

A SHARED FUTURE FOR TWO SECONDARY SCHOOLS IN BURNHAM

The past two months have proved to be something of a curate's egg with regards to our efforts to win the County Council's support to re-open Burnham's non-selective secondary school.

Burnham Parish Council re-affirmed their support for the re-opening of the school whilst also recognising a subtle but significant change of emphasis in the proposed format of the school.

Our proposal is now to re-open the school, for 11to18 year olds, with a strong emphasis on vocational and skills training being especially mindful of the recruitment needs and opportunities being provided by our local employers.

We are hopeful that the re-opened school will become part of the Beeches Learning and Development Trust which is currently responsible for both Burnham Grammar and Dorney Primary Schools. Such an outcome, with both the re-opened secondary school and Burnham Grammar School sharing guidance from the same Trust, would make for an exciting school partnership for both parents and children aiming to attend a Burnham secondary school in future years.

From the County's perspective, it is inclined to look more favourably on this new proposal as it does offer the prospect of some funding from central government. However, we still have some progress to be made on reaching a shared understanding on the future viability of Burnham's non-selective secondary school with regard to potential pupil numbers.

As outlined in the last edition of Round and About, the key issue is that the County's methodology for assessing demand for school places does not take full account of the demand for non-selective secondary school places across the local government border with Slough.

Our local knowledge provides us with the strong conviction that in a few years' time after the school's re-opening, both secondary schools in Burnham will be offering 180 places a year to Year Seven pupils and we continue to seek out the process whereby we can reach this shared viewpoint with the County Council.

Viv Nicholas. January 2022.