

ANNUAL BURNHAM PARISH MEETING – 2023

THE NEW SCHOOL FOR BURNHAM STEERING GROUP UPDATE

It will be soon four years since the closure of E-Act Burnham Academy and the campaign for the school to be reopened would have undoubtedly withered away without the significant support from the Parish Council's members and officers. The future health and vitality of our village community depends on its capacity to provide an outstanding education for all of its young people up to the age of 18 years.

The decision to close the school was both ill-advised and irregular and unfortunately many of the people involved in that decision have yet to open their minds and reflect more carefully. It is evident that the older members within our community do share a great concern as to the reopening of the School but to date it has proved to be a challenge to capture the interest and commitment from most parents of school-age children. Burnham Grammar School's governors and leadership team continue to be resolute in offering their support and we need to work harder to gain the support of all our local primary schools that are located in both Buckinghamshire and Slough.

Our primary focus over the past few months has been to track carefully the pathways that our local Year Six children will be taking as they transition to secondary school education. This academic year there are 399 children attending our seven most local primary schools and our research in March indicated that 101 were planning to attend Slough Secondary Schools, 96 were aiming to attend comprehensive schools in Maidenhead, 26 were allocated places in Buckinghamshire Secondary Schools and 46 had been offered places at Burnham Grammar School. There were also 89 children who had yet to have been allocated to any school.

We will be following up on this issue at the end of the summer term to check on the transitions being made by all of our current Year Six children.

Our data on the number of children attending our local primary schools does indicate that this pressure and uncertainty to find secondary school places will continue for future primary school children and their parents and we are starting to prepare for a more concerted effort by our local parents to challenge the decision to close Burnham's non-selective secondary school. We are also fortunate in having the support of our local press and some talented people adept at developing social media interest.

Another pathway we are pursuing is to attract the interest of clubs and groups where young children are supported outside the school setting by their parents and other adults. We have done well in gaining interest from Phoenix Rugby Club who encourage young boys and girls to play rugby on Sunday mornings and good progress is being made in winning the support of Burnham Juniors Football Club who are by a considerable margin the largest voluntary organisation in Burnham.

Viv Nicholas. 17th May 2023