

WORKING GROUP FORMING TO CAMPAIGN FOR NEW BURNHAM COMMUNITY THROUGH SCHOOL

Burnham Parish Council resolved at its mid-October meeting to form a working group with the purpose of campaigning for the opening of a new community through school on the Opendale Road site previously occupied by E-Act Burnham Park Academy.

Councillor Ekta Kaur Ross has offered to coordinate the working group and will be presenting draft terms of reference for the working group at its next meeting in early December.

It is understood that, whilst housing development is taking place on the neighbouring site of the old police and petrol stations, there are no plans to develop the school site for any purpose other than for education.

The governing bodies and headteachers of Lent Rise and Burnham Grammar Schools have outlined an imaginative and enabling plan to open a through school for children aged 4 to 18 years. But we all face a considerable challenge in conducting a campaign to establish the case for the new school.

The previous school closed almost 18 months ago and any forecast of the time it will take to open a new school must be, at best, within a timescale of three to four years as opposed to one to two years. This will, of course, mean that each year young Year Seven children will face the prospect for six years of having to travel considerable distances to alternative secondary schools. Their schooldays will be long in duration and their parents may well be expected to pay a considerable sum for their transport.

Whilst every family will make the best possible decision for their own children, we need to find a way for all parents and children to

consider working collaboratively and campaign for the re-opening of a community through school.

Bucks. already has two through schools based in Aylesbury and Wycombe and there is another in Slough and overall there are 200 through schools distributed across all England.

Our eight most local primary schools are :-

Lent Rise, St Peters Burnham, Our Lady of Peace, Priory, St Nicolas Taplow, Dorney, St Mary's Farnham Royal and Dropmore School.

The most important initial task for the working group will be to establish strong links with parents and staff at all eight schools in order to understand clearly their expectations of the proposed new school.

Furthermore, older readers will recall that 30 years ago, Burnham Upper, as it was then known, had an extremely active adult education programme which has withered on the vine to the extent that there is currently no adult education provision at all in Burnham and its surrounding community.

So, in addition to parents with children at any of the above 8 primary schools who would like to play a part in building the case for the new community through school, it would be invaluable to gain the help of any local people who have expertise in the provision of adult education.

Please contact me – Viv Nicholas – e-mail – mrviv.nicholas@btinternet.com.