

# Frequently Asked Questions about the Proposal for a New School

## SITING OF THE NEW SCHOOL

### 1. Why can't the school be rebuilt on the current school site?

There is inadequate funding for this and the site with the current number of children is at capacity. The developer needs the profits from the school site and 2 other sites to raise the £6.5 million to build the new school. There would also be the logistical issue of where the children would go to school while demolition/construction are ongoing. Under this proposal the current school would continue to operate until the new school is ready to move into.

### 2. Why can't the current school site be left as a new park?

The current school site needs to be developed as the profits from this site will go towards building the new school.

### 3. The proposed new site is on the edge of the village. Why can't a more central site be found?

The new school site is 1.9 hectares. Oxfordshire County Council will not consider any sites for a new school much smaller than this. There are no available sites of this size closer to the centre of the village.

### 4. I support the idea of a new school on a new site but not GNP5 & 6 being developed.

The new school would be paid for by the developer from the profits made on these 2 sites plus the current school site. No other developer is making such an offer.

## WHEN

### 5. When is this going to happen?

If the plan gets approved now, we are looking at a 3-5-year timescale. As the proposal states, if planning were secured by summer 2018, the school could potentially be open by summer 2020.

## CURRENT SCHOOL

### 6. How has the school been allowed to get into its current state?

The school has been operating on very limited resources for many years. Every year difficult decisions have to be made on where to make savings. The school has only just enough money to pay the teachers and support staff and the day-to-day running costs of the building - there is very little left to pay for additional educational resources, let alone major refurbishment costs. This situation is typical of schools across the country.

### 7. What about all the money the PTA raises?

The PTA historically has raised money for enhancements and activities such as sporting and musical equipment, clubs, and of course the new outdoor play equipment that will be installed this summer. It also raises money to maintain/replace resources it has previously purchased such as the minibus, laptops and swimming pool. While PTA contributions are generous and greatly appreciated, they would not come close to paying for the very significant sums required to refurbish the school.

## NEW SCHOOL

### 8. Would the new school site be secure adjoining farmland?

The entire school site would be enclosed by secure fencing to meet the latest safeguarding standards. Much of the site adjoins the Thames Water facility on Springhill Road which is a secure area in itself.

### 9. Is there adequate parking at the proposed new school?

The illustrative plan shows scope for more than 60 cars, as opposed to the 17 at the current school/pre-school site.

This number of spaces allows for dedicated car parking within the school grounds for parents escorting children to and from the building. There would be separate parking for the school minibus.

Comments relating to inadequate drop-off spaces have been forwarded to the developer.

### 10. Would the new school have bike sheds?

Yes – and there will be safe cycle /pedestrian access from Springhill Rd.

### 11. Why is there only 1 school hall shown?

New schools are typically built with 1 hall and 1 studio space. Many choose to put this space together to make one larger hall. The plans shown so far are indicative and the exact design would evolve from input from many parties including the staff, pupils, governors, architect, Diocese, and Oxfordshire County Council, and would have regard for the shape and contours of the site.

### 12. How much of the new site will be level ground suitable for sport and how much is on a gradient?

School sports and play areas would be provided to meet relevant standards. The area indicated for the playing field is where the ground is more gently sloping. Detailed surveys and plans will be needed but with some re-profiling a suitably level area can be created.

### 13. Could the new school have solar panels?

This would be very desirable and something we would ask the architect to consider, whilst taking account of landscape considerations. As the proposal states, 'the main south-facing roof of the school building would lend itself to an array of solar panels'.

### 14. Has use of new school facilities by the community out of school hours been considered and planned for?

The new school would be designed in such a way as to maximise the use of the school facilities out of hours. This would include having direct access to the hall and any studio space, and such spaces would have their own WC facilities including disabled access. Additionally the new school would initially be 1-form entry (i.e. 30 children per year group), with a large open-plan space that could be converted to classrooms when demand for spaces increased. This open-plan space would be available for community use throughout the day until such time as the school expanded into it. After such time, the school hall/outside space would continue to be available for community use out of hours.

**15. Why is there no swimming pool at the proposed new school? Where would children learn to swim?**

Our current swimming pool was put in by the PTA in the 1970s. The costs of installing such a facility in today's climate are likely to be prohibitive – indeed the school continues to rely on PTA and parent contributions to keep the pool operational. Running the pool on the school's budget would be impossible. Potentially a space on the site could be identified for a new pool but it would have to be externally funded (i.e. by charitable donations). Swimming is part of the National Curriculum so with no school pool, arrangements would be made for the children to travel to a nearby pool for lessons.

**THE DEVELOPERS**

**16. Has the developer been transparent?**

The governors have been building up a relationship with the developers over the last year. Thus far McAdden Homes has invested significant time and resources into this proposal. Since 2016 McAdden Homes and the governors have sought joint meetings with the Neighbourhood Plan Steering Group and Parish Council to discuss this proposal. This opportunity for a joint meeting has not been forthcoming. McAdden Homes and the governors would like a full village consultation on the new school package at the next stage of the Neighbourhood Plan. The final legal terms of the package will be robustly scrutinised by the Diocese and Oxfordshire County Council legal teams to ensure that best value is achieved for all stakeholders and that the new school is built to the required standards.

**17. How can we be sure the developer won't just build the houses and renege on the school?**

The developer proposes that the new school be completed before houses are built on GNP5. The current school site would also not be redeveloped until the new school is completed and occupied. We expect the planning permission to include clauses to this effect.

**18. Family homes/ homes for young people would be better than more elderly accommodation**

We have passed this comment to the developers. However every household in Goring was surveyed by the Neighbourhood Plan team on this question and the plans are responding to the results of this survey. Of the three sites in this package accommodation for the elderly has been proposed only on the existing school site. The other two sites would provide family homes/ homes for young people.

**19. How can we be sure the developer will build what is being suggested now?**

The consultations to date will form part of the developer's final planning submission.

Any major deviation from these that reduces the quality of the package will weaken their position. All proposals will have to gain planning permission through the normal route so any concerns can be addressed during this process. Examples of the developer's previous schemes were shown at the drop-in event to illustrate the quality and designs they have built in the past.

**20. There are narrow pavements on Springhill and Wallingford Roads. What will be done about these?**

The proposals site the school away from Wallingford Road as a direct result of concern over safe access. Springhill Road is a quieter road with slower traffic. Within the land under its control the developer would provide good footpath access. The pavements beyond that are the responsibility of the County Highway Authority.

**21. Could play areas for older children such as a skateboard park be included?**

We have forwarded this suggestion to the developers.

**22. Could we have a detailed statement of the developer's responsibilities and the financial structure of the deal, including construction sequence?**

The submitted proposal document includes a draft Heads of Terms outlining responsibilities and the 'deal'. The intention is that this will be fleshed out and discussed further with the relevant statutory bodies. The answer to question 17 above comments on construction sequence.

## **TRAFFIC AND ROADS**

**23. Can we have proper cycle lanes throughout the village?**

We agree this would be great but this is a matter for the Neighbourhood Plan and/or South Oxfordshire District Council/ Oxfordshire County Council.

**24. I am concerned about sightlines for access on and off Wallingford Rd – are these being considered?**

This is something for the planning/highways departments but we have passed the concerns to the developer, who advises that sightlines have been incorporated to meet standards.

**25. Could there be alternative car access to GNP6? The proposed dwellings plus the school is too much for a single road.**

The road will be a two-lane (one in each direction) standard-width road. By having all vehicle access via Wallingford Road, the neighbouring Springhill Road and Icknield Road will be quieter and safer for pedestrian/cycle access.

**26. Has the traffic impact on Wallingford Road been considered?**

Yes – the developer has undertaken detailed surveys of this and specialist highway advice has been obtained. This concludes that the roads and junctions would operate satisfactorily within normal standards.

## **THE RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT**

**27. Could the properties on the old school site be single storey so they don't overlook neighbouring properties?**

The cost of land is such that this would not be economically viable, particularly as the new school would be funded through the developer's profits. A thoughtful 2-storey scheme has been shown on

the illustrative plans that avoids adverse impacts on the adjoining neighbours. Any specific concerns can be addressed to the developers or through the planning permission process.

**28. Could the development include some social housing?**

In line with SODC policy 40% of the housing on GNP5 and GNP6 has been factored in as affordable housing.”

**OTHER**

**29. The proposal is very professional. Who wrote it and how much did it cost?**

The detailed 60-page proposal was written entirely by the governors, with input from the developer and Diocese. There was nil cost other than a great deal of governor time!

**GOING FORWARD**

**30. Does the community realise that the current plan the NP team are preparing does NOT include a new school?**

We are not sure this is understood by everyone and we are working to raise awareness of this and to persuade the Steering Group to revisit their site selection in light of the benefits this proposal offers.

**31. Why can't the new school be included in the next version of the Neighbourhood Plan in a few years' time as suggested by the Steering Group?**

If this opportunity is not grasped now the proposed school site will have houses built on it. No other suitable and financially viable sites have been offered.

**32. How can the Neighbourhood Plan be changed to include the school?**

The Neighbourhood Plan has not been finalised yet. There is still time for it to include the new school package. The governors and McAdden Homes responded some months ago to Neighbourhood Plan consultations, asking that they embrace this new school package. This could happen now or later:

- a) The Steering Group and Parish Council could include it in the draft Plan (expected this summer/ autumn) as a result of comments from people now supporting the new school package.
- b) If the Neighbourhood Plan /Parish Council does not include the new school package, villagers can respond to the final Neighbourhood Plan consultations and state that it should be included.
- c) An independent examiner will review consultation responses and, if persuaded by the arguments, could recommend that the Neighbourhood Plan include the school package, prompting a rethink.

- d) The final stage would be when the Neighbourhood Plan is put to a vote in the village. If the Neighbourhood Plan does not include the school package, a majority vote against the plan would also prompt a rethink.

### 33. We want this to happen – how can we help?

A group of parents and other interested members of the community are forming a campaign group. If you are interested in joining this or supporting them please email [clerk@goring.oxon.sch.uk](mailto:clerk@goring.oxon.sch.uk) and we will forward your email to them. Alternatively, if you just want to be kept up to date with key stage alerts please email the clerk for this too.