



GRAIG COMMUNITY COUNCIL

16th March 2021

Graig Community Council response to the Statutory Notice for the proposed expansion of Bassaleg School

Graig Community Council has in its ward the villages of Bassaleg, Rhiwderin, Lower Machen and part of Afon Village in Rogerstone, and represents some 7000 residents.

The Community Council has many concerns regarding the detail of the plan to expand Bassaleg School and has been contacted by numerous residents objecting to this proposed expansion.

The concerns mainly centre around the lack of transport infrastructure to cope with traffic congestion which at present, is stretched beyond capacity without taking account of the additional traffic such an expansion would create. This would affect not only the villages of Bassaleg and Rhiwderin, but also any traffic travelling on major highways in close proximity to the school; the A467 northbound from Junction 28 of the M4 and Southbound from Newbridge (due to hold-ups on Bassaleg Roundabout) and also Eastbound traffic on the A468 from Caerphilly.

Graig Community Council respectfully requests that this application be held back until such time as a proper public consultation meeting can be held for local residents to attend where their views can be aired and considered. To push through an application of this magnitude when proper consultation of those most affected cannot be arranged would be undemocratic and unfair. Council understands you have satisfied your statutory requirements, but in this case feels this is not sufficient.

Current traffic surveys submitted are not adequate, as none takes account of the traffic chaos which takes place at both The Griffin and Court Crescent, both of which have created longstanding problems for the residents of the Graig ward. An increase in pupils will not only affect the residents surrounding the perimeter of the proposed development you have contacted; but also the increase in traffic will have an impact on all residents in the village of Bassaleg and beyond.

To this end Graig Community Council offers you the use of Graig Hall on Caerphilly Road in Bassaleg which had extensive facilities to hold a Covid-safe meeting place to conduct a consultation either in small groups or individual appointments. If you would be willing to take up this offer, please contact the Clerk who will happily arrange for the Hall to be open for you.

Graig Community Council understands the school needs to be updated as it has been left behind most other schools in the Newport area, but little or no attention has been given to the impact on its surroundings such an expansion would bring.

Clerk to the Council: Sian Davies 6 Vale View, Gelli Park, Risca, Newport. NP11 6HS

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Attention must be given to the following:

- Creating a sufficient on-site waiting area/pick-up/drop-off point for parents dropping pupils by car. This would eliminate many of the issues experienced by motorists travelling the roads at key times of the day and ease the current overwhelming issues being experienced by residents of Court Crescent, Viaduct Way, Churchmead and The Griffin which parents currently use for this purpose. Some arriving 30 minutes early for picking up students to 'secure a spot to wait', sometimes parking inconsiderately, inappropriately and even across dropped kerbs blocking resident's drives.
- Conduct an appropriate traffic survey. It is recognised this has not been possible to date due to Covid-19 restrictions greatly affecting normal traffic conditions but is necessary and should be used in conjunction with other available data taken pre-March 2020 to give truly realistic results.
- Creating dedicated sufficient on-site 6th former parking spaces to prevent issues with 6th formers having to take up resident's parking facilities.
- Explore the use of the Newport City Council owned field adjacent to the school site to provide for the above.
- Consider prevention of 6th form students from bringing their cars to school or seek permission for pupils to park at Whiteheads Sports Club in Park View a short distance away.
- Consider extending the pull in/create additional access/waiting area alongside Bassaleg Roundabout in front of the school.
- Extend double yellow lines on Forge Road and Court Crescent and increase enforcement patrols in and around the school.
- Explore the possibility of a direct access road off Bassaleg Roundabout to assist with reducing the impact of additional traffic in the villages of Bassaleg and Rhiwderin. Caerphilly Road air quality has been reported to DEFRA and is now the site of an AQMA. The air quality in this area exceeds acceptable rates already.
- Explore the possibility of a footbridge instead of a Pelican Crossing over Forge Road to eliminate the need for traffic to be halted. This is a major contributor to the tailbacks being experienced.

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- To review the decision to change from open grassed playing fields to 3G pitches which are not only worse for the environment but will cause light and noise issues if they were to be open to the public use during the evenings.
- To eliminate/severely limit vehicles from use of the entrance off Penylan Road/The Griffin as this road is narrow, unsuitable and used as a rat-run to Cardiff so is always very busy at the same times of the day pupils are coming and going to and from school. It is part of the safe routes to school, but City Council Officers agree has inadequate footpaths, no safe crossing points and unacceptable amounts of traffic.
- Consider the impact a large development spanning an estimated two-year period will have on local residents such as noise level impact, issues with construction traffic and where materials are stored.
- Address the concern about traffic pollution and noise. Caerphilly Road is an AQMA site and being monitored regularly as a result. Air pollution would be exacerbated with more traffic generated by more pupils.

Questions need also to be answered as to why excess pupil numbers cannot be accommodated in other schools which are under-subscribed in the Newport and Caerphilly area (e.g. residents of Afon Village, Jubilee Park and Rogerstone to use Risca Comprehensive, residents of Castleton and Marshfield to use Duffryn School) and 6th Form students be accommodated at local Further Education Colleges as few schools now have 6th form spaces.

Arrangements with neighbouring Local Authorities have been successfully used to share facilities in other areas. Risca Comprehensive lies close to the border between Newport City Council and Caerphilly County Borough Council. School catchment areas can be straddled between authorities if necessary.

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