



26 November 2012

Dear Staff, Parents and Students

Consultation on the future of Faith Education in North Denbighshire

Over the past two weeks the Governing Body has received a number of enquiries regarding the consultation that Denbighshire Local Authority is currently undertaking. It appears that the communication that was issued by the Trustees has raised some concerns and I would like to take the opportunity to explain the trustees' position in a little more detail.

Firstly on behalf of the Governing Body can I state clearly that it goes without saying that the Governors are extremely committed to St Brigid's School. Discussions with the Local Authority have been on-going for a number of years. We have on numerous occasions stated our opposition to both a merger and a federation of schools. Our position has always been that we want a new school following the St Brigid's model that is on or near the current site.

St Brigid's is in a unique position in that the buildings and the grounds belong to the St Brigid's Trust, and not the Church or the Local Authority. Therefore the Local Authority can only access the assets of St Brigid's if the Trustees decide to relinquish control leaving us in a strong position to ensure that any new proposals meet the needs of the St Brigid's community.

With regards to the finance for the project it simply has not yet been secured. It is not certain whether the Catholic or Anglican Dioceses have the funds available for the project. Therefore the Local Authority is eager to have St Brigid's on side and to secure its assets.

To be absolutely clear about the position of the governing body: the consultation that the Governors have agreed to go along with is simply to -

'provide the opportunity for pupils, parents, governors, staff and the local communities to put forward their views as to what the long term solution should be for faith based secondary provision in Denbighshire'.

The Governors' position on this issue and the requirement to participate in the consultation is driven by the condition of the school buildings. If we do not agree to the discussions it has been made clear that further capital expenditure will not be forthcoming and we will have to secure the finance for improvements by other means. At present these means are not forthcoming from any source and unless we can come up with any alternative funding arrangements we will rely on cooperation with Denbighshire County Council as the current fundholder.

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Put simply the local Authority is asking for your views on its proposals. It is your chance to express your views to the Local Authority. The Governing Body would strongly encourage you to take part in the consultation so that the voice of St Brigid's is clearly heard. I would urge you to raise your views with your local councilors, assembly members, Members of Parliament, and your local clergy.

The Governors will be arranging meetings for Denbighshire Local authority at St Brigid's during the week commencing the 8th January to provide the opportunity for parents to discuss the consultation directly with representatives from the Local Authority. I would urge you all to attend these meetings as it is essential that your views are heard in the consultation exercise.

Many of you will also be aware of current developments at the Welsh Government with changes to the current position proposed by the Education Minister last week. This could well have a direct bearing on our future and the Governors will be keeping a very close eye on the developments with a view of any potential benefits to St Brigid's.

I am very much aware that sometimes the views of the Governing Body can be distorted or misrepresented through second or third hand accounts and I would therefore invite anybody to contact myself or any of the other Governors via St Brigid's School with any questions they might want to raise or simply to obtain further information.

Yours faithfully,

Anthony Hannigan

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Chairman of Governors