and the loss of jobs.

#### **Option 2**

- (i) Funding from the Department for Children Schools and Families (DCSF) to implement an amalgamation has not yet been confirmed. This poses a significant risk to The Mead Community Primary School's financial position. However, the Local Authority can use its targeted school improvement budget for schools causing concern over the next two years to underwrite the minimum amount required to prevent the Mead from subsidising Wingfield.
- (ii) It has become clear that the situation regarding Devolved Formula Capital, which funds the upkeep of the buildings, will be significantly

reduced on amalgamation due to the DCSF's classification of the modern building at The Mead. The Mead should not be put in a position to have to subsidise building maintenance at Wingfield. This could mean a potential loss of up to £35,000 per annum to the Mead. However, the Local Authority will need to lease the buildings from the Diocese as Wingfield is currently a Voluntary Aided School. The Diocese is proposing to establish a Trust fund and this could be used to support the up keep of the buildings.

- (iii) Legal issues surrounding the transfer of building responsibilities from the Salisbury Diocese to the Local Authority are not yet clear as the Diocese await legal advice.

### **Financial Implications**

#### **Option 1**

- 22. The closure of the school will lead to the redundancy of staff. The one off costs of redundancy are a pressure on the Dedicated Schools Grant and the ongoing costs are the liability of the Local Authority.
- 23. Once the school closes the Local Authority would save on the flat rate payments, with per pupil rate following the pupils to their new schools.
- 24. As an Aided School the buildings and land are owned in Trust and are the responsibility of Salisbury Diocese.

#### **Option 2**

- 25. The closure of Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School would remove a flat rate allowance. This is replaced by a split site allowance which is of the same monetary value. Therefore there is a nil affect on the overall school delegated budget.
- 26. Other financial implications are listed above within the risk assessment section

### **Legal Implications**

- 27. The Local Authority has to follow a DCSF determined statutory process before the proposal can be implemented. This will be initiated by the publication of a Statutory Notice to close Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School or to close Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School and amalgamate it with The Mead Community Primary School. At the conclusion of the period for responses to the Statutory Notices the Cabinet Member for Education and Youth Development will determine this matter.
- 28. Salisbury Diocese are working with the Local Authority to resolve legal issues around the ownership of the site and buildings at Wingfield that will need to be addressed to establish a community school on the site. At the point of preparing this paper the Salisbury Diocese await final decisions from their legal advisers.

## **Options Considered**

29. The consultation document at **Appendix A** details two options considered in this matter. The Local Authority and Salisbury Diocese believe that these are the only ways forward. Respondents were invited to put forward other proposals during the consultation but no alternatives came forward.

## **Conclusion**

30. One of the Council's key objectives is the provision of high quality education for the children of Wiltshire. The Local Authority has a strategic responsibility to expand popular and successful schools and there is a national presumption against the closure of small rural village schools. Successful village schools make a positive contribution to community cohesion.
31. This paper recognises that there are current risks as a consequence of timescales. However, they are manageable. Option 2 has the greatest support to provide high quality primary education for Wingfield and the surrounding community. The suggested recommendation is to close Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School and amalgamate it with The Mead Community Primary School to form one school operating on both sites from 1 September 2009.
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## **Background Papers**

The following unpublished documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report: None.

## **Appendices**

- A ~ Consultation Documents on the future of Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School
- B ~ Record of the Consultation Meetings on the Future of Wingfield Church of England Voluntary Aided Primary School with the Public, Staff and Governors

**CONSULTATION ON THE FUTURE OF WINGFIELD CHURCH OF ENGLAND AIDED  
PRIMARY SCHOOL**

**MARCH 2009**

**1. Why are the Local Authority, Governors and the Salisbury Diocese consulting you?**

1.1 The Local Authority, Governors and Salisbury Diocese are concerned about the quality of education at the school and the school's ability to sustain improvements and progress further in the future. Our prime concern is to ensure that pupils receive high quality education and we are seeking your views on two options:

1. to close Wingfield Church of England Aided Primary School

or

2. to close Wingfield Church of England Aided Primary School and amalgamate it with The Mead Community Primary School to form one school that would operate on both sites.

**2. Who is being consulted?**

- Parents of current pupils at both schools
- Parents of children attending pre-schools in the designated admission area of both schools
- Governors
- Staff
- Other Council and partners' staff working locally, such as social care and health professionals
- Wingfield Parish Council
- Hilperton Parish Council
- The Trowbridge Community Area Board/Community Area Manager
- The Local County Councillors – Mrs J Swabey and Mr E Clark
- West Wiltshire District Council
- The Local M.P., Dr A Murrison
- The County Secretaries of the Relevant Professional Associations
- Primary Heads Forum
- Heads and Chairs of Governors of nearby Primary Schools and Secondary Schools

Further copies are available at the schools, the nearest libraries and on the County Council website.

**3. The Current Position at Wingfield Church of England Aided Primary School**

3.1 The school was inspected by OFSTED in June 2007 and placed in Special Measures because it was failing to provide an acceptable standard of education and the people responsible for leading, managing and governing the school were not demonstrating the capacity to secure the necessary improvements.

3.2 Since that time the governors and staff have worked hard to improve matters. The Local Authority and Salisbury Diocese have provided significant support. However the quality of education has not improved quickly enough and a recent OFSTED monitoring inspection determined that overall progress since being placed in special measures is inadequate. Other recent Local Authority monitoring visits have identified that teaching and learning ranged from inadequate to good.

3.3 The school has now been in Special Measures for 20 months. Throughout this period, despite improvement, it has not yet been possible to secure the consistently high quality of education across the school which is expected. The Local Authority, Governors and Salisbury Diocese have reviewed the situation and determined that there is still much to do to address the key issues of the OFSTED inspection:

- Improve the quality of teaching and guidance given to pupils in order to raise standards in English, mathematics and science by the end of Year 6 and in writing by the end of Year 2
- Strengthen the clarity of leadership and direction of the school, and establish regular ways of checking the performance of the school and responding to the information found, ensuring governors are fully involved in the process.
- Develop a curriculum which stimulates and motivates all pupils to promote their academic achievement and all aspects of their personal development.
- Improve the provision for pupils in the Foundation Stage and in Years 1 and 2

Our shared view, confirmed by OFSTED, is that the school does not have the capacity to make the necessary improvements to ensure that current, and future pupils, enjoy high quality education.

3.4 The number of pupils in October 2008 was 65, 12 of whom live in the Wingfield designated admission area. The current buildings have space for 84 pupils, with a Planned Admission Number of 12 each year. 8 pupils have registered to join the school in September 2009, 4 of whom are from the catchment area. There are currently 64 pupils on roll.

If option 2 is adopted, for admissions purposes the two sites would continue and there will be two designated areas and two separate Planned Admission Numbers. Parents could apply for The Mead or The Mead at Wingfield or both. Living in The Mead's designated area at Paxcroft Mead will not give any particular priority for a place at the Wingfield site. Children living in the parish of Wingfield would continue to have priority for places at Wingfield.

Health Authority data indicates that the number of pre-school children living in the designated admission area, aged 1 to 3, averages 2 per year.

3.5 In seeking to meet the challenges at the school a number of possibilities have been explored. The Local Authority, Governors and Salisbury Diocese are consulting on two options:

1. to close the school

OR

2. to close the school and amalgamate it with the Mead Community Primary School to form one school that would operate on both sites.
4. **Option 1 – to close Wingfield Church of England Aided Primary School on 31 August 2009**

4.1 It is proposed to close the school with pupils being offered places in alternative schools. The 64 pupils would have to be split between a number of primary schools. A new school will be identified as the designated primary school to serve the area currently served by Wingfield Church of England Aided Primary School.

4.2 Local Authority staff from the School Admission Team will work with parents to secure places at other schools.

4.3 Details of other nearby primary schools are given in the table below:

School	Capacity of School	September 2009 forecast	September 2012 forecast	Distance from Wingfield by road (miles)
Studley Green	238	188	187	2.04
Walwayne Court	294	256	191	2.22
Westwood with Iford	119	95	85	2.54
Southwick	175	160	158	2.95
Fitzmaurice	238	204	208	2.43

4.4 If Wingfield School closes it is proposed that Southwick Church of England Primary School becomes the school serving the current designated admission area for future admissions. This is a village school with Church of England affiliations.

4.5 The nomination of a future school to provide places for children from Wingfield does not interfere with a parent's right to express a preference for a different school. However, school transport entitlement is linked to the designated area school, unless an alternative school is closer to the child's home address.

5. **Option 2 – to close Wingfield Church of England Aided Primary School and amalgamate it with The Mead Community Primary School to form one school that would operate on both sites from 1 September 2009**

5.1 To ensure that the quality of education at Wingfield improves quickly and to the standard required it is proposed to bring the school under the leadership of a popular and successful school. The Mead Community Primary School is recognised as an outstanding school, and is led by a Headteacher whose strengths have been recognised as a National Leader of Education. The Mead

is also a National Support School. National Support Schools are recognised as having the capacity and ability to lead other schools out of their difficulties and effectively operate a school on more than one site.

- 5.2 The Mead Community Primary School has already been deployed to support at Wingfield and the Local Authority, Governors and Salisbury Diocese are confident that the formalisation of this support and leadership will bring about the necessary improvements. We are also confident that the Mead Community Primary School leadership team has the ability to manage both sites effectively so that there is no adverse effect on pupils at its current site.
- 5.3 The Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) has agreed in principle to support this amalgamation. National financial support can be accessed to support this approach. This support will benefit both schools and the Headteacher will be an Executive Headteacher across both sites. In addition to this the Local Authority provides a one-off start-up grant to facilitate the two schools to plan effectively before an amalgamation. Thereafter the newly formed amalgamated school will receive a split-site allowance every year in recognition of managing two sites.
- 5.4 We believe that this option presents a range of advantages for both school communities:

**Current Wingfield Church of England Aided Primary School**

New and improved leadership and management for the site  
Improved quality of education  
Improved resources to help raise standards  
An expanded school on 2 sites  
Improved professional development opportunities for staff  
All permanent staff positions will be protected  
Ongoing primary education for all and a rural school retained at the heart of the community

**Current Mead Community Primary School**

Expansion to the leadership team with an Executive Headteacher model in place  
A bigger staff talent pool, supporting developments across both sites  
Improved professional development opportunities for staff, supporting retention  
The outstanding quality of education will continue to improve  
Improved resources and some budget benefits through economies of scale  
An expanded school on two sites with more capacity to accommodate applications for admissions  
All permanent staff positions will be protected  
Ongoing primary education for all

**6. The process of change**

- 6.1 It is important that you understand what will happen as a result of this consultation. There will be a period of six weeks during which you can express your views on this consultation, including through public meetings. At the conclusion of this consultation the options, and the consultation responses, will be considered by the Implementation Executive Board of Wiltshire Council on 13 May 2009. The Board will decide which option to pursue as a formal proposal.

6.2 A statutory notice detailing the proposal will be published for a period of six weeks during which views on the proposal can be sent in writing to the Local Authority.

6.3 Finally, the Cabinet of the new Wiltshire Council will consider the proposal in the statutory notice, and responses to it, and make the final decision on the matter.

## 7. Other questions you may have

7.1 Are the Local Authority and Salisbury Diocese considering any other option?

No – we believe that the current options are the only way forward. Respondents to the consultation may put forward other proposals.

7.2 Who will be the Headteacher of the new school?

Mrs L Bolton will be the Executive Headteacher. A new staffing structure will provide appropriate leadership provision on both sites.

7.3 What about school uniform and such matters?

Before the new amalgamated school opened, matters such as this would be resolved by a shadow governing body in consultation with parents and the existing governing bodies of both schools. The shadow governing body would be made up of equal numbers of governors from the two current governing bodies.

7.4 How will the new Governing Body be formed?

The governing body of the newly amalgamated school would be reconstituted to ensure reasonable representation from both current governing bodies. In Wingfield's case these representatives will be nominated by Salisbury Diocese.

7.5 Will the amalgamated school be a Voluntary Aided Church of England School?

No, it will be a Community Primary School. Salisbury Diocese and the Local Authority and the new Governing Body will work together to ensure that an appropriate religious dimension is maintained within the school and close links with the village church community are preserved.

7.6 What about the Special Measures label?

This is removed when a school is closed. The new leadership and management team will address the quality issues at the school and the Local Authority will continue to support the school. The removal of the Special Measures label and the quality improvements should make the school more attractive to parents and help its future sustainability.

## 8. How to express your views?

8.1 We want to know what your views are on these options. You can do this by completing the attached reply slip. In addition you can attend one of the Public Meetings to be held:

<b>Date</b>	Monday 30th March 2009	Thursday 2nd April 2009
<b>Time</b>	18.30	18.30

<b>Venue</b>	The Mead Community Primary School	Wingfield Church of England Aided Primary School
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- 8.2 The governors and staff of both schools will be invited to separate meetings to discuss this consultation document.
- 8.3 If you want to respond in writing please do so no later than noon on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2009 using the attached form.

**Response to the consultation on the future of Wingfield Church of England Aided Primary School**

Please give your name and your interest in this consultation (e.g. current parent of either school, local resident of either community, staff, governor etc.)

1. Do you support either option? (Please circle)

Option 1	Yes	No
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Option 2	Yes	No
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2. Do you have any further comments in support of either proposal? (please continue overleaf if necessary)

Please return this form to:  
Stephanie Denovan, Service Director, Department for Children & Education  
(SND/AMG), County Hall, Bythesea Road, Trowbridge, BA14 8JB to arrive no later than  
noon on 6<sup>th</sup> May 2009.

## Consultation on the Future of Wingfield CE Aided Primary School

March 2009

### Meeting Notes

#### 1. Staff Meeting The Mead Monday 30 March 4:30

Present

Julie Cathcart, Head of School Improvement Wiltshire County Council

Clare Mellor, HR (Education) Wiltshire County Council

Bryan Cash, Education Officer Wiltshire County Council (taking notes)

Melanie Jacobs, Chair of Governors

Lyssy Bolton, Headteacher

40 members of staff

Julie Cathcart opened the meeting by referring to the consultation document. She outlined the two options on which we were consulting.

Q Can you confirm the time scales involved?

A 6 weeks consultation and to the Implementation Executive on 13 May. Then a public notice and a further 6 weeks notice period.

Q When is the final date?

A Week of 20 July

Q What would happen to staff at Wingfield?

A They would join this staff if they want to. Some may find other jobs. Some temporary staff would go and not have their contracts renewed.

Q Would The Mead School continue?

A Yes we would stay and all our records would be intact

Q What would the class structure at Wingfield be?

A We would have a three class structure in place for September 2009.

Q It would be terribly sad to see Wingfield close. Lots of hard work has gone into that school over the years.

A This is a view shared by the Local Authority. Option 2 is sustainable.

Q This is a good opportunity. There would be no impact on The Mead. It is an all round winner.

A Thank you for these comments.

Q Would children stay where they are?

A Yes there is no intention to bus children between sites for their normal lessons.

Q Can I make the comment that the parents at Wingfield are very supportive? This is a good opportunity for staff.

A Yes.

Q What is the capacity of Wingfield?

A It has room for 90 pupils and has an intake of 12.

Q Could Wingfield be independent again

A Whilst technically this is possible it is not on the immediate radar.

Q Would there be joint activities

A We would build on what takes place now but there are no firm plans yet about things like sports day.

Q The children at Wingfield have written letters saying how much they appreciate what the Mead has done so far. Should we pass these on?

A Wingfield pupils have been positive and appreciate the support received but at this moment we will not publish letters at this moment.

Q Do we have the capacity to run both sites?

A Yes it would be easier running one school on two sites than two schools as at present.

Q What would happen with admin staff?

A There would be some streamlining. It is likely things would be centred here but this isn't decided as yet.

Q Who sets the staffing structures

A The new governing body would be responsible for staffing for teaching and non teaching staff at both sites since we would operate as one school.

There was a strong and positive feeling expressed by the staff for Option 2.

JC asked staff to complete the response form on which they could raise individual issues. The key thing is to make a response so your views are heard.

## **2. Governors Meeting. The Mead 30/3/09. 5:20**

Present

Julie Cathcart, Head of School Improvement Wiltshire County Council

Clare Mellor, HR (Education) Wiltshire County Council

Bryan Cash, Education Officer Wiltshire County Council (taking notes)

Melanie Jacobs, Chair of Governors

Lyssy Bolton, Headteacher

Fiona Allen Headteacher Corsham Primary

Elspeth Griffiths Chair of Governors Corsham Primary School

16 governors

LB stated that a wish list had been drawn up and this has been submitted to DCSF for approval. There are elements on that which are, as agreed at previous governors meeting, needs which must be in place. If these are not met The Mead could not go into the amalgamation.

Fiona Allen gave an account of her experiences. She outlined the successful way in which the former Box Highlands has improved as Corsham Primary (Broadwood). She stated she received a start up grant from the DCSF of £275 000. There were some differences in that the staff didn't need to be taken on. Managing staff across two sites has been a challenge but has worked well. 5 staff were moved over to the Broadwood site and their positions backfilled at Corsham Primary.

Q Can we still pull out? What happens if money doesn't come through?

A Yes we can and we would if the DCSF aren't forthcoming to met the absolute needs. The timing of the whole process would allow us to pull out.

Q Has this all strengthened Corsham Primary School?

A Definitely!

Q Was there a question of why are we doing this from your staff and parents?

A To some extent but we were able to show we had the capacity to take on the challenge.

Q Is there anything still to do?

A Yes we need to get the parents groups working together. The PTAs like to collect for their own site but we also do whole school fund raising e.g. for a minibus.

LB confirmed that there would be one off amalgamation costs from the local authority and an on-going split site allowance. There would be a flat rate payment and formula capital based on the two sites.

LB said she was confident that the school leadership would deal with any staffing issues which remain at Wingfield. Robust assessment would be in place.

Wingfield was a successful school not long ago. The lack of consistency over the past two years has hit it hard.

There is no guarantee that staff will remain at the Mead indefinitely even if the Wingfield amalgamation doesn't go ahead.

Q Would Wingfield teachers come here?

A The governors would determine the staffing structures.

Q We are helping them now. Why can't this continue as before?

A There is no sustainability being built in to Wingfield. The capacity to sustain progress isn't there and would only come with a fresh start.

JC confirmed that nothing is decided yet and urged governors to return the response forms. She would welcome the opportunity to receive all comments.

There was a generally positive feeling expressed in favour of option 2.

Q How are you contacting parents of pre- school children?

A We have sent consultation documents to all pre-school groups so we would ensure we follow this up. ACTION on JC.

### **3. Parents Meeting. The Mead 30/3/2009 6:30**

Present

Julie Cathcart, Head of School Improvement Wiltshire County Council

Bryan Cash, Education Officer Wiltshire County Council (taking notes)

Melanie Jacobs, Chair of Governors

Lyssy Bolton, Headteacher

Fiona Allen Headteacher Corsham Primary

Stephanie Denovan, Service Director Schools Wiltshire County Council.

114 in attendance.

Julie Cathcart outlined the consultation and made reference to the consultation document which had been circulated.

She stressed para 5.4 outlining the advantages for Wingfield and the Mead of option2.

JC urged parents to respond using the form at the back of the consultation paper or to e-mail her. She stressed that any options not already in the papers would be considered.

Lyssy Bolton was the invited to address the meeting. She said she would not be here tonight if she didn't think option 2 would work. She confirmed she would do nothing which would jeopardise the Mead in any way. She was positive that this school has the capacity to succeed.

The original intention had been to go in and support Wingfield and then walk away. The capacity to self sustain is not there at all. There have been 8 headteachers in last two years. The Mead is full with a healthy budget this is not so at Wingfield and although the money is not in deficit it would soon be if things continue as now. Lyssy confirmed that the Mead had the capacity to take on the challenge and that both staff and governors wanted to help Wingfield for the sake of the children there. It would not be tricky to support the school. There may be capacity for future applicants not getting into the Mead at Wingfield. The challenge for the Mead is to retain staff at the moment and this proposal would mean some staff would be retained who might otherwise leave.

There needed to be robust procedures in place to take in staff and children. This would be a natural progression from what has been done since July 2008.

Mel Jacobs made the point that the governors are concerned for the children at Wingfield. They are confident that this would only bring positives to the Mead which would benefit the school. Nothing at the Mead would be allowed to be adversely affected.

Q How often have the governors discussed this?

A It has been discussed at a meeting once. There was then a meeting with local authority last week and one this evening. There have been informal contacts between governors too.

Fiona Allen was asked to give her experiences as a head of an amalgamated school. She said there were very similar concerns being expressed when she amalgamated with Box Highlands. The experience though has been very positive. It has retained staff and created fresh challenges for them. It has attracted staff to the school too. It has give some staff the opportunity to try out mixed aged teaching and to work in a smaller environment. We are one school with a commitment from the staff and governors to make things work. There is quality assurance at both sites and so improvements have come about at Broadwood as a result of this. The same policies and ethos has helped enormously. Links between the two sites are always developing. There has been an issue of gaining trust from the parents and in reality this has been forthcoming so things have not been as difficult as imagined. It is a "buzzier" place now.

Q Can you explain how the budget works? Would funds be drawn away from this school?

A There would be a shared budget. It would have some elements which were one off payments but some which were continuous. There would be a one off start up grant and money from DCSF. There would be a continuing split site grant and funding dependent of numbers of children in the school. If at the time of amalgamation Wingfield were in deficit then the LA would pick that up it wouldn't be passed on.

Q What about remedial building works?

A That is part of our bid to DCSF. That bid contains a number of must haves and if these are not in place the amalgamation cannot go on.

Q This is a fast process. How long will it take DCSF to respond? Their record isn't good on such things as LSC.

A We anticipate they will come back quickly. We have an agreement in principle to give us funding. SND said she expected a response within five weeks.

A We would not go ahead if the money from the DCSF is not forthcoming. We won't backfill from the Mead's funding. Without the required financial support the Mead would withdraw from the scheme.

Q If you take on Wingfield what happens if another school needs support?

A We don't have to support another school. We wouldn't have the capacity to take on more work. The LA would not ask the Mead to take on another school.

Q Would you stretch yourself too far?

A It is like growing a school. We have done that before because we started as a seven class school. It is like having three additional classrooms at the school.

Q If this school has outstanding capacity why do we have to send our two children to two different schools? Why isn't the local authority supporting other schools, why does it wait until they are in special measures to do something?

A. SND We do support other schools. I am not sure to which school you are referring but you may not know we are supporting it or not. This school here is up to capacity according to DCSF and we can't expand on this site.

BC We have to operate within the published admission arrangements and if a school is full we can't admit any more children. The Infant Class Size regulations prohibit this. The school here is a fourteen class school; this is what the DSCF says the site should have.

Q. Why can't siblings go to the same school - this should be the policy?

A We have to operate within the policies laid down by the elected members. In area children get priority over out of area siblings. Whichever way we went we would be criticised. The policies are determined by the Implementation Executive and full minutes are publicly available.

Q Would we have teachers suddenly leaving classes half way through a year?

A No the staffing structure would be set up for a year beginning in September.

Q Has the standard in foundation classes at the Mead suffered this year?

A Not according to our SIP. An evaluation was carried out last week which showed the high standards have been maintained.

Q. Is that the parents view too?

A We haven't asked the parents for their views yet.

Q I don't even know what a National Support School is.

A We get funding for this work. We get additional staffing too. The fact that it has been going on and you haven't noticed means it is working effectively. It is a model the DCSF have recently introduced to help failing schools.

Q Would all this be diluted?

A No it would not we would continue in the same way. We would still be a national support school.

Q We have no indication of the mechanics of how it would all happen. How is it all going to work?

A This would be decided by the new governing body. We haven't planned yet because we don't know if it will go ahead.

Q Surely bringing together two staff pools would dilute our talent. The existing staff at Wingfield would have to be taken on

A Not all the staff there are permanent. Some staff would come over some would leave. We would fill any gaps in staffing before September.

Q I do not believe supporting schools in this way is a good thing. I'm not sure it has helped my child in reception.

A It is a new procedure but I am sure it would become more common place in the next five years. The DCSF have laid down how this leadership model can work.

Q Would any Wingfield staff work here?

A We do not know the staffing structure yet. Again this would be determined by the new governors. We would do this work in May.

Q What happens if you pull out?

A We have to start plans which can be unscrambled if necessary. The local authority would deal with any consequences with regards to staff.

Q What happens if you have gaps in the teaching staff here? What else of our capacity goes over to support Wingfield?

A We might deploy some staff to Wingfield and we would fill up those gaps here by normal recruiting. Plans would be discussed at the governors and would therefore be public knowledge in May. All governors' minutes are open for public access.

Q As Chair of Governors of Southwick can I point out that option 1 has not been discussed? The first we knew of this was last Friday.

A We are looking at Option 2 because this has the impact at this school. We do not want to send children to other schools which is what option 1 would mean.

A SND confirmed we would have to do a preference exercise to see where parents wished to send their children if Wingfield closed. We do not want to do this if it can be avoided.

Q If the Mead and Wingfield joined would there be joint activities?

A There are now so these would continue. We would build on what there is now. We have not decided what joint activities there might be.

Q Can I say I think this would be great opportunity for this school? We have the best staff and this would not affect this school? Mentoring other staff and sharing expertise would only be of benefit. The pupils at Wingfield deserve an opportunity to excel too.

*(There was general applause at this).*

A Thank you for those comments

Q Why has there been a dip in performance at Wingfield since we have taken over?

A Understandably since the school has been in special measures the performance has been reviewed regularly. There has been recognised improvement over the last few months.

A The local authority would hope to move a school out of special measures within 18 months. This has not been the case at Wingfield. The main reason for recent failings at the school has been the high turnover of headteachers. This has meant

that there has been no overall strategic planning. What the Mead has brought, and what it would continue to bring, is stability and with that clear systems and structures.

Q. I don't agree that you can make things better by making the school bigger. In my experience small systems cope with change better and the whole process is easier to manage.

A That is your opinion but is not one shared by the local authority in this instance.

Q In September would all children know who their teachers are going to be? Would they keep the same teacher all through the year?

A Yes as far as it is possible, it isn't possible to cover every single eventuality but the staffing structures would be discussed by the governors in May and once they are set up for September that is what we would run with.

Q How much influence would the Salisbury Diocese have on any amalgamated school?

A There would be a reconstituted governing body. This would include community governors and it would be anticipated that some of these might be representing the Church at Wingfield. Eventually there would be one governing body since we would be one school. In the interim the two separate governing bodies continue and we have been advised that a smaller group be formed as a shadow governing body for the amalgamated school and this would have representation from the Mead and Wingfield.

Q What percentage influence would the Salisbury Diocese have?

A They would be included in the community governors and the percentage of those would not alter from the present structure.

Cllr Ernie Clark gave his apologies for leaving the meeting at this stage. He said that on the third Tuesday of April the matter will be discussed by Hilperton Parish Council. This meeting is open to the public.

Q What is the feeling about this at Wingfield?

A The children there know of the benefits of working alongside our staff. The governors are sad that the school would be closing after so many years but they are positive in their support for the proposal to amalgamate.

A There will be similar consultation meetings at Wingfield on Thursday evening.

Q If there was a fall off in standards at the Mead we would already have seen that. Am I correct in saying that with extra resources which would be available the task of supporting education at Wingfield would actually get easier?

A Yes this is agreed. There is capacity within our staff to give support but this is not sustainable unless a more permanent situation is set up.

Q Will all parents be canvassed to get their views on this?

A All parents at both sites have received a copy of the consultation paper and are invited to make a response.

Q What would be the cost of Wingfield closing? Is that a cheaper option?

A It is difficult to give precise figures, but this isn't a proposal being driven by finance. We cannot divorce what is happening from the children and we have to be driven by their needs. The local authority would not be looking to claw back any savings by closing Wingfield.

Q Can't you support other area heads so that the resources at Wingfield are shared out?

A Yes some of the physical resources could be split up but there would be little financial gain for the authority if Wingfield were to close.

Q If this goes ahead would my three year old get into the Mead? How would admissions work?

A There would be one school as far as budgets and so on are concerned but for admissions the two sites get treated as two schools. The two designated areas would not change. Parents can apply for The Mead or Wingfield or both. If you don't get in to the Mead we would not consider a place at Wingfield unless you have put that down as a preference. The admission criteria would be those for all community and voluntary controlled schools. This in effect would be the only change from the current arrangements and processes.

Q Because Southwick is named in the document should they not be consulted?

A The views of the governing body at Southwick will be welcomed.

Q What happens with the friends of the school?

A There is a strong PTA at Wingfield too. How the support would operate would be for the friends to determine.

Q How can staff operate on two sites without losing something from this site?

A It would be like having an extension to our school albeit more remote than the mobiles we used to have. Staff would not transfer across sites to teach their normal classes.

Fiona Allen summed up what she thought were the main concerns she had heard and how these had been addressed in her situation.

- We received support from the local authority
- Current staffing issues were underwritten by the local authority and did not cost us anything.
- We reconstituted the governing body and include parent governors from Box Highlands
- We move 5 members of staff over to the Broadwood site and had to recruit for the Pound Pill site
- We keep staff on one site for the whole year.
- We treated our budgets separately for a couple of years. We are now going to operate with a single budget.
- It has really given us an expansion of leadership opportunities which ahs retained staff.
- We use the same curriculum at both sites
- We have the same policies uniform at both sites
- The children soon get used to the new procedures and feel more comfortable because they have a structure to work within.
- We have two PTAs. Each one raised funding for their own site but we also have joint fund raising for a minibus at the moment.
- Yes I do a lot of driving but we have invested in technology so for example we use video conferencing to run staff meetings.
- Our experience has been positive.

Q What happens to the funding?

A We would have a start up grant from the local authority of about £25k. We would get a split site allowance annually of £60k. We get our normal AWPU budget and

we have applied for a one off grant from DCSF. Fiona got £275k from that source we do not know what the DCSDF would give us.

JC thanked everyone for their attendance and closed the meeting at 8:15. She urged parents to use the response form to get their views back to the local authority.

#### **4. Staff Meeting. Wingfield Primary School 2/4/2009 4:00**

Present

Julie Cathcart	Head of School Improvement, Wiltshire Council
Stephanie Denovan	Service Director Schools, Wiltshire Council
Clare Mellor	HR (Education) Wiltshire Council
Chris Sheppard	Diocesan Director of Education
David Ross	Head of School Support, Wiltshire Council
Lyssy Bolton	Executive Headteacher
Bryan Cash	Education Officer, Wiltshire Council (taking notes)

8 staff including Rita Owen and Kirstie Jamieson (from the Mead).

Julie Cathcart opened the meeting by thanking everyone for attending. She outlined the two options which were included within the consultation paper. She said that whilst there were improvements which have been made at Wingfield there was still work to do into the future.

If the chosen option was closure the children would be spread around schools.

There wasn't one school which could take all the children. There would be no education left at all in Wingfield. Future children coming along would be in the designated area for Southwick Primary.

Option 2 would close Wingfield but would retain an educational presence on the site. This would give some continuity for the children. Permanent staff would transfer over to The Mead.

Chris Sheppard said that the Diocese is not happy with either option because they would lose a school. His concern is for the children and so the preferred option for the Diocese would be option 2. This would use the expertise and knowledge of the Mead. Although Wingfield would lose its religious character in a formal sense – because there would no longer be foundation governors – the Diocese would like to see some of the tradition and heritage preserved at the site. It will not be a CE school but there are many community schools which are more “churchy” than some VA schools. Therefore it isn't the end of the line just a different line.

Stephanie Denovan explained the process and that we were in a six week consultation period. She urged staff to publicise the consultation and to encourage as many as possible to return a response.

Lyssy Bolton said she wanted to assure staff at Wingfield that everyone at The Mead wanted to support the children here. The staff and governors have been unanimous in their support though it is true to say that the parental view is more mixed. Feedback received from Fiona Allen the Head of Corsham Primary has been very positive and really encouraging.

Q Who has the final say?

A After consultation a report will be made which makes a recommendation. The Implementation Executive of Wiltshire Council will meet on 13 May. They will then go forward with a public notice which takes another six weeks. The elected members make the final decision.

SND wanted to reassure staff that planning will go ahead and some structures will be put into place but these could all be withdrawn.

Q Why are you doing this?

A To get the best for the children at Wingfield. This is the motivation.

Q The parents seem to be very pro an amalgamation. Keeping a school here would be the option they wanted. Why is everything happening so quickly?

A The timetable to some extent is driven to get everything in place for a September start. We need to secure stability for the children here so they know what is happening.

Q What will happen to the staff as individuals?

A Clare Mellor is happy to come out to the school to discuss with individuals their own position. This will be organised after the Easter break. It would be inappropriate to discuss individual contracts in an open forum now.

Q The children do not want the school to close. They very much reflect their parent's opinions and views.

A This is a common pattern.

Q Do we get made redundant?

A No, all permanent staff have a job automatically – though the new governing body would set up the staffing structures required. There would be a continuity of service so the terms and conditions will be no worse than those currently enjoyed.

Q What about hours of work?

A Again this would be decided by the new governing body. They would set up the staffing structure and decide who works where and for how long. There may be some working at a different site.

Lyssy Bolton explained that an application for additional funding had been made to the DCSF. Some of this would have to be in place for the Mead to continue with the process of amalgamation. The bid includes some capital items (such as IT) and also some staffing or revenue items. There has been an agreement in principle to make funding available for the amalgamation because the Mead is a National Support School. This funding would not be available if the amalgamation didn't go ahead with The Mead.

Q Can you confirm that the special measures tag would be removed?

A Yes it would. The amalgamated school would have one Ofsted. It may be that if Option 2 is followed that Ofsted inspectors will not return in June for a reinspection.

It was the unanimous feeling of the staff present that they were in favour of Option2.

Julie Cathcart thanked everyone for their time and urged all to complete the response form. Views are welcomed from all. An informed decision will be made based on all returns received.

## **5. Parents Meeting Wingfield School 2/4/2009 6:30**

Present

Julie Cathcart

Stephanie Denovan

Chris Sheppard

Head of School Improvement, Wiltshire Council

Service Director Schools, Wiltshire Council

Diocesan Director of Education

Lyssy Bolton	Executive Headteacher
Bryan Cash	Education Officer, Wiltshire Council (taking notes)
Pauline Roger	Governor Wingfield
Ken Marshall	Chair of Governors Wingfield
Kay Vousden	Substantive Head Wingfield
Rita Owen and Kirstie Jamieson	(from the Mead).

45 others

Julie Cathcart opened the meeting by referring to the consultation paper and outlining the two options proposed in that document. She said tonight's meeting was an opportunity to ask questions and seek clarification. She urged people to return the response form.

Wingfield is a school in special measures and the local authority has reflected hard about the future. Progress has been made but the school continues to need support. This has gone beyond the normal two year period and although there is a balanced budget, we have a slightly reduced roll. Only 1.6 teachers can be supported in September 2009. This would sustain only two classes.

If anyone has a different option from the two proposed do please come forward with it.

If option 1 were followed then the existing children in the school would be reallocated around schools in the area. There isn't one school which could take all 64 children. The number of children coming from the village is about 2 or 3 per year. In future these would be designated to Southwick which is a very good local school.

If option 2 was followed, Wingfield would cease to exist. It would become part of a bigger school. This would maintain education on this site.

We have talked to the Department for Children, Schools and Families and they are considering giving financial support to the proposed amalgamation. This package is only available because the Mead is a National Support School.

There is more detail in the consultation paper about Option 2 because this is more complex. Closure is straight forward where as amalgamation may be new to many people.

There is a six week consultation as per the section at the beginning of the paper. Responses will be collated and presented in a report to the Implementation Executive on 13 May. That report will make a recommendation. There would then be a six week public notice period. The final decision will be made by the elected members in the middle of July. There will be an indication mid May of the direction of travel.

Chris Sheppard said the role of the Diocese was to support parishes and their schools so that every child gets the best possible education. Options were gradually reduced based on the reports of visitors to the school and from Lyssy herself. The Diocese does not want to stop education here or to lose the Christian character. The option to close is not one the Diocese could support in any way. In option 2 the Mead school is reaching out in a Christian way to support Wingfield - and the Diocese support this.

It would not be a church school any more. However it would still retain links to the parish and church. The Diocese would look to work with the Mead to preserve the Christian character perhaps by having nominated governors.

Lyssy Bolton said that it had been the intention for the Mead to moor alongside Wingfield for a temporary period and then to move off. However it was obvious that the school does not have the capacity to go it alone. The offer to continue to help is there but if the community do not want it then the Mead will step away. The staff and governors at the Mead are behind the amalgamation proposal because we believe this is the best option for the children here.

Q Special measures were imposed when there were special circumstances at this school. Would Ofsted look at the circumstances and remove the special measures tag now?

A In June 2007 Ofsted put the school into special measures. It is judged as being inadequate. It is the view of the local authority that if there were to be a reinspection this would still be the result and there would be a presumption of closure. The circumstances within the school now would not be enough to take away the special measures tag.

Additional support would be required and it is a cumulative effect of what has happened at this school. Ofsted won't take this into account. They will look at the school as it is, they will not be looking to save Wingfield.

SND said this is not a monetary issue for the local authority. However we have had to put in a lot of financial resource and this cannot continue. The number of heads in the school has been a contributory factor. A two class school here would not be viable.

LB confirmed the plan would be to retain a three class structure at Wingfield. The timetable is driven by the need to get something into place for September. The local authority will underwrite any planning which is done now.

Q Is the sum from the DCSF a fixed amount? Is this support certain?

A We have an agreement in principle. There isn't a fixed amount we have put in a shopping list which includes revenue and capital spending. The DCSF have not given a cast iron guarantee that they will support option 2. We should though hear from them within the next couple of weeks.

Q Why was thousands spent on extending the school when we are now contemplation closure?

A Chris Sheppard responded by saying that the Diocese invested the money for the benefit of the children in the school. It has been worth it for them. If education continues into the future then it will have been money well spent, if not I am happy that the current children in the foundation class have benefited. It was not a funding stream which came from the local authority or the school so it was a different pot.

Q It is now April. When will we know the class teachers for September and the class organisation?

A As soon as possible. We would have a transition programme in July but the staffing process would be the same as it is now. It will be no different. As far as the children are concerned much of the planning will be in the background but they will know their new teachers as soon as possible.

Q Will we have a fourth classroom? Will there be money for this?

A It is too early to say what will happen in the future. We need to secure this school first although it would be an aspiration of the governors to grow. The bid is to retain three classes here. Without that the amalgamation would not go ahead.

Q Unless the numbers grow won't we still be at risk in the future?

A It will be part of the Mead and that school will not close. Yes we must attract children to this site. There would be one school with one Ofsted and it would be an outstanding school on two sites. I don't think anyone can foretell what might happen into the future though.

Q If option 2 is signed off what is the risk of this school closing in the future?

A The risk is very small. At Corsham Primary where we have done a similar amalgamation, Broadwood is now recruiting up to its PAN. The intention would be to retain education on this site.

Q If you don't get the funding from DCSF does the Mead have enough money to go ahead in any case?

A No. If the DCSF do not come up with funding the Mead would not be able to enter into an amalgamation. The governing body at the Mead has made it clear it does not want to start something which drains our finances. The DCSF want to expand popular and successful schools and also wants to retain small village primary schools. This amalgamation would do both.

Q I thought it would all be decided in six weeks

A There is a statutory process which we have to follow. After six weeks we will know the direction we are going in but any formal decision cannot be taken until the public notice period has taken place. The elected members have to make the final decision not the officers on the Council.

Q What happens about admissions? What catchment would there be?

A There would in effect still be two schools for admissions purposes. The Wingfield site would retain the ecclesiastical parish as its designated area. Parents could apply for The Mead or Wingfield or both. If you didn't get a place at The Mead you wouldn't be considered for a place here unless you had named it as a preference too.

If Option 1 were followed there would be a mini preference round where the existing parents could express 3 preferences as to where they wanted their children to go. We would meet the highest preference possible in those circumstances. We would provide a breakdown of spaces at local schools for parents to use to make their choices.

Q You have now had several meetings. What is the feeling emerging?

A So far the staff and governors at both sites have been very positive. Parents at the Mead wanted to hear assurances that they will not lose out. This is not a surprising reaction. We cannot at the moment say how parents will respond it is a genuine consultation. My feeling is that the parents on Monday were generally supportive but a few did have mixed feelings.

Q The Parish Council has no intention of letting the school close. Can we attend the governors' meeting later?

A Yes we would welcome your input.

Q Many parents come here because it is a small school. There are concerns about joining a big school. Have you consider a federation not an amalgamation? I know this happens in other schools in Wiltshire.

A Yes this option has been considered. However the DCSF funding would not come through and we do not feel at the moment there is the capacity for Wingfield to stay as a separate school. There are as you say a variety of federation models but none would remove the special measures tag. Amalgamation with a NSS is the only way to do this and get funding from DCSF. We want to build on what we have done. The children here must come first. There is no advantage to federation. These children know us we are not strangers to them and they are thankful for what we have done. The teaching quality is good now and we have started something which we, not strangers, need to continue and develop.

*There was applause at this point.*

Q Will teachers from the Mead transfer to this site?

A All of the needs for all of the children will be met by the Mead. We have to trust Lyssy. Stability will not come if the current teachers are not here in September. We wouldn't be doing this if the Mead did not have the capacity. We will use Kirstie and Rita to build on the work that has been started already. It is important to note that

not all the staff here are on permanent contracts and every school has teachers who move on. All issues with teaching staff will be resolved.

Pat Rogers said that you do not get any where without taking some risks. What is key is to manage the risk so that we can move forward and Option 2 allows this to happen

*More applause at this point.*

Q Can this procedure ever be reversed?

A Technically anything is possible. It hasn't been done before and it is unlikely that it ever would be done but never say never. The desire of the governors of the Mead is to do things together and not to move off. It would be a very long term thing if we ever considered moving away from Wingfield. It is certainly not on the radar and isn't a condition we could accept. The situation would be extremely difficult to reverse.

Chris Sheppard supported this statement saying he considered the move irreversible.

Q What should those who support option 2 do now?

A Everyone is encouraged to fill in the response form and get it back to the Council.

Q What happens if Lyssy leaves the Mead?

A We would not wish her to move on; the Mead's capacity is not solely reliant on her. It is a good school and it would still be outstanding if Lyssy went. There is lots of distributed leadership at the Mead and it is outstanding in all aspects.

Why should the Mead want to bother? It is a way of giving the staff at The Mead more strings to their bows. It's a win:win situation for both schools.

Q Wingfield is different. Will it continue with its own character?

A It will stay a small village school. We are talking with the Diocese about governance. Although there will not be foundation governors we would still want to retain a link to the church. Why wouldn't we it is right next door. Community links are embedded in all we do at the Mead. We want a full 4-11 provision at both sites. Chris Sheppard commented that the small school will give something to the big school. It is not just one way traffic.

Q. Will there be joint activities?

A We may have joint activities but it is far too early to plan for these now. We have asked for IT links and this will build on the current dialogues going on between pupils at both sites. The children will stay on one site for their day to day teaching.

Q I would like to say that I wanted assurances from the Mead meeting and I got them. We should trust the leadership and that was the message given to parents on Monday. I got a really strong feeling of support from the Mead parents. The governors impressed me. They do not want to be aggressive they were warm and generous in their support for this school.

A Thank you for your comments which are noted.

Q Do you think what happened at Urchfont will happen here?

A No that was a different situation and every situation is slightly different. We feel that there is a genuine empathy for the parents at Wingfield. We do not think the parents at the Mead will want to turn down this move.

Q Can I add that the Mead is a big school but I have very positive feelings about it

A Again thank you for that comment.

Julie Cathcart thanked everyone for their attendance and giving up their time to come along.

The meeting closed with applause at 8:10.

Ken Marshall as Chair of Governors concluded by saying that there was an overwhelming concern for the children here. Lyssy's team has done so much for this school and he really appreciated the support of everyone involved including the local authority and the Diocese.

## **6. Governors meeting Wingfield 2/4/2009**

Present 8 governors and "guests" as per parents' meeting

At a brief meeting after the parents' meeting, strong support was given for option 2. The governors are grateful for all the support they are receiving in this difficult time for the school.