**William Marshall VC Primary School**

**Minutes of the Public Consultation Meeting**

**held on 19th May 2015**

**6.00 – 7.30 pm at the school**

In attendance:

Panel Members: Kathryn Littlewood – Independent Chair

Alison Cunningham – NCC – Adviser for School Organisation

Richard Snowden – NCC – Head of School Admissions Service

Tricia Pritchard – Ely Diocese – Director of Education

Rachel Beeson – Ely Diocese – Deputy Director of Education

Jan Munn – NCC – Senior Partnership Adviser

Suzanne Walker – NCC – Governor Services

Representative of William Marshall School

Independent Clerk – Kate Francis

Approximately 75 Members of the public (see appendix 1)

1. **Welcome and Introductions**

1.1 Kathryn Littlewood welcomed all and introduced the panel members.

1. **Purpose / Aims of the meeting**

2.1 Kathryn Littlewood explained the purpose of the meeting was:

* To ensure that everyone understands why the decision to consult about the future of the school has been taken.
* To ensure that everyone knows what the consultation process is and the timescales that have been set.
* To ensure that there is an opportunity for people to ask questions and to express their opinions / views. Please note - All comments will be recorded and published along with other documents on the consultation website.

1. **Why we consulting about the future of the school**

3.1 Alison Cunningham explained her responsibility in statutory consultations of all types. She highlighted that a decision to close school was not taken lightly, and was usually due to a combination of factors. In this case, the factors were:

**1) concern about standards** – Ofsted inspection visitsin 2006 & 2010 had judged the school as “satisfactory”, then following Ofsted’s change in categories, the 2013inspection resulted in a “requires improvement” rating. NCC was aiming for all schools in Norfolk to be rated as“good” or better. The 2013 “requires improvement” rating had demonstrated that there had been no significant improvement in the school in 9 years, therefore the school had been identified by NCC as a “school of concern”. The NCC audit in November 2014 revealed significant need for improvement in the school, with high levels of staff absence and only 1 permanent member of staff, thus making it very difficult to bring about the level of improvements required and thereforethe school remains vulnerable to anadverse inspection rating.

**2) low and declining number of pupils at the school** - numbers had been below 40 for some time and were declining, with the number of children in the catchment also declining long term. Even with the planned new housing development, the forecast is for numbers not to increase to 40, with another dip before 2025.

**3) leadership**– since 2004 the school had not had its own substantive head teacher. This was not unusual for a small school because of budget constraints. Upwell had seconded their head for 1 day per week for the last 10 years but this arrangement would not continue indefinitely.

**4) finances** – governors had done good job balancing the school’s budget to get good outcomes for pupils, but this was increasingly difficult as funding was now on a per child basis. Only if number of pupils increased significantly and were sustainedwould the school maintain a balanced budget, otherwise the governors were unlikely to be able to balance the budget and the school would go into deficit next year.

3.2 Alison Cunningham summarised that these factors had not come out of the blue. There had been a lot of work by the governors and the school to try to mitigate the 4 points above.

3.3 Jan Munn added that as partnership adviser, she hadworked with the school’s governors to try to create a long-term sustainable future for the school. Conversations about the strategic future of the school began in 2013 with the Head teachers and the governors who had confirmed they wanted to be proactive to secure a sustainable future for the school. The Diocese had also been involved in seeking a long-term solution but despite exploring all avenues, sadly by September 2014 those involved realised that there were no solutions to offer. Some details of the avenues explored cannot be shared because of the confidentiality of discussions with other schools.

3.4 Jan Munn summarised that the governors, NCC and the Diocese had talked to a lot of people about federating or becoming part of another organisation, but no partnerships leading to federation were possible, and this was not for the want of trying.

1. **The consultation process – what is happening, how to become involved, the timescales and how a decision is reached**
   1. Alison Cunningham explained the well laid down consultation processand confirmed this was currently at stage 1 – an open consultation to collect views including on paper andonline.She would then give a report of those views, including the number of responses, who had responded and the issues emerging from those responses.
   2. Alison Cunningham reported the main issues emerging so far were the beliefthat the school was providing a good quality education, concern about travel for young children, uniform costs, large classes, exacerbating an aging demographic, the affect on village life, the planned housing development and concerns about vacant housing. She confirmed she had received 2 petitions and 65 responses so far.
   3. Alison Cunningham explained that at end of the period of consultation, a report would be written for the Director of Children’s Services who would then make a decision whether or not to proceed to stage 2, which would bea formal declaration of the proposal to close the school.
   4. Stage 2 would progress with a public notice appearing in the local newspaper, on the school gates and a copy would be sent to parents. The public notice would be accompanied by further information about the full proposal. There would be a 4 week representation period, during which time people could respond to the public notice. It would then be the decision of the Director of Children’s Services based on all of the evidence, including the minutes of this meeting for example.
   5. The decision whether or not to implement the proposal would be followed by a further period of implementation. The earliest the school could close would be the end ofAugust 2015. It was likely that a closure date of December 2015 would be suggested, but children would transfer to other schools from September 2015.
   6. Question/Comment 1:  
      A member of the public said this would be except one child who would stay at the school in September.
   7. Question/Comment 2:  
      A member of the public asked if this information was stated on NCC’s website.
   8. Alison Cunningham confirmed that it would be.
   9. Richard Snowden briefly stated the admission process if the school was to close, confirming Upwell would becomethe catchment school from Jan 2016 and free transport would be provided as it would be the designated school. He highlighted that families affected by the flood areawould be consulted about possibly being re-designated to Ten Mile Bank. He confirmed that parents maintained the right to express a preference for any school, which would be dealt with by standard processes.
   10. Question/Comment 3:  
       A member of the public asked who would pay for transport for the autumn term.
   11. Richard Snowden confirmed that the Local Authority would provide free transport to Upwell from September 2015.
   12. Question/Comment 4:  
       A member of the public asked if the free transport would include nursery for half days and reception half days.
   13. Richard Snowdensaid reception children would be offered full day. Those who opt for part time would be included in free transport as would nursery children.(*NB Confirmed after the meeting that the school do not have a nursery so provision would be for reception children only*).
   14. Question/Comment5:  
       A member of the public asked if August was long enough to complete the consultation stages.
   15. Alison Cunningham replied that the statutory consultation is 6 weeks, then the public notice representation period was 4 weeks, then a decision must be made within 2 months.
   16. Question/Comment 6:  
       A member of the public said August was too soon, and asked if it was possible to wait another year.
   17. Alison Cunningham confirmed that August was realistic given the outlined timetable, but confirmed that the process of consultation with staff would take longer.
   18. Question/Comment 7:  
       A member of the public said Ofsted was giving 1 year for schools to come around.
   19. Kathryn Littlewood sought to facilitate the session as too many questions were being asked simultaneously, and moved on to the next agenda item.
2. **Questions / comments from the audience**
   1. Question/Comment 8:  
      A member of the public asked for details about the transport provision. Would there be an additional responsible adult aboard for Health &Safety of pupils.
   2. Richard Snowden confirmed that Norfolk County Council policy was not to provide an additional adult for under 30 pupils unless there was a specific health need to do so.
   3. The member of the public sought clarification that Richard Snowden thought it was OK for 4 year olds to travel without an additional adult.Richard Snowden confirmed that this was the policy.
   4. The member of the public asked whether booster seats would be provided.Richard Snowden confirmed that the appropriate transport would be provided on a closed contract basis, which would likely be either a coach or 2 minibuses.
   5. Question/Comment 9:  
      A member of the public said that some children already come to the school by coach and asked whether the existing transport would remain.
   6. Richard Snowden confirmed that the existing transport would remain, and the rest of the children would be picked up from the village school.
   7. The member of the public sought clarification of the route of a child living in Lakes End. Would they have to get the transport into Welney and then back through Lakes End to Upwell, as transport times areimportant.
   8. Richard Snowden confirmed the law is transport for less than 45 minutes, and the evidence suggested all travel times likely to be no more than 30 minutes in this case.
   9. Question/Comment 10:  
      A member of the public asked if the taxi service for the other side of The Washes would have to go to the other school.
   10. Richard Snowden confirmed that any catchment changes would be spelled out in the public notice, for example, those living south of The Washes would be in Ten Mile Bank catchment. He highlighted the need for a long-term view to minimise the impact of the road flooding issue.
   11. Question/Comment 11:  
       A member of the public was concerned that the panel had been talking as if the decision to close the school had already been made. They queried the efforts to save the school by federation, why this had drawn blanks, and why the discussions were confidential.
   12. Jan Munnexplained the discussions were a governor-led process, and the Local Authority could not insist that one school federates with another. In this area there were likely a variety of reasons why federating with another school had been unsuccessful. For example, some schools would be looking at different ways of working such as becoming an academy, and/or may themselves be struggling to deliver improvements. Rural schooldevelopment was problematic because of the continuing difficulty of recruitment of teachers. Federation requires a shared vision and other schools may well have concluded that the time wasn’t right as they had other things to focus on.
   13. Question/Comment 12:  
       A member of the public asked why Upwell didn’t want to federate with the school.
   14. Jan Munndid not have the details, but highlighted that this would still mean 2 sites, and deploying staff issues would not make it an easy choice. She confirmed that Upwell have not been able to agree to federate with the school.
   15. Question/Comment 13:  
       A member of the public asked if there were any school governors present.In response, several governors in the audience raised their hands.
   16. Question/Comment 14:  
       A member of the public queried the long term capacity of Upwell school.
   17. Alison Cunninghamconfirmed that Upwell is a one form entry school so the maximum capacity was 210, equal to 30 children per year group. She confirmed that there was enough capacity and also enough space to provide additional accommodation at Upwell if this school closed.
   18. Question/Comment 15:  
       A member of the public highlighted their experience of the closure of Upwell secondary school, when they had been assured that there was space at Downham school and then there wasn’t.
   19. Alison Cunningham said the site at Upwell is able to support a bigger school.
   20. Question/Comment 16:  
       A member of the public asked if there were funding guarantees for this school’s children to attend Upwell. Alison Cunningham reiterated that there was space to expand at Upwell and that the funding would transfer with the pupils.
   21. Question/Comment 17:  
       A member of the public asked if extra accommodationwould be in place from the start. They were concerned about lack of space at Upwell and arrangements not being in place forSeptember.
   22. Alison Cunningham confirmed that colleagues had already been to Upwell on an ‘in case’ basis, and would be working with Upwell governors to ensure there was space in September.
   23. The member of the public asked for a guarantee that accommodation would be in place for September.Alison Cunningham confirmed that this would be the case.
   24. Question/Comment 18:  
       A member of the public asked whether there was also capacity at Upwell for the new homes being built in and around the village, which would bring in additional families.
   25. Alison Cunningham confirmed the nationally accepted formula for the development had been applied, and the generated predicted admissions numbers were in the Upwell forecasts. She reiterated that the site at Upwell had potential to expand.
   26. Question/Comment 19:  
       A member of the public asked how many children would go into the new houses.
   27. Richard Snowden explained the nationally accepted formula is a forecast to help with planning, which predicted 25 children from 100 new homes, and this figure was checked against what happens in Norfolk.
   28. Question/Comment 20:  
       A member of the public asked what happens if a school is overcrowded.
   29. Question/Comment 21:  
       A member of the public thought that the Welney numbers plus the housing proposals for Upwell would result in large classes, and was worried about access to school ifthe 200 houses for Upwell were built.
   30. Question/Comment 22:  
       A member of the public asked what the class sizes for Upwell would be.
   31. As questions 20-22 had been asked simultaneously, Alison Cunningham responded that the only concern with class size is reception, as potentially this could be over 30. She highlighted that until all pupils arrive in September, the number was not guaranteed, as based on past experience, notall pupils will come as expected.
   32. Question/Comment 23:  
       A member of the public said that the consultation was on the basis of 1 document, the consultation letter, which he said contained flaws and errors. He quoted from the letter “...*governors have reluctantly acknowledged that they do not have the capacity to bring about the significant improvement needed in the school to guarantee a good enough education*...” taking exception for the use of the word “*guarantee*”. He quoted from the letter that “*numbers are dipping*” but said that 7 not 4 children were joining in September. He said the letter stated that the consultation was being done because governors had requested it, but the letter didn’t say it was under duress the governors had made the decision as they had no choice.
   33. The Chair of Governors, SueDobson, who was in the audience, responded that she would not say that in the same language ashad been used by the member of the public.
   34. Question/Comment 24:  
       A member of the public said the letter should not be how evidence of closure was phrased.
   35. Alison Cunningham replied that this was evidence to consult, not to close. She repeated that the Director of Children’s Services would decide after 25 May, quoting from the consultation letter that “*The Director of Children’s Services will then decide whether or not to go ahead, with the publication of a statutory notice to close William Marshall VC Primary School.*”
   36. Question/Comment 25:  
       A member of the public pointed out that it was the same person making the decisions to issue a statutory notice and to make the final decision. They asked if the public was only able to respond to the consultation letter, or whether they would be able to have a copy of the audit report from November 2014.
   37. Alison Cunninghamconfirmed that the audit report belonged to the governors. She also confirmed that the statutory notice would be worded on the basis of evidence of responses to the consultation and would include prescribed information of more detailed reasons for the proposal. She summarised that there would be more detail to come during stage 2 of the process, which the public could make representations on.
   38. Question/Comment 26:  
       A member of the public said she had written a letter on 11 April requesting documentary evidence that there was not a good enough standard of education at the school but had not received a reply. She said the public should have this information to back up the claim on the consultation letter. The 2013 Ofsted report suggested the school was improving. She asked why the Ofsted inspection on 11 May 2015 had been aborted after the first day.
   39. Alison Cunningham confirmed that it was Ofsted’s policy to defer an inspection where a proposal is under consultation, including a statutory consultation.
   40. Question/Comment 27:  
       A member of the public asked why the Ofsted inspector came for 1 day.
   41. It was confirmed the inspector came but did not do an inspection so there was no official report.
   42. Question/Comment 28:  
       A member of the public said that the last Ofsted report had been based on 3 pupils so queried how a small school could ever achieve a good rating.
   43. Alison Cunningham highlighted that Ofsted did not just look at standards.
   44. Question/Comment 29:   
       A member of the public said that children are happy in the school and that parents are happy with the school.
   45. Alison Cunninghamsaid that the Local Authority looked at result trends and rate and risk schools accordingly. This assessment prompted the further audit of quality of teaching and learning. She confirmed that the school’s Ofsted rating was “requires improvement”.
   46. Question/Comment 30:  
       A member of the public said the level 3 in 2010 was “satisfactory” and now its not.
   47. Kathryn Littlewood pointed out that it was Ofsted who had changed the categories, not the Local Authority.
   48. Alison Cunningham added that she had been through several Ofsted inspections in previous roles, and that “satisfactory” is simply not good enough. The reason Ofsted changed their wording was to effect improvements rather than schools to settle for being “satisfactory”. NCC have stressed that they want children to go to at least“good” schools.
   49. Question/Comment 31:  
       A member of the public asked if the final decision can be appealed.
   50. The panel confirmed that as a Voluntary Controlled school, the only people able to appeal the final decision would be the diocese and governing body. The appeal would go to an adjudicator.
   51. Question/Comment 32:  
       A member of the public asked what would happen to the children during an appeal process. Would lodging an appeal stop the closure process?
   52. Alison Cunningham confirmed this would depend on the adjudicator decision which would then have to be acted upon. She highlighted that it would be very odd if the diocese chose to appeal, given that they had been part of the consultation.
   53. Question/Comment 33:  
       A member of the public highlighted that governors could appeal.
   54. Alison Cunninghamsaid it was her understanding that she had been working with governors, not against them.
   55. The member of the public responded that governors had been coerced.
   56. Question/Comment 34:  
       A member of the public asked if Ofsted was aware that the school has track record of producing young entrepreneurs, highlighting examples.
   57. Alison Cunningham confirmed that Ofsted would not know this.
   58. Question/Comment 35:  
       A member of the public asked what villagers can do during the 6 week consultation to reverse decision.
   59. Question/Comment 36:  
       A member of the public said that no-one outside of the school was aware that governors were struggling, including the Parish Council and the William Marshall Trust. Now the public had been given a short amount of time to deal with this. He noted that there was not even a full board of governors. He said he didn’t think anyone was aware of the seriousness of the situation, but said now that people knew, they are here to help bring the school up to standard it needs to be.
   60. Question/Comment 37:  
       In response to the previous comment, Sue Dobson, who had been a Parish Councillor disagreed. She said the Parish Council was aware of the potential danger for any schools under 50 pupils. The Parish Council was also aware that the refurbishment of local housing had dropped numbers to 19. These issues were also raised at the William Marshall Trust. Also the governing body had been short of parent governors for a long time and had regularly asked for parent governor applications. For a whole year the governing body had only one parent governor whose child had actually left the school.
   61. Others in the audience disagreed that governors had sought new parent governors, but were assured that the evidence of parents letters and newsletters were available.
   62. Alison Cunningham said the bottom line for a small rural school was that it needs support of parents and for all children in catchment to support school. She highlighted the long history of the school, and that the numbers only rose substantially when Lakes End schoolclosed and pupils were transferred here. She said that there was a natural life of a school where a village is not expanding. She reiterated that it was extremely difficult for governors to make the school successful in this setting. Achievingthe best outcomes possible for children had been an uphill task for the governors.
   63. Question/Comment 38:  
       A member of the public picked up on the idea that there was a natural process for a rural school to be closed. They said that since the merger of the Lakes End catchment, Lakes End had not expanded. NCC public transport had also been cut, so the villagewould be unlikely to expand.
   64. Alison Cunningham confirmed that public transport provision was not within the remit of this process.
   65. Question/Comment 39:  
       A member of the public repeated that all parents were happy with standards at the school.
   66. Question/Comment 40:  
       A member of the public summarised that in past, parents had not been contributing but now theywere prepared to help, including becoming governors. He asked for the parents to be given time to turn the school around.
   67. Alison Cunningham said that all schools with 50 or fewer pupils face recruitment difficulties which are beyond the control of governors and parents.
   68. The member of the public responded that ex-teachers living nearby are prepared to come into school to help bring up standards.
   69. Question/Comment 41:  
       A member of the public thought it should be the panel’s responsibility to give the village more time to fight their case.
   70. Alison Cunningham confirmed the statutory timeline was being followed, and reminded those present of the 9 years of Ofsted evidence that the school was not improving.She responded that the concerns of villagers should have beenraised by now and confirmed that in general the quality of education at the school had not been considered good.
   71. Question/Comment 42:  
       A member of the public highlighted that satisfactory was now not good enough, which had moved the goalposts.
   72. Question/Comment 43:  
       A member of the public asked what the closure would cost, and asked if the whole process was all about money. They believed that all on the panel had made their minds up already, and said they were upset with the panel talking about when the school would close rather than how to save it.
   73. Alison Cunningham explained how schools were funded and confirmed there was no agenda to close small schools. Schools were financed throughout Norfolk at the rate of £118k per school per annum, plus a per pupil allowance. The more children in school, the more money there was to spend. If a school closes, there was no saving. The per pupil amount would go with pupil to the new school. The lump sum £118k goes back into the Designated School Grant budget and is ultimately shared out to other schools. So there was no saving.
   74. Question/Comment 44:  
       A member of the public said he did not believe anyone on the panel was telling the truth and felt this meeting was a waste of time.
   75. AC assured those present that it was not up to the panel to make the decision.
   76. Question/Comment 45:  
       A member of the public queried whether there would be a budget deficit by the end of next year and asked the Chair of Governors to respond.
   77. The Chair of Governors, Sue Dobson, agreed that governors had not anticipated a deficit budget.
   78. The member of the public highlighted the language used in the consultation letter and the panel not producing evidence to back this up, which feltlike the consultation was just going through the motions. He asked if the responses to the consultation had been reported at the Children’s Services Committee meeting on 12 May.
   79. Alison Cunningham confirmed that the Committee were told there had been 13 responses by 12 May, 9 in favour of keeping the school open, and 4 in favour of closure. The Committee had also been told about the petition. She confirmed this was reported on a responses-to-date basis, and that all of the responses would be included with the final report.
   80. In response to several simultaneous questions about whether the decision had already been made, Alison Cunningham assure those present that no decision had yet been made, and that it was the Director of Children’s Services who would make the decision, not anyone present at this meeting.
   81. Question/Comment 46:  
       A member of the public queried how Pupil Premium would be dealt with for the next school year.
   82. Alison Cunningham agreed seek clarification on this issue. She confirmed if the decision to close the school was taken, then theper pupil budget will go with children from September. She also agreed to check with finance colleagues what would happen to the per school lump sum.
   83. Question/Comment 47:  
       A member of the public asked whether NCC have checked results of this school’s pupils at Downham Market high school, who had had no problem with children being under-educated, so did not support Ofsted’s assessment.
   84. AC highlighted that NCC had also done their own audit, but that they had not looked at Downham Market results.
   85. Question/Comment 48:  
       A member of the public said they had heard a lot about how the school would be shut down, but not how it could be kept open.
   86. Alison Cunningham repeated that it needed more children in it, more governors, more challenge, and for standards to be raised.
   87. Question/Comment 49:  
       A member of the public repeated that they didn’t know there was a problem before. He confirmed that many villagers were ready to help improve the school but they were not being given time or opportunity to do this.
   88. Question/Comment 50:  
       A member of the public flagged up the 26-point action plan for governors and said that 10 were nearly impossible including the lack of governors and not being able to federate rapidly. There are enough potential governors now. Have the diocese said they could federate with schools elsewhere in Cambridgeshire?
   89. Tricia Pritchard confirmed that the Diocese had already looked at these possibilities and sadly had received the same response, that no school wanted to federate with this school.
   90. Question/Comment 51:  
       A member of the public asked if the villagers can prove to the panel that they can help governors to bring standard up and over period of time, and increase pupil numbers, would the school be kept open.
   91. Alison Cunningham confirmed it was not the panel’s decision to make.Tricia Pritchard urged those present to put the evidence in their consultation responses now.
   92. Question/Comment 52:  
       A member of the public said the problem appeared to be staff sickness and standard of education rather than low numbers at the school which seemed to be the focus of the discussions. They asked who was responsible for getting good staff and why weren’t they doing it.
   93. The panel confirmed it was the responsibility of governors and the head. Alison Cunningham stressed the difficulty of recruitment of staff generally.
   94. Question/Comment 53:  
       A member of the public summarised that if recruitment is the issue, now the public are aware, they can drive this forward.
   95. Tricia Pritchard advised for all to put details in their consultation responses. She confirmed that it was important to address recruitment, the leadership issue with the head seconded 1 day per week, also facilities and learning environment to support curriculum development. She said the school had old buildings, and that older children needed different facilities.
   96. Question/Comment 54:  
       A member of the public highlighted at Upwell it would be the same leader, and the facilities in Upwell may well be a portacabin.
   97. Question/Comment 55:  
       A member of the public asked if parents decided not to go to Upwell, would free transport be provided elsewhere.
   98. Richard Snowden confirmed that it would not.
   99. The member of the public said that there was effectively no choice of schools.Richard Snowden highlighted that parents could indicate preferences, not choose their school absolutely. He confirmed that while some parents may be constrained by NCC school transport provision, some parents may choose to provide their own transport.
   100. Question/Comment 56:  
        A member of the public said it would be easier to federate with Upwell.
   101. Alison Cunninghamhighlighted that governors at Upwell have supported this school for 10 years by seconding their head, and confirmed that Upwell governors would not be thinking about any potential financial gain if this school closes.
   102. Kathryn Littlewood asked for closing comments at 7.25pm
   103. Question/Comment 57:  
        A member of the public said NCC were building more schools.
   104. Question/Comment 58:  
        A member of the public asked why the meeting had to close at 7.30pm.
   105. Alison Cunningham confirmed that if new issues were raised, the meeting wouldbe extended.
   106. Question/Comment 59:  
        A member of the public referred to a discussion with Liz Truss MP about the growth budget, and referred to the East Harling example where pupils from the village had to travel 4 miles as they didn’t get into their village school.
   107. Richard Snowden confirmed that children in East Harling were offered places in school, so the situation has been resolved.
   108. Question/Comment 60:  
        A member of the public said her son had started at the school in 2008 and had received a wonderful education, with the same very good quality staff. Her and her son’s experience of the school had been very good.
   109. Question/Comment 61:  
        A member of the public urged the panel to consider a child’s view at this school. The current situation was the fault of the management not of the children. He asked for the school to be given a chance to improve.
   110. Question/Comment 62:  
        A member of the public asked if Upwell parents were happy with this school’s pupils joining them.
   111. Alison Cunningham responded that they have been sent the consultation letter and some have responded.
   112. Question/Comment 63:  
        A member of the public asked if the transfer of pupils would impact Upwell results, and asked why the staff who will be recruited there could not be sent to this school instead.
   113. Alison Cunningham observed that the perception was that children would move to a big school, but Upwell is still a small school. She said there were positives for children being in larger groups.
   114. Question/Comment 64:  
        A member of the public repeated that responseskept sounding like the decision has been made already.
   115. Alison Cunningham replied that she was just putting the case for an alternative which is what she was obliged to do.
   116. Question/Comment 65:  
        A member of the public summarised three key questions. Whether the public could improve governors, education and save money. He said yes they can, if they were given a year to show what they can achieve.
   117. Alison Cunninghamhighlighted governors had worked hard at the school.
   118. Question/Comment 66:  
        A member of the public said it felt like governors have worked in secret, and said that this is why the situation is so bad, having to respond in short space of time.
   119. Question/Comment 67:  
        A member of the public said that younger pupils do not thrive in larger school, and cited personal experience of having fewer illnesses in a small school compared with a large one.
   120. Question/Comment 68:  
        A member of the public said that over 70 investigations of class sizes had been conducted which had proved that large classes do not make for better education, and that small classes are better.
   121. Question/Comment 69:  
        A member of the public highlighted her example of her child who had been in a class of 34 but now in this school had progressed well.
   122. Another comment echoed this experience, and several people simultaneously said they were against big classes and big schools.
   123. Question/Comment 70:  
        A representative of the school confirmed that Upwell classes are not big, with most around 20.He reiterated that Upwell is a small school. 170 in 7 classes put the average well below 30.
3. **Closing remarks – what happens next?**

6.1 Kathryn Littlewood asked all to respond by the end of consultation with the points raised today.

6.2 In response to comments about the closeness of the consultation deadline, Alison Cunninghamsaid**the consultation would be extended until 29 May**, as its half term, to allow those present more time to respond. She did however confirm that a statutory notice deadline cannot be extended.

6.3 In response to a member of the public, it was confirmed that the 26 pupils could go to Upwell from this school, with a further 27 due to start in September and 25 leaving at the end of this term, so the roll would likely increase by around 28 from September. There were forecast to be 26/27 pupils in reception, and it was confirmed that no more than 30 pupils were allowed per reception class.

6.4 Kathryn Littlewood drew the meeting to a close, asking everyone to sign in on the sheets provided before they left.

6.5 The meeting concluded at 7.40pm.

(ends)

**William Marshall VC Primary School - Minutes of the Public Consultation Meetingheld on 19th May 2015**

**APPENDIX 1**

**Attendees who signed in:**

**Governors/Staff**

Heidi Cowles (Parish Councillor)

Clare Freer

Alan Culley

Sue Dobson

Liz Thorpe

Kathy Bone (clerk to governors)

J Eyles (Secretary)

**Parents**

Christie Webb

Darren Cox

Amy Lawrence

Fletcher Lawrence

Olivia Lawrence

Ray Gilbert

Michaela Bennett

Paul Bennett

Mark Smith

Marie Smith

Alison Wheeler

Elizabeth Wheeler

Daryll Wheeler

Keith Farrow

Tracy Farrow

Daniel Farrow

Aaron Lee

S Ellis

Glenn Cragg

Andrea Cragg

Mandy Wills

Vicki South x 3

**Local Residents**

Councillor Vivienne Spikings

Kyle Cowles (Parish Councillor)

Councillor David Pope

Ken Goodger (Parish Councillor)

Steve Ashworth

Jennifer Ashworth

Mark Mooney

L Edmunds

P Edmunds

R Wilson

Paul Fox

D Levesly

M Levesly

R Giles

Graham Rainbird (Parish Councillor)

G Bombata (Parish Councillor)

Bornie Venny

Chrissy Venny

Alan Bye

Joy Bye

Clive Haycock

Janet Marsh

Ray Marsh

Anne Brazier

David Brazier

Sophie Hunt

John Hunt

A Scarff

**Others**

Tracey Sandford

Carole Lowry

K Lowry

John Carter

Barbara Carter

Colin Rose

Ray Bone

L Gladdon

Kira Aim

Emily Smith

John Carter

Barbara Carter

B Morgan

C J Bye

A Cragg

Glenn Cragg

Mandy Wills + 4