**A SCHOOL FOR BURNHAM – PROGRESS UPDATE**

The month of March gets its name from the Roman God of War – Mars – and it does look as if a growing number of local parents of current Year Six children are having to go into battle to find a secondary school place for September 2023. Four local Bucks. primary schools have given me their up to date information a week after parents received notification of a secondary school place for their Year Six child and the offer of a place for 49 out of a total of 167 children is not yet known. And it may well be that the offers received may not be acceptable to the parents and children.

Obviously individual parents will take up the challenge of finding school places for their children but surely there’s a need for the community at large to make a collective case to open a new secondary school on the existing Opendale Road site here in Burnham. The decision to close the School in 2019 was both ill-conceived and irregular and since that time I regret to say that I have found county, regional and national government to be both arrogant and ignorant.

Whilst nationally there may be a peak for Year Six numbers for this academic year, the local campaign group has shown that both local demography and development associated with The Elizabeth Line indicates that our local school population will not go into decline.

The conundrum that the campaign group has faced is that whilst it has attracted a fair deal of support from grandparents and older community members – it has to date found it difficult to gain significant support from the parents of children who are, or soon will be, attending our local primary schools. We are grateful for the 1,000 plus letters that have been written to local and national government leaders but now we would like as a next step to explore and implement a new approach.

There are numerous local organisations and groups where adults and parents engage enthusiastically with children to enrich their life experiences – for example – the uniform movements, sports clubs, artistic performance groups, youth and church groups. We would like to encourage all these groups to take as many group photographs as possible portraying adults and children displaying ‘a school for burnham’ banner and posters. Our aim must be to create a photographic gallery of supporters and build a community movement across all generations that will demand more secondary school provision in Burnham.

It will only take a handful of active parents and children to start this ball rolling – so do please get in touch. And for further information – please refer to the New School link on the Burnham Parish website – [www.burnhamparish.gov.uk](http://www.burnhamparish.gov.uk) and [www.aschoolforburnham.com](http://www.aschoolforburnham.com)

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