

# **STEWKLEY NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN - REPORT TO STEERING GROUP FROM NURSERY AND PRIMARY EDUCATION WORKING GROUP**

## **1. INTRODUCTION**

1.1 The Nursery and Primary Education Working Group consists of three members, all of whom live within the village. One member belongs to a family who has resided in the village for 3 generations. The second member has lived in the village for 15 years however there are connections within the family going back for 100 years. The 3rd member is relative newcomer to village life, therefore bringing a fresh viewpoint in to the mix. The youngest two contributors to the working group have seven children between the ages of 4 years and 17 years of age. Therefore, they have been users of and volunteers within the educational system in Stewkley for many years.

## **2. TOPICS COVERED**

2.1 The aim was to investigate Nursery and Primary Educational services within the confines of the village. This to include a variety of allied groups where appropriate as they added additional qualities to the educational facilities offered to our children in their early years.

2.2 The topics covered were many and varied, the most important of which was the impact on our local village school if 140 new houses were built in the next 20years. St MICHAEL'S C of E COMBINED SCHOOL is right at the heart of the village, it is highly regarded by the residents of the village, the pupils play an active role in village life. The next most important service available for the children of Stewkley is attendance at CYGNETS PRE SCHOOL which has an OUTSTANDING OFSTED, of course there will certainly be an increase in demand for places if a large number of new houses are built in the village. All the other allied services are identified within the body of the report.

## **3. WORKING GROUP MEMBERS, SKILLS and EXPERIENCE**

3.1 The skills and experience offered by the members of the working group are extensive and cover a very wide spectrum. All three members are Mothers and in one case a Grandmother. Qualifications include a Chartered Surveyor, a Personal Administrator in Industry, a Registered Nurse with 40 years of experience in a wide variety of nursing environments and management roles.

3.2 With a wide variety of commitments to the Community, members of the group have or are serving as a Youth Club Committee Member, Parent Volunteer at School, Chair of the Pastoral Care group, a Pre - School Committee member and Co-ordinator of the Village Volunteer Transport Scheme. In the recent past they have undertaken duties as a School Governor and a Justice of Peace serving on the bench for 10 years.

#### **4. METHODOLOGY**

4.1 The AIM was to identify and investigate the Educational establishments and the allied groups within the parish of Stewkley. To assess the current facilities and the numbers of children who can access these services. To find out if these facilities can cope with expansion of the village i.e. an increase in the number of houses will automatically bring an increase in the population and a significant proportion will be children. To see what potential there is to expand the facilities where appropriate.

4.2 The OBJECTIVES were for a minimum of 2 members of the working group to visit each identified establishment by prior appointment. Informing the head, the manager or the owner of each establishment on the preparation of the Neighbourhood Plan. To go through list of prepared questions taking notes of all the answers, one person to be the questioner, the other to be the note taker. Thus establishing the current level of activity in each facility. [one person taking part in this process requested a copy of the questions they would be asked prior to the appointment being made. The working group complied with the request and the subsequent interview progressed very smoothly]. Comments were invited, the interviewees were asked about possible plans for future expansion should a demand for their services increase. The participants were assured that once the results of these interviews were typed up they would have the opportunity see the document relating to their establishment to verify that their answers were recorded accurately. A 100% record was achieved with this process. It was decided to remove the personal details of the individual Childminders names and addresses from the final document and relate to childminder 1, childminder 2 etc. All the childminders interviewed appreciated the decision to delete their personal details.

4.3 Seven different establishments were identified, St Michael's C of E Combined School, Cygnets Stewkley Pre-School, Wide Awake Club, Bluebell Club, Daisy Club, Baby and Toddler Group and Friday Workshop. There are seven Registered Childminders within the village. Full details of these establishments & the records of the interviews are available in Appendices.

## **5. DRAFT VALE OF AYLESBURY LOCAL PLAN 2016**

5: 1 The Draft Vale of Aylesbury Local Plan 2016 was read and checked. There were 7 mentions of Education and /or Schools but no specific reference to Nursery and Primary Education. Ref: Appendix 1

## **6. CONSULTATIONS AND VIEWS EXPRESSED**

### **ST MICHAEL'S C of E COMBINED SCHOOL OFSTED GOOD (MARCH 2014 & 2018)**

6.1 The first Consultation undertaken was with the then Head of the School, Mrs Della Peacock B Ed [Hons]. Two members of the team had a full and frank discussion following the format previously agreed. This information has been most recently updated following consultation with the new Head Teacher, David Morley. BA Hons.

Ref: Appendix 2

6.2 When future expansion was discussed it was agreed that a possible extra 60 pupils could be accommodated within current classroom setup. The current 'spare classrooms' are well used for Music, Enrichment, and Activity Group work; as such they are very much appreciated. They will be sorely missed if returned into use as standard classrooms.

6.3 However, it has to be acknowledged that all the new pupils will not be of the same age group. Integrating the new pupils throughout the school is a more complex procedure. Additional cloakroom and washroom facilities would be needed. The size of the Hall and Kitchen facilities would need to be increased. The school grounds are extensive; the layout of the school would make expansion of the building a distinct possibility. The main difference would be the need to increase the STAFFING numbers.

6.4 The current head is very happy with the School as it is, knowing every pupil and the parents is seen as an important factor in maintaining good atmosphere, encouraging great teaching and learning. However, it is recognised that the school may well have to expand in the future.

*"I can confirm that based on current trends there is sufficient primary school capacity at St Michael's School to accommodate the level of housing growth suggested"*

Stephen Chainani - Schools Planning Office, Bucks Education Authority in email dated September 2<sup>nd</sup>. 2017.

Ref: Appendix 3

6.5 Concern has been expressed about children from Stewkley being transported out to other areas to attend schools where the pupil numbers are low. Currently 78 of the 227 pupils attending St Michael's School come from outside the recognised catchment area of Stewkley, Drayton Parslow, [year 3 onwards] Hoggston, Dunton and Littlecote. These 78 pupils come from Leighton Buzzard, Cublington, Newton Longville, Wing, Bletchley, Mursley, Swanbourne, Winslow, Soulbury, Wingrave, Aston Abbots, Weedon, Stoke Hammond, Bierton, Newton Leys, Rowsham, Mentmore and Adstock.

6.6 These 78 children should be protected, however in future the Admissions Policy should give precedent to local children to follow the guidance laid out below: “*Local Schools for Local Children - We are committed to ensuring the children can go to a local school especially in the face of significant changes in the population through the growth agenda. This promotes community cohesion and minimises the impact of travel to School.*” Ref: Early Years and School Place Planning Framework and Principles. Buckinghamshire County Council 2014 - 2018. Page 3, paragraph 2. Ref: Appendix 4

6.7 Following the granting in February 2017 of planning permission for the construction of 67 houses in Soulbury Road also for 14 homes in Cricketers Close, High Street North. This will have a major impact on the Educational facilities within Stewkley Village. As these developments are most likely to be built at the same time and therefore fully occupied within a very limited time span, it is quite possible there will be an influx of primary age children within the village. It will not be possible to absorb all these children into St Michael's C of E School during the same term. Moving house midterm may mean that some children will continue to attend their original school [if it is within a reasonable travelling distance] until the end of the school year. It will be TOTALLY INAPPROPRIATE to consider transporting young children aged 5 and 6 out of Stewkley to attend Schools elsewhere. Buckinghamshire Education Authority control the pupil admissions policy, the Head is notified of the next intake.

6.8 Concern has been expressed about additional traffic congestion in and around Capel Square, especially relating to the safety of the children. Two different options for alternative entrances to School were discussed but referred to TRANSPORT and INFRASTRUCTURE WORKING GROUP for further exploration as this was deemed to be more appropriate group to deal with this matter.

## **7. OBSERVATIONS**

- A** When the housing stock within the parish expands in the future, the resulting additional numbers of school age children could be accommodated within the existing building with a degree of expansion of the building and facilities. This will be dependent on the numbers of children involved and the speed of the development over the next few years. The school site and the building could cope very well with some degree of expansion however, this would come at some considerable expense.
- B** The overriding issue will be the need to increase the **STAFFING LEVELS** with good quality staff to ensure we retain the **GOOD OFSTED** rating awarded in **MARCH 2014 & 2018**.
- C** The way to accommodate some of the increased pupil numbers will be to ensure pupils from the **EXISTING OUTLINED CATCHMENT AREA** i.e. **Stewkley, Hoggeston, Dunton, Littlecote and Drayton Parslow [year 3 onwards]** are given priority admission

7.1 It is beyond the remit and the expertise of the Nursery and Primary Education Working Group to assess the cost of any development that would be needed.

## **8. STEWKLEY CYGNETS PRE – SCHOOL - OFSTED OUTSTANDING 2013 / 2014.**

8.1 Pre - School facilities have been running within the village for around 60 years but on an informal basis. A purpose built Pre - School building within the grounds of St Michael's School has been in operation since 2007. The Cygnets Pre - School is now a Charitable Incorporated organisation and is operated as a limited company.

8.2 Currently 30 children attend the Pre – School at various times. Maximum of 25 children per session is allowed. Cygnets are operating at full capacity at the moment in the existing building. Full details available. If an increase in demand for places occurred, outside space would be sufficient however more inside space would be required.

Ref: Appendix 5

8.3 There is a waiting list and in September 2016 the Pre - School Trustees/ Committee decided to limit places to those children living within the village only then extending out to Hoggeston and Soulbury where places have traditionally always been offered. Thereafter accepting requests for places for children from other nearby villages. This policy remains.

8.4 Currently 5 members of qualified staff are in post. In addition there is a cleaner. An increase in demand for places would require an increase in staffing levels.

8.5 It is anticipated there will be an increase in demand for places following further development of new homes in the Parish. Such an increase occurred when the Government changed the funding on offer to 30 hours of free Child Care for toddlers aged 3 to 4 years in September 2017.

8.6 A decision was made to investigate the local provision for longer hours childcare, within a 10 mile radius of Stewkley. There are currently 16 places with provision for longer hours childcare in this geographical area. Full details available. Ref: Appendix 6

## **8.7 RECOMMENDATION**

Following the Public Consultation Exhibition on Saturday 11<sup>th</sup> March 2017 the Nursery and Primary Education Working Group only received two written comments on the draft policies and recommendations. In the case of one respondent they were fully in support the policies. The second respondent expressed some concerns, these were duly discussed and some minor changes were made, as it was agreed that there had been an oversight on behalf of the working group.

**We strongly recommend that a NEW NURSERY SCSHOOL be built [possibly funded by S.106 money]. This could be on the recreation ground or incorporated into one of the new proposed building sites in the village. This would be of great benefit to the village as it would release the old pre - school building to be used by the school. A pre - school on the recreation ground would mean good access to the recreation facilities and the wildflower meadow for the staff and children providing a very appropriate setting for a countryside facility.**

8.8 A privately run nursery school would seem to be a very good idea for Stewkley. However, this would have to be a business decision made by a person who had suitable premises and the appropriate qualifications and desire to run this type of establishment.

## 9. CHILDMINDERS

9.1 In Stewkley there are 7 Childminders registered with Family Information Service Bucks County Council. OFSTED issues the registration. Childminders are a very valuable source of good reliable childcare within the locality. Full details available at the Family Information Centre. Ref: Appendix 7

9.2 Comments made to us about the facilities in Stewkley Recreational Ground are in the main extremely good, however a request for some renovation of the current toilet block has been received. The Childminders stated that without the toilet facilities they would be unable to make such good use of the play facilities in the recreation ground.

### Community Action

**Whilst outside the initial brief it is strongly recommended the toilet block in the Recreation Ground is fully renovated to enable children using the area to have improved Hygienic toilet facilities.**

## 10. WIDE AWAKE CLUB

10.1 The Wide Awake Club is run by St Michael's School every school day morning from 8am until 8.50 am. There are 2 team members running the club with assistance from 2 additional part time staff. All of whom are First Aid trained and DBS checked. Any child registered at the school can attend. After initial registration, attendance can be flexible any morning from 1 - 5 days per week. The children are offered toast and water or fruit juice before they leave to attend school. On average the attendance is 27 per day. If the number rises above 30 on any one day a member of the school staff comes into the Hall in addition to the Club staff. Ref: Appendix 8

## 11. BLUEBELL CLUB

11.1 The Bluebell Club is held on School premises but is operated by a Company called Bluebell Childcare. The registered Office is: Bluebell Childcare, Southcott Lower School, Bideford Green, Leighton Buzzard, Beds LU7 2UA.

11.2 Bluebell club operates daily from 3.30pm until 5.30pm. All staff are DBS checked and First Aid trained and have also attended Play Working Courses.

11.3 Any child registered at St Michael's School can attend Bluebell Club. After initial registration the attendance pattern can be entirely flexible. Ref: Appendix 9

## **12. BABY AND TODDLER GROUP**

12.1 Up until recently a Baby and Toddler group operated in the Parish. Unfortunately, the activities of this group have now ceased and no such facility exists in operation.

## **13. DAISYCLUB**

13.1 Daisy Club is run by Stewkley Methodist Chapel on Wednesday mornings term time only from 10.30 am until 11.30 am. The club is held in the Methodist School Room and has been in existence for 25 years.

13.2 Daisy Club is primarily for Mothers with Children up to 3 years. However, they are prepared to be flexible on the upper age limit. Adults with foster children, grandchildren and friend's children do attend the Daisy Club however an adult must stay with the children at all times.

13.3 No limit on the numbers attending at the present, if numbers increased more volunteers would be needed. This is kept under review. Ref: Appendix 10

## **14. FRIDAY WORKSHOP**

14.1 Friday Workshop is run by Stewkley Methodist Chapel, held in the Chapel School Room the first Friday of every month term time only 3,30pm until 5pm.

14.2 Friday Workshop is open to any child between 0 - 10 years with an adult in attendance. They average 10 - 12 children per session and undertake a wide variety of crafts.

14.3 Volunteers from the congregation run the club with help from the parents. All volunteers are DBS checked. Ref: Appendix 11

## **15. EXPERT ADVICE OBTAINED**

15.1 Expert advice was obtained where appropriate from many different sources. An approach was made to BUCKINGHAMSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL EDUCATION AUTHORITY for information about future plans for further expansion of Stewkley School. Liaising with Paula Campbell - Balcombe and Stephen Chainani from the Schools Planning Office. Ref: Appendix 3

15.2 With reference to the Buckinghamshire County Council, Early Years and School Place Planning Framework and Principles Policy. [Down loaded from the Bucks Website] Contact was made with Carrie Saunders in the Early Years Department to obtain information about the date of this Policy as it was noted that the paperwork was undated. Dates since confirmed as relating to the period 2014/2018. Ref: Appendix 4

15.3 Contact was made with the Family Information Services at Buckinghamshire County Council regarding the licensing of Childminders. OFSTED [Office for Standards in Education, Children's Services and Skills] undertakes the Registration process for Childminders.

15.4 Information was gathered from CACHE [Council Awards in Childcare Health and Education]

15.5 Searches were carried out on the Internet, using Bing and Google maps to establish distances.

15.6 The Parish Clerk at the time Janette Eustace has been a mine of information and extremely helpful with the research.

## **16. ISSUES, VISION AND CONCLUSIONS**

Our vision for the community is to encourage sympathetic building development within the confines of the Parish of Stewkley. However, all the much valued excellent Educational and associated facilities within the Parish must be maintained. This wide and varied mix of services greatly enhances the educational experience for all our primary age children in Stewkley. With great thought, much planning and vision a lot of the issues involved in additional development can be overcome.

## **17. KEY RECOMMENDATION**

**We strongly recommend that a NEW NURSERY SCHOOL be built [Possibly funded by S.106 money]. This could be on the recreation ground or incorporated into one of the new proposed building sights in the village. This would be of great benefit as it would release the old pre - school building to be used by the school. A nursery school on the recreation ground would mean good access to the recreation facilities and the wildflower meadow for the staff and children providing a very appropriate setting for a countryside facility.**

## **REASONS FOR THE RECOMMENDATION.**

- a) There are no Nursery School facilities within the parish catering for infants 0 – 2years which can be utilized by working parents.
- b) The nearest possible nursery establishment is located in Wing (3.2miles)
- c) With the increasing number of young professional working parents living in the parish and commuting elsewhere.
- d) The existing Pre School operates for limited hours therefore not meeting the needs of full time working parents.

Stewkley is a wonderful parish in which to reside, great community, good facilities providing a good lifestyle for young and old alike. In our opinion with care and consideration some degree of development can be carried out which will enhance the village.

PAMELA DICKENS

DATE: 3rd March 2019

SAMANTHA TOFIELD

REPORT – 5<sup>th</sup> Edition

FIONA WEBB