

MEETING	COUNCIL
DATE	October 16 2008
TITLE	Re-organisation of the County's Primary Schools
PURPOSE	To receive guidance on <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To report on the statutory consultation period with two schools. 2. To request the Committee's direction with regard to one other school.
RECOMMENDATION	To accept the recommendations contained in Section 6
AUTHOR	Iwan Trefor Jones, Strategic Director Development
PORTFOLIO LEADER	Councillor Liz Saville Roberts

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 The Council published a draft report which outlined a recommended organisational model for the county's primary schools in October 2007.
- 1.2 At its meeting on 13 December 2007, the Council supported a consultation on the draft plan. It was also agreed that further research work should be undertaken on the possible language impact of the plan along with further examination of the advantages and disadvantages of the proposed federal school model.
- 1.3 On 19 June 2008, the Council received the above reports. An Improvement Working Group was established to consider the next steps.
- 1.4 It was agreed that that same meeting that a period of statutory consultation should commence on the proposals to close Rhydyclafdy and Croesor schools.

2. STATUTORY CONSULTATION WITH YSGOL RHYDYCLAFDY

- 2.1 Separate meetings were arranged with staff members and another held jointly for governors and parents (with the agreement of the school) on 3 July 2008. Representing Gwynedd Council were the Portfolio Leader for Schools, the Head of Schools Service, the Schools Service Senior Manager, the Dwyfor Area Education Officer and the School Organisation Project Support Officer.
- 2.2 A consultation paper was presented to staff members, governors and parents at those meetings. The relevant paper can be seen at Appendix B1.
- 2.3 The meetings were minuted and those minutes were shared with the school with a request that they be validated. The minutes can be seen in Appendices B3 and B4.
- 2.4 The consultation paper was also shared in turn with a range of organisations and individuals. A full list of those who received a copy follows in Appendix B2. The consultation period was extended to allow a full 10 weeks from the date of the statutory meeting.

- 2.5 No children attend the school today.
- 2.6 No responses were received to the consultation paper by the close of the consultation period on 15 September 2008.
- 2.7 The timetable for the process from this point on is outlined in the consultation paper.

3. STATUTORY CONSULTATION WITH YSGOL CROESOR

- 3.1 Separate meetings were arranged with staff members, governors and parents on 7 July 2008. Representing Gwynedd Council were the Portfolio Leader for Schools, the Head of Schools Service, the Schools Service Senior Manager, the Dwyfor Area Education Officer and the School Organisation Project Manager.
- 3.2 A consultation paper was presented to staff members, governors and parents at those meetings. The relevant paper can be seen at Appendix C1 .
- 3.3 The meetings were minuted and those minutes were shared with the school with a request that they be validated. No comments on the minutes had been received by the close of the consultation period. The minutes are attached as Appendices C3, C4 and C5.
- 3.4 The consultation paper was also shared in turn with a range of organisations and individuals. A full list of those who received a copy follows in Appendix C2. The consultation period was extended to allow a full 10 weeks from the date of the statutory meeting.
- 3.1 Responses were received from the following:
- The school's governing body (1)
 - Former pupils of the school (5)
 - Parents of current and former pupils (2)
 - Community Council (1)
 - The Welsh Language Society (1)
- 3.5 A summary of the responses is provided in Appendix C6.
- 3.6 The timetable for the process from this point on is outlined in the consultation paper.

4. THE SITUATION IN YSGOL LLAWRYBETWS

- 4.1 At the beginning of the autumn term 2008, significant concerns have been raised about the sustainability of Ysgol Llawrybetws in the face of a substantial decrease in pupil numbers.
- 4.2 While consulting with the school in March 2008, staff, governors and parents outlined their opposition to the then current proposal to close the school.
- 4.3 The school had forecast that around 10 pupils would attend the school in September 2008. At the beginning of this term only two pupils attend the school.
- 4.4 The school currently has a full time headteacher, one teacher (0.7) who operates as a classroom assistant the remainder of the week (0.3), a one-to-one special needs

support worker for a child with Special Educational Needs, in addition to a part-time cook and caretaker.

- 4.5 The schools does not anticipate that more pupils will begin attending the school in the short term.
- 4.6 The school's budget for the current year is £104,474.
- 4.7 The Portfolio Holder for Schools and Head of Schools Service held discussions with staff and governors at the school during September 2008.
- 4.8 The Schools Service's view is that the school is no longer sustainable.
- 4.9 With the agreement of the Children and Young Peoples' Scrutiny Committee, the intention is to proceed to a period of statutory consultation on the intention to close Ysgol Llawrybetws with effect from 31 August 2009 or 31 December 2009
- 4.10 The statutory consultation period will reflect that which has previously been offered to Rhydyclafdy and Croesor.

5. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 5.1 The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee received a report on the above on 25 September 2008.
- 5.2 The report and the recommendations contained therein were accepted without objection.

6. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 To agree the proposal to give statutory notice of the intention to close Ysgol Rhydyclafdy with effect from 3 April 2009.
- 5.2 To agree the proposal to give statutory notice of the intention to close Ysgol Croesor with effect from 31 August 2009.
- 5.3 To agree the proposal to conduct a period of statutory consultation on the intention to close Ysgol Llawrybetws with effect from 31 August 2009 or 31 December 2009.

Iwan T. Jones
Strategic Director Development
ITJ/SW/02.10.08

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE YSGOL RHYDYCLAFDY BY 31ST AUGUST 2009

CONSULTATION PAPER

The Proposal

1. The purpose of this consultation paper is to discuss the proposal to close Ysgol Rhydyclafdy. According to the timetable which has been identified, the school will close – if there is agreement – by 31st August 2009
2. This consultation is held with parents, governors and staff of Ysgol Rhydyclafdy in addition to others identified by Welsh Assembly Government guidelines. Anybody else who wishes to present their comments is also welcome to do so.
3. The consultation period will run between 30th June and 15th September 2008. A report on the outcome of the consultation will be presented to the full Council meeting on 16th October 2008.

What are the implications of this proposal?

4. Ysgol Rhydyclafdy will close.
5. The school and the land around it are owned by the Council. The Council will need to consider the needs of the community alongside the requirements of its own draft Asset Management Plan.
6. Gwynedd's Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee proposed on 5th June 2008 that Dwyfor Area Committee should have the opportunity to discuss the use of the site post-closure. If there is agreement to sell the site, any profit will be reinvested within the county's primary school system.
7. Pupils who reside within the current Rhydyclafdy catchment area will be entitled to transport to school in line with the council's transport policy. There will be an obligation on the Council to note within which catchment area the current catchment area will be located in future. This is a specific issue to be addressed by this current consultation.

The factors which support this proposal

Pupil numbers in Ysgol Rhydyclafdy have been low for some years and have shown a significant reduction in recent years.

September 1975	27
September 1985	27
September 1995	31
September 2005	20
September 2007	4

- Two of the four children currently attending the school are in Year 6 and will have left the school by September 2008. The parents of the two remaining children have made a formal application to the Schools Service that their children should be provided with places at Ysgol Llanbedrog from September 2008. These applications have been agreed and the relevant arrangements confirmed. It is therefore foreseen that there will be no children in Ysgol Rhydyclafdy in September 2008.
- The school's devolved budget for the financial year 2007-8 was £103,278
- The school has capacity for 42 children. There is sufficient space in neighbouring schools to offer places to the children residing within the catchment area.

8. Annual revenue savings made by closing the school will be reinvested within the education system, in particular in order to reduce class sizes within the county's most deprived areas.
9. There will be no interference to the education of children because – according to the school's projections – there won't be any children in the school in September 2008.

What are the disadvantages of closing Ysgol Rhydyclafdy?

10. The school is a community resource in a rural community, and closing the school will result in the loss of that facility.
11. There will be staffing applications. At present there is a permanent head teacher, one part-time teacher and support staff. Focused consultation will be held with staff and their union representatives as part of the current consultation process.

Next steps

12. A statutory consultation meeting will be held with school staff, parents and governors on 3rd July 2008 and a formal consultation will be conducted with those identified by the Welsh Assembly Government's guidelines following those meetings. Any others who wish to present their comments will be welcome to do so before 15th September 2008. The intention is to present the results of the consultation period to the full Council meeting on 16th October 2008.
13. If the Council agrees to the proposal to close Ysgol Rhydyclafdy a formal notice of closure will be published and copies will be distributed to the school and the local public library. The notice will outline the right of objectors to present their objections in writing within two month of the publication of the notice. If there are objections, the matter will be transferred to the Welsh Assembly Government. The Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills will consider any objections, the authority's response to those objections, and any evidence which supports the proposal before deciding whether the proposal should be agreed, refused or amended.

14. The timetable outlined for this process follows:

July 2008	Commencement of a statutory consultation period with the school's staff, parents and governors.
16 th October 2008	Full council makes a decision on the proposal If there is a decision to close the school, statutory notices will be published immediately to close the school, allowing for a period of two months in for the presentation of objections.
23 rd December 2008	If there are no objections to the proposal, the Council will confirm the proposal to close Ysgol Rhydyclafdy. If there are objections, the Council will be obliged to refer the proposal to the Welsh Assembly Government's Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills. The Government usually requires a period of around 3 months from the date of the period for the presentation of objections in order to reach its decision. This means that the Welsh Assembly Government will have made a final decision by Easter 2009. If there are no objections, the Council could decide to press ahead with the closure of Ysgol Rhydyclafdy with effect from the end of the Spring Term 2009. If there are objections, the

earliest date at which the school could be closed would be 31st
August 2009

Staffing

15. As has already been noted, it is intended that detailed consultation will be held with staff currently working at Ysgol Rhydyclafdy with regard to the options available to them.

How can you respond?

16. The Council has pages of general information on the school reorganisation process to this point on its website.
17. You are welcome to present your written comments to:
Mr Iwan Roberts
Senior Schools Service Manager
Gwynedd Council
County Offices
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Or you may e-mail trefniadaeth.ysgolion@gwynedd.gov.uk

18. Any comments must reach the Council by Monday 15th September 2008

If you require this document in another format, please contact Seimon Williams on 01286 679247.

List of who received the consultation paper

Parents of Ysgol Rhydyclafdy pupils

Ysgol Rhydyclafdy Head teacher

Head teachers of neighbouring schools in the Glan y Môr and Botwnnog areas

Comprehensive school Head teachers in the catchment area

Local Councillor

Community Council

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Statutory Meeting with Ysgol Rhydyclafdy
Ysgol Rhydyclafdy
3 July 2008 at 17:00

STAFF MEETING

*Minutes***1. Welcome**

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting by Dewi R Jones, Head of School Services.

2. Context

A presentation was given by Iwan Roberts and it was explained that there will be a chance for staff to ask questions tonight but if they do have any personal worries there will be individual meetings at a later date.

3. Discussiona) Staff Issues

It was noted that the main worries were personal ones that will be more relevant for the personal meetings.

IR – It is Gwynedd Council's responsibility to help everyone's situation. Arrangements will be made to meet with everyone on an individual basis. It may be helpful for staff to take outside advice from unions etc.

Will there be a difference if staff are on a yearly contract rather than a permanent contract?

Dependent on the length of service. Support will also be given to temporary staff.

It is obviously unfair to discuss individual situations at this meeting, there will be a chance to discuss these worries in the individual meetings.

It was agreed to arrange the individual meetings with IR on the 10th. As Sioned only works in the afternoons it was agreed that she should be met with first, the Governors' Clerk will also need to be contacted – it is her desire not to continue as a clerk.

Matters regarding the future of the building, catchment areas and transport.

Rhydyclafdy is in Glan y Môr catchment and is on the boundary of Llanbedrog and Pentreuchaf primary catchments. There is no specific tendency to which school the children go to. i.e. children from one side of the village do not necessarily go to the school on that side.

The Governors are more likely to have observations with regards to the after use of the school, catchment areas and transport.

4. Close

Dewi R Jones thanked everyone for attending.

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Statutory Meeting with Ysgol Rhydyclafdy
Ysgol Rhydyclafdy
3 July 2008 at 17:45

GOVERNORS AND PARENTS MEETING
Minutes

1. **Welcome**

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting by Dewi R Jones, Head of School Services.

2. **Context**

A presentation was given by Iwan Roberts.

It was noted that the staff meeting had already been held and that further meetings would be arranged with individual staff members next week. It was decided that because of the school's situation that there was no need for separate governors and parents meetings.

Governors/Parents have accepted that the school will close, it was felt that it wasn't the council that was closing the school but the lack of pupils.

3. **Discussion**

a) Building after use

A small informal meeting has already been held to discuss the building's future. There is an intention to distribute a letter throughout the village to set up a group to discuss the building's future.

Liz Saville Roberts brought to attention the implications of any local committee. Maintenance responsibility would fall on that committee. Guidance needs to be given to the group on this.

No discussion has been held between the group and Buan Community Council regarding the future of the building. It may be useful for the group to report/feed back to the Community Council.

Maintenance responsibility would fall on the community's if the building was to be transferred to the community.

There is no other centre in the village, no shop, only a chapel.

Older members of the community are concerned for the use of the playing field. Some remember that there was some sort of condition on the field that it is to be used by the village's children outside of school hours. It is the only playing field in the village.

Short term maintenance arrangements will have to be made for the building.

b) Transport

It was asked what the transport arrangements for the remaining two children that will move to Llanbedrog in September. One parent is unable to drive and the other is outside of the Rhydyclafdy catchment area. It is usually the parents responsibility to transport their children if a decision is made to move them to another school outside of their catchment. The council would be open to consider transport for the two because of the circumstances.

c) Catchments

As yet, no decision has been made regarding the catchment boundaries. A definite policy will need to be set for the future.

Concern was shown regarding the high school catchment areas, at present Rhydyclafdy is within the Glan y Môr catchment and Llanbedrog has the choice of either Glan y Môr or Botwnnog. Pentreuchaf is in the Glan y Môr catchment.

From the children that have already moved there is no definite pattern of which school is preferred i.e. children from one side of the village does not necessarily go to the school that is on that side of the village. Rhydyclafdy area is more similar to Pentreuchaf.

d) Governing Body's future

it was asked what the governing body's future will be from September as there will be no head teacher representative, parent representative etc.

There is a possibility that the Council will be able to take over from the governing body.

4. Close

Dewi R Jones thanked everyone for coming.

CONSULTATION ON THE PROPOSAL TO CLOSE YSGOL CROESOR BY 31ST AUGUST 2009

CONSULTATION PAPER

The Proposal

1. The purpose of this consultation paper is to discuss the proposal to close Ysgol Croesor. According to the timetable which has been identified, the school will close – if there is agreement – by 31st August 2009.
2. This consultation is held with parents, governors and staff of Ysgol Croesor in addition to others identified by Welsh Assembly Government guidelines. Anybody else who wishes to present their comments is also welcome to do so.
3. The consultation period will run between 30th June and 15th September 2008. A report on the outcome of the consultation will be presented to the full Council meeting on 16th October 2008.

What are the implications of this proposal?

4. Ysgol Croesor will close.
5. The school and the land around it are owned by the Council. The Council will need to consider the needs of the community alongside the requirements of its own draft Asset Management Plan.
6. Gwynedd's Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee proposed on 5th June 2008 that the Meirionnydd Area Committee should have the opportunity to discuss the use of the site post-closure. If there is agreement to sell the site, any profit will be reinvested within the county's primary school system.
7. Pupils who reside within the current Croesor catchment area will be offered a place in Ysgol y Garreg, Llanfrothen or in another school if that is the parents' wish. There is sufficient capacity within Ysgol y Garreg for the pupils.
8. If Ysgol Croesor closes, the school's catchment area will become part of the catchment area of Ysgol y Garreg. Pupils within the present catchment area will be entitled to transport to school in line with the authority's transport policy. The present policy permits transport to school if the child's home is more than one mile and a half from the school for under 8s, 2 miles for those between 8-11 years of age.

Factors in support of the proposal

Pupil numbers in Ysgol Croesor have been low for some years and have shown a marked decrease in recent years.

September 1975	19
September 1985	16
September 1995	23
September 2005	14
September 2007	9

- In September 2007, 9 children attended Ysgol Croesor. By Easter 2008, this number had decreased to 6 and projections predict that the number by September 2008 will be 4.
- The school's devolved budget for 2008-9 is £103,015.

- The Schools Service is of the opinion that the pupil numbers at Ysgol Croesor are no longer sustainable. The cost of educating children attending the school is significantly higher than the average cost in the remainder of the county's schools. On the basis that the school has 4 pupils, the per head cost will be in excess of £25,000 which compares with average per head spending across Gwynedd of less than £4,000 per head
 - Since the retirement of the previous head teacher of Ysgol Croesor during the summer of 2007, the head teacher at Ysgol y Garreg has led both schools
 - Ysgol Croesor already works very closely with Ysgol y Garreg and pupils at Ysgol Croesor spend parts of each week at Ysgol y Garreg in order to extend and enrich their experiences. The transfer of pupils to Ysgol y Garreg would be an opportunity to further develop these advantages.
 - There is capacity for 33 pupils at Ysgol Croesor, and a further 49 at Ysgol y Garreg while the latter school had 15 pupils in January 2008. There is sufficient space at Ysgol y Garreg to offer places to pupils currently attending Ysgol Croesor.
9. Annual revenue savings made by closing the school will be reinvested within the education system, in particular in order to reduce class sizes within the county's most deprived areas.
 10. The school and land are the property of the Council. If there is a decision to sell the land – dependent on the discussions of the Meirionnydd Area Committee and the Council's decision in line with the Asset Management Plan – the intention is to reinvest capital receipts back into the schools system.

What are the disadvantages of closing Ysgol Croesor?

11. The school is a community resource in a rural community, and closing the school will result in the loss of that facility.
12. There will be staffing applications. At present the school is clustered with Ysgol y Garreg with the head teacher of the latter school leading Croesor. A full-time teacher currently operates as the site head at Croesor, and there is also one part-time teacher, in addition to support staff. Focused consultation will be held with staff and their union representatives as part of the current consultation process.

Next steps

13. A statutory consultation meeting will be held with school staff, parents and governors on 7th July 2008 and a formal consultation will be conducted with those identified by the Welsh Assembly Government's guidelines following those meetings. Any others who wish to present their comments will be welcome to do so before 15th September 2008. The intention is to present the results of the consultation period to the full Council meeting on 16th October 2008.
14. If the Council agrees to the proposal to close Ysgol Croesor a formal notice of closure will be published and copies will be distributed to the school and the local public library. The notice will outline the right of objectors to present their objections in writing within two months of the publication of the notice. If there are objections, the matter will be transferred to the Welsh Assembly Government. The Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills will consider any objections, the authority's response to those objections, and any evidence which supports the proposal before deciding whether the proposal should be agreed, refused or amended.
15. The timetable outlined for this process follows:

July 2008	Commencement of a statutory consultation period with the school's staff, parents and governors.
16 th October 2008	<p>Full council makes a decision on the proposal</p> <p>If there is a decision to close the school, statutory notices will be published in September to close the school, allowing for a period of two months in for the presentation of objections.</p>
23 rd December 2008	<p>If there are no objections to the proposal, the Council will confirm the proposal to close Ysgol Croesor. If there are objections, the Council will be obliged to refer the proposal to the Welsh Assembly Government's Minister for Education, Lifelong Learning and Skills. The Government usually requires a period of around 3 months from the date of the period for the presentation of objections in order to reach its decision. This means that the Welsh Assembly Government will have made a final decision by Easter 2009.</p> <p>If there are no objections, the Council could decide to press ahead with the closure of Ysgol Croesor with effect from the end of the Spring Term 2009. If there are objections, the earliest date at which the school could be closed would be 31st August 2009</p>

Staffing

16. As has already been noted, it is intended that detailed consultation will be held with staff currently working at Ysgol Croesor with regard to the options available to them.

How can you respond?

17. The Council has pages of general information on the school reorganisation process to this point on its website.
18. You are welcome to present your written comments to:

Mr Iwan Roberts
Senior Schools Service Manager
Gwynedd Council
County Offices
Caernarfon
Gwynedd
LL55 1SH

Or you may e-mail trefniadaeth.ysgolion@gwynedd.gov.uk

19. Any comments must reach the Council by Monday 15th September 2008

If you require this document in another format, please contact Seimon Williams on 01286 679247.

List of those who received the consultation paper

Headteacher of Croesor and Y Garreg schools

Croesor School Governors Chairperson

Parents of all children who attended the school in July 2008

Llanfrothen Community Council

Local Councillor

Primary Schools in the Ardudwy Catchment and Ardudwy School

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Statutory Meeting with Ysgol Croesor
Ysgol Croesor
7 July 2008 at 17:30

STAFF MEETING
Minutes

1. Welcome

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting by the Head of Schools Service.

2. Context

The Head of Schools Service explained that this was a statutory meeting for parents and any comments were welcomed and would be noted.

3. The Consultation Paper

The Senior Manager of the Schools Service presented the consultation paper which outlines the councils intention, advantages and disadvantages of the proposal along with an explanation of the process from now on.

It was explained that the council on 19/06 agreed to move on to a period of statutory consultation on the intention of closing the school and that the Council would discuss the final proposal in October 2008. If the proposal substantiated, the school will close by 31/08/09. In the meantime, there will be a consultation period and anyone who wishes to do so, may express their opinion. If the Council decides to close the school, the council will publish statutory notice and offer a period for objections. If there are objections the matter will be referred to the Education Minister.

It was noted that staffing matters will probably be the main consideration for this meeting.

4. Discussion

a) September 2008 projection.

It was confirmed by the school that they expect at least one child will attend the school in September 2008. It was understood that another was also likely to attend. One of the children will be in reception year and the other in year 5. Both live within the Croesor catchment area.

b) Transport for Croesor catchment pupils

It was explained that the council will need to re-form the catchments boundaries and it is reasonable to consider that Croesor will lie within the Llanfrothen catchment should Croesor close.

The lawfulness of transporting children under 5 years old on taxis to school was questioned.

It was replied that this is lawful, as Croesor children already regularly travel to Ysgol y Garreg, Llanfrothen in taxis and therefore this custom is acceptable.

There is no necessity to provide transport to nursery children but this can happen if there are places on the bus or taxi.

c) Staffing Issues

- i) It was noted that there was a chance in the meeting to discuss general staffing matters and that there will be personal matters that will also need to be discussed. The Senior manager schools service said that he would re-visit the school in the next few days to discuss personal matters with individual staff members.
- ii) Concern was expressed that a number of staff members are young. It was agreed that each case will need to be discussed individually. The current staffing level is 1 ½ teachers, 2 assistants and a caretaker.
- iii) The responsibility over provider staff lies outside the Schools Service and assurance was given that every effort will be made to maintain jobs for everyone. There is no kitchen in the school and the cluster arranges to transport food from Ysgol y Garreg to Croesor.
- iv) Forecasts suggests that two pupils will attend the school in September 2008, with substantial age difference between the. It was agreed that further discussions will be needed on the best way of preparing their education.

d) Managerial issues

The current arrangement is to allow Croesor pupils to be transported with taxis to Ysgol Y Garreg for 3 afternoons a week at times (and at least twice a week regularly).

It was noted that the cluster hasn't as yet agreed how to arrange managerial matters for September 2008 but discussions continue.

e) Effect of the consultation on school reorganisation

Opinion was expressed that the consultation over the last years had panicked parents to remove their children from the school. Eleven children who live within the Croesor catchment received their education outside the catchment, and none of them had moved to Y Garreg. Seven of the eleven had attended Croesor and not one transferred to Ysgol y Garreg. The opinion was that the consultation plan – which recommended the closure of both schools to transfer the children to Penrhyndeudraeth – had worked against Y Garreg too.

5. Close

The Head of Schools Service thanked the staff and encouraged them to discuss the best way to prepare education for the two pupils that will attend the school in September 2008.

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Statutory Meeting with Ysgol Croesor
Ysgol Croesor
7 July 2008 at 18:15

GOVERNORS MEETING
Minutes

1. Welcome

Everyone was welcomed to the meeting by the Head of Schools Service.

2. Context

The Head of Schools Service explained that this was a statutory meeting for governors and any comments were welcomed and would be noted.

It was noted that a letter was left for the Council by the Chairperson of the Governors (who was absent for personal reasons). It was agreed that the officer would read the letter in the meeting should the governors wish.

Among the points raised were:

- Concern was noted for the 11 children who has left the school since September 07 because of uncertainty.
- That the building is in good condition and suitable for foundation phase.
- The school is rich in resources and staff.
- That the chapel is still open.
- Many children have been born in the area recently.
- The school is the heart of the village.
- The school could thrive if kept open.

It was agreed among governors that the discussions over school reorganisation is at the root of the reason that many children have left the school recently. Governors were eager to support the Chairperson's letter.

3. Discussion*a) The future of Ysgol y Garreg*

Assurance was requested that Ysgol y Garreg would not close in order to calm concerns in the catchment. The School Portfolio Leader that a working group has been set up to discuss the field again.

It was confirmed that the old plan had been rejected by The Council, but that it was no way of promising that there will be no further changes in the future.

b) Criteria

Assurance was given that clear and strong criteria would be part of any proposal to close schools.

c) Effect on the community

It was noted that the closure of the school would make it harder to attract and keep young people and families in the village.

The community

The village concept is important. It was suggested that Croesor children wouldn't feel as much part of the community in Penrhyndeudraeth as they do in Croesor.

d) Budgetary Effect

An officer noted that there many budgetary points are factors. The link between capital for renovation and new builds and that the council needs to reduce the amount of empty places and build bigger schools. The School Portfolio holder added that over 40% of the council's budget is spent on education, and there is an obligation on the council to consider how to keep balance between maintaining small rural schools and larger schools in urban areas that are under financed. She noted that she is glad the council is restarting, but there will be hard decisions to come, and there needs to be fair and transparent.

e) Pupil Numbers

It was suggested that Croesor pupil numbers have always increased and decreased. Reference was made at a plant to close the school in the 1070s when 4 children attended the school and that numbers have increased since then.

f) School Building Ownership

It was questioned whether the council owned the school? Officers said that the council's property section would confirm this to be the case.

g) Consultation period's closing date

It was asked to extend the consultation period past 08/09/08. it was noted that 08/09/08 wouldn't be the end of the consultation and the governors were urged to write by the closing date.

(Note: since the meeting it has been agreed to extend the consultation period to 15 September 2008)

h) Facilities

It was noted that the community and school had created a playing field. It was also noted that two affordable houses will be created over the next 2-3 years. There is a worry that the closing of the school could undermine this.

i) Building after use

The community has already discussed possible options. It was explained that the matter would go to the Meirionnydd Area Committee.

4. Close

Everyone was thanked for attending the meeting and the governing body was urged to send their comments by the closing date.

It was said that English copies of any document would be provided.

DEVELOPMENT DIRECTORATE

Statutory Meeting with Ysgol Croesor
Ysgol Croesor
7 July 2008 at 19:00

PARENTS MEETING
Minutes

Five parents were present.

1. Welcome

Apologies were made that there were no English versions of the papers and it was noted that they would follow. It was noted that the Council would need to translate the letter received from the Chair of Governors when official papers are prepared for the Council meeting in October.

2. Context

The Head of Schools Service explained that this was a statutory meeting for parents and any comments were welcomed and would be noted.

3. The Consultation Paper

The Senior Manager Schools Service presented the consultation paper which outlines the council's intention, the advantages and disadvantages of the proposal and explanation of the consultation process from now on.

Some points were highlighted by the officer:

a) Use of site

It was noted that the governors (during the governors meeting earlier in the evening) has questioned the building and site's ownership. The council noted further work would be done on the matter.

b) Numbers

It was noted that is one of the main reasons for action in Croesor's case – 2 pupils in September 2008 but invites are extended for further information.

4. Discussion

a) Ownership of the building and site

There was uncertainty with regards to the ownership of the school and the surrounding land. Explanation was requested on this, especially when the after use of the building is considered if the school closes.

Officers noted that the Meirionnydd Area Committee would discuss the matter of after use. The general feeling was that councillors would be eager to find a community use to the site on the condition that would be possible and sustainable for the future. It was noted that any enterprise business plan

would need to be durable as the council has a responsibility over the maintenance of too many buildings.

b) Building after use

It was added to the above that there are plenty of possible uses. A request was asked for consideration to use the building as a 'crèche'. It was also noted that the school could be used as a site for foundation phase within a larger school.

The building is in good condition.

It was agreed that it would be better to discuss this after 16 October if the council's decision will be to close the school. Officers noted that the council would be eager for definite plans to be in place for September 2009 if the decision would be to close the school.

c) Individual pupil history

Individual children histories were shared by their parent, concentrating on the contribution the school had made to their development.

d) Effect of the reorganisation process on pupil numbers

It was felt that the start of the consultation process had led to the reduction in pupil numbers as parents moved their children from the school. This factor was accepted.

e) What would the effect of not closing Ysgol Croesor be on the project?

It was noted that there isn't a 'project' anymore except for the proposal to close Croesor and Rhydyclafdy schools and transferring the children to neighbouring schools. However, a working group has been established by the Council on 19 June to re-examine school organisation.

f) Transport

Concern was expressed by parent about transporting children by bus. It was noted that it was the council's responsibility to provide free transport if the children live more than 1.5 miles from the school: it is the parents choice if they wish to accept.

Flexibility was asked in Croesor's case with regard to transport because only 2 schools are on the closing list at present.

Transport costs is something to be considered for the future as fuel costs rise.

Family circles maintain the situation e.g. grandparents/family members help to collect children especially if the parents work.

5. Close

Everyone was thanked for attending the meeting. The timetable was referred to and the body was urged to send their comments by the closing date.

**RESPONSES TO THE CONSULTATION ON THE INTENTION TO CLOSE YSGOL
CROESOR BY 31 AUGUST 2009**

13 responses were received.

1.

Name: Llanfrothen Community Council
Date: 06/09/08
Format: Letter
Language of response: Welsh
Response:

Dear sir,

CONSULTATION REGARDING PROPOSED CLOSURE OF YSGOL CROESOR

The council have decided not to object to the closure of Ysgol Croesor subject to that part of the finance from the sale of the building be earmarked for expenditure on Ysgol y Garreg.

Their reasons for not objecting to its closure, was that it is no longer economically viable to keep the school open, and that the small pupil numbers does not promote the children's development.

Yours sincerely

Ken Williams
Clerk Llanfrothen Community Council

2.

Name: Enfys Huws, Former Pupil
Date: 10/09/08
Format: E-mail
Language of response: Welsh
Response:

Dear Iwan Roberts,

Upon my arrival home to Llanfrothen after a period spent at the university, I was shocked to hear that Ysgol Croesor was under threat of closure.

As a former-pupil at Ysgol Croesor, I am totally opposed to the idea. I received as good an education, if not better, than can be received at a larger school. I feel strongly that the relationship that exists, between the children and the teachers, and between the children and the local community has boosted confidence as well as a strong sense of belonging to a close community. If the school were to close, this would be lost for ever - this would inflict irretrievable harm on everybody in the area. The school provides the focus for the Croesor community, that needs to be strengthened, not weakened. If I were a parent, I would regard myself as very fortunate in discovering a gem such as Ysgol Croesor, to provide education, security and a homely ethos in a close community for my children.

I speak on behalf of my sister Ceirios Huws who is out of touch in New Zealand, but who has requested me to express her opposition as well.

Yours sincerely,

Enfys Huws

3.

Name: Ceirios Huws, Former Pupil

Date: 11/09/08

Format: E-mail

Language of response: Welsh

Response:

Dear Iwan Roberts,

I write to you to oppose the possibility of the closure of Ysgol Croesor soon. As a former pupil at the school, and as somebody who has lived in the area throughout my youth, I feel very strongly that the school should remain open to those children wishing to attend it. The school offers much more than good education for the children who receive their lessons there; it is a focal point for the area's children, families and residents, as well as being a focal point for the community.

I regard it as a privilege to have been a pupil at Ysgol Croesor, and although it is a small school, I received as good an education there as I could have received anywhere else. It provided an excellent opportunity to get to know the children, the teachers, and parents very well, and therefore, as I said earlier, fostered a sense of community in the village and area. If the school were to close, such close links cannot be developed anywhere else.

I am also strongly of the view that education should be available locally. Having had to travel from Llanfrothen to Harlech to attend the secondary school, I sympathize with anybody who has had to travel to obtain his/her education.

To conclude, may I stress that closing Ysgol Croesor would be a great mistake. It is an excellent school, important to the children who are taught there, and to the surrounding community, a community that would not exist without it.

Yours sincerely,

Ceirios Huws

4.

Name: Dr Peter Marshall, Parent

Date: 11/09/08

Format: E-mail

Language of response: English

Response:

Dear Mr Iwan Roberts,

I have heard from a family friend that Ysgol Croesor is threatened with closure. I lived in Garth-y-foel near Croesor for 16 years from 1980 and both my children Emily and Dylan went to the school. They grew up speaking fluent Welsh thanks to the school.

The primary schooling they received under Mrs Morgan and Mr Robinson was excellent and prepared them well for their future life. They both went on to university and have become teachers themselves. They enjoyed going to the school, which respected individual differences, brought out the best in each child and allowed the pupils to develop at their own pace. They also appreciated the way it was rooted in the environment, history and culture of the Cwm Croesor.

Not only was Ysgol Croesor a good school, but it is an essential part of the community. At different times of the year, it brought together all members of the community and every day parents from different backgrounds would socialize at its gate. It provided a living and lively centre to the life of the valley.

I therefore strongly urge the Gwynedd Education Authority and the Education Department of the Welsh Assembly to think again and keep the Ysgol Croesor open. The numbers may be few at present but in the long run, with the continued rehabilitation of the countryside in Wales, new families with young children will move to the area. On the other hand, if the school closes, it will end a long and fine tradition and be another blow to the unique and ancient culture of this beautiful part of the world.

Yours faithfully,

Peter Marshall (Dr)

5.

Name: Menna Angharad, Parent

Date: 11/09/08

Format: E-mail

Language of response: English

Response:

Dear Iwan Roberts,

I write to you to express my opposition to the proposed closure of Ysgol Croesor. This is an excellent and unique school; the area's residents have been very fortunate in obtaining such good education for their children in a homely, cosy and happy community environment, and it would be a tragedy if this were to cease.

My two daughters were privileged to receive all their primary education at Ysgol Croesor.

Yours sincerely,
Menna Angharad

6.

Name: Dr Emily Zobel Marshall, Former Pupil
Date: 12/09/08
Format: E-mail
Language of response: English
Response:

Dear Iwan,

I was a pupil at Ysgol Croesor and had article about my experiences there published in the Welsh magazine *Barn*. I was very sad to hear about the imminent closure of the school and thought I would send it to you. It was translated into Welsh - I have attached the English version (Ref: Marshall, E. Z. (2006) 'Byd o Addysg.' *Barn*, pp. 18-19). I can photocopy the article (Welsh version) and send it to you should you need it,

All the very best,

Emily Zobel Marshall (Dr.)

29/09/06

Ysgol Croesor.

Emily Zobel Marshall

I was asked write my about my memories of Ysgol Croesor four days ago; since then I have thought of nothing else. I have been continually reminiscing; boring everyone with stories of Ysgol Croesor, dreaming about Ysgol Croesor. I have so many wonderful memories that I hope as I finally put pen to paper I can successfully condense the essence of my experience into only one thousand words.

My mother is from the French-speaking Island of Martinique in the Caribbean, and my father from the exotic climes of Bognor Regis. Following the dream of an alternative, self-sufficient communal lifestyle they set up a commune of seventeen adults and seventeen children, on seventeen acres of land, in Buckinghamshire in the late 70's. Finding this lifestyle more complicated than anticipated, when I was nearly three years of age we moved to Snowdonia in North Wales. My father had fallen in love with an uninhabited and very isolated house, Garth-y-Foel, near the tiny village of Croesor. Surrounded by the mountains of Cnicht and the Molewyns and with a view down to the sea it was an idyllic setting, which compensated for the lack of any proper track leading to the house. Soon after moving to Garth-y-Foel my parents started learning Welsh, and gradually became more fluent over the following years.

I started at Ysgol Croesor aged four. There were 16 children in the school at that time, six in the 'little' class and ten in the 'big' class, from both Welsh and English-speaking

backgrounds. Mrs Morgan, the headmistress, was a highly intelligent lady in her 60's, who had been teaching at the school for several decades.

The School was a stone building with large windows and the interior a spacious open plan room with sliding partition doors which at times separated the two class rooms. It was situated in the centre of the village, on the banks of Afon Croesor. Nearby, villagers had dammed part of the river to create a natural swimming pool for the school children, and every summer we spent hours slowly turning blue as we played in the freezing waters.

We were taught through the medium of both Welsh and English, but speaking Welsh was encouraged both in class and at playtime. Mrs Morgan inspired in us a love of Wales, reading tales from the Mabinogion and setting us detailed course work on Welsh history, poetry and literature from an early age. She also taught us to appreciate the beauty of our surroundings and the natural world. On sunny days lessons were taken outdoors, we climbed Cnicht and the Molewyn's on sponsored walks, and spent whole afternoons on nature trails around the Cwm identifying the homes, tracks and droppings of animals and birds. No child left Ysgol Croesor without an impressive knowledge of local plant and animal life.

My two mile walk to school was magical; through 'Bluebell Wood,' and 'Badger city,' over moss-covered dry-stone walls and under tunnels of green bracken, ending in a wade across the fast-flowing river. Nearly all the pupils lived within walking distance of the school and came on foot, and each of their journeys was something of an adventure.

Ysgol Croesor was at the heart of the Croesor community. Mrs Morgan took advantage of the expertise of local people who would take us for classes, filling in the gaps in her knowledge of particular subject areas. Lucy Rees, with a biology doctorate, took us for biology lessons, which were often spent wading through the river catching fish in nets and overturning rocks to identify various species of water life. My mother taught us French and with a local carpenter we built a full-size Navaho Indian canoe. Local sculpture Michael Watts spent several weeks with us and together we carved the history of Croesor, with chisels and hammers, on to several huge slate slabs which today stand at the centre of the village, like a miniature Stone Henge. On a particularly cold winter's day we made an igloo around the school climbing frame large enough to house all of the 'big' class. The strict health and safety regulations enforced in today's schools would have made these projects, through which we gained an incredible range of skills, impossible.

My fellow pupils at Ysgol Croesor were like my extended family. Brothers and sisters who were still too young to attend would come and pose for school photos and make up the numbers. So familiar were they with the school, its staff and its pupils, that they longed for

the day that they could join us, and on that day they would walk through the school gates with the most natural ease and confidence.

As there were so few of us in class Mrs Morgan, the infant's teachers, and later the wonderful headmaster Mr Robinson, could give each pupil a huge amount of individual attention and encouragement. They had the time to offer one-to-one support and understood our strengths and weakness. Our talents were praised and we were made to feel exceptional and unique. Our poems, stories and paintings were sent off to publishers and national competitions, of which we won quite a few. The entire school spent several months working on a project for a national competition documenting the life of an oak tree; we came first and won hundreds of pounds for the school.

However, having such flexibility in our schooling and only two teachers also had its share of disadvantages. Although the school made use of the talents and expertise of the local community, we inevitably shared the weaknesses of our teachers in certain subject areas. Ysgol Croesor pupils were never strong at maths or spelling and some of us struggled in these areas at secondary school level.

Going to secondary school was a huge shock. Wrenched out of the familial surroundings of Ysgol Croesor into a school with five hundred children was confusing and overwhelming. Suddenly you were insignificant and worse still, Ysgol Croesor children tended to stand out in a crowd. There were numerous reasons for why we didn't fit in. As country kids we had spent most of childhoods in anoraks and wellies; we were seriously lacking in fashion sense and style. We had grown up surrounded by woods and fields and knew little about the dynamics of teenage town life; hanging out at the bus stop or Spar shop, smoking fags and snogging were all pretty alien to us. Yet although many of us were teased, we remained outspoken and unashamed of our differences. Besides, after the first few years at secondary school pupils get bored of the 'cool' kids and being a little different becomes an advantage.

Today Ysgol Croesor has more pupils and enjoys an excellent reputation. Unfortunately it is still battling against closure. I remember there always being talk of closure during my primary school years. It seemed like an impossible and distant threat that I could never fully comprehend.

There are no shops in Croesor village or town hall; if Ysgol Croesor was closed it would rip the heart out of a small and fragile community. I sincerely hope that one day I have the opportunity to send my own children to a small school. Pupils lucky enough to attend schools like Ysgol Croesor receive the attention and encouragement they need to grow up with pride and confidence.

7.

Name: Melangell Dolma, Former Pupil
Date: 15/09/08
Format: E-mail
Language of response: Welsh
Response:

Dear Iwan Roberts,

I write to you as a former-pupil at Ysgol Croesor to express my feelings about the intended closure of the school. I am currently in my second year at Pwllheli college studying A-level subjects.

I recall my time at the school as a period of enjoyment and a great deal of pleasure where I received education of the highest standard in a friendly and Welsh environment, where I met most of my closest friends and where I learnt to communicate with, appreciate and respect others around me.

One thing in particular which made my experience at Ysgol Croesor so valuable were the annual shows that we as a school produced every Christmas where I acted from my first year there when I was four years old. I have since developed so much passion towards acting and performing and that early experience certainly made me want to continue to participate in the world of drama. In addition, we as pupils were involved in the entire process of creating the show from the outset and start to gather ideas and write the script up to creating the set and painting the back drop which was one of the aspects to which we all greatly looked forward. These annual shows also attracted a wide audience which represented an excellent method of bringing the entire community together to enjoy and school events was always an excellent focal point for the whole village.

I am certain that the early education that I received at Ysgol Croesor has provided me with firm foundations for the rest of my life and has set me in the right direction from the outset. I am of the view that the entire community would lose out if the school closed and would have a major impact on life within the small village. The experience I gained at Ysgol Croesor is one that I would never exchange and one that the area's local children will hopefully enjoy for years to come.

Yours sincerely,

Melangell Dolma

8.

Name: Seran Dolma, Former Pupil
Date: 14/09/08
Format: E-mail
Language of response: Welsh
Response:

Dear Mr Roberts,

I write to you as a former-pupil at ysgol Croesor, to ask you what you can do to prevent this excellent school from closing its doors to the area's children.

Ysgol Croesor is a small, sustainable school with a track-record of providing excellent and creative education. It provides the focal point for the village and is a source of considerable pride in the area, and its closure would be a sad loss to the area's closely knit community.

Thank you,

Seran Dolma.

9(b).

Name: Siân Cwper, Parent

Date: 15/09/08

Format: E-mail

Language of response: Welsh

Response:

Dear Iwan Roberts,

Although in my governor's role, I have objected to the school's closure, I think that I forgot to voice a personal objection.

My two daughters have attended Ysgol Croesor, and have benefited a great deal from the experience. They have achieved enormous academic success. The eldest has gained a first class honours degree and MSc with honours, and the other has gained an A or A* in every GCSE subject, and an A in her four AS subjects this year. She was head pupil Ysgol Ardudwy.

I think that if you conducted a study of the achievements of former pupils at Ysgol Croesor, you would find that their academic performance substantially exceeds the national average. And that is a school's purpose. They are also confident, responsible, with close ties and close to their community. What more is required?

Please forgive me if I am reiterating most of what I have already told you.

Yours sincerely,

Siân Cwper.

9(b).

Name: Siân Cwper, Chairperson of Ysgol Croesor Governors

Date: 07/07/08

Format: E-mail

Language of response: Welsh

NOTE: This letter was received through the school in the statutory meeting with governors at Ysgol Croesor on 07/07/08.

Response:

Dear everyone,

I apologise that I cannot be present at this important meeting regarding the future of Ysgol Croesor, but a memorial service has been arranged for today in memory of my mother, for some months.

Since last September 11 pupils left Ysgol Croesor to go to other primary schools. This has happened because Gwynedd Council has caused uncertainty and great concern for parents and children with constant talk of possible school closure.

Only one of the 11 has moved to neighbouring Ysgol Y Garreg, because of the uncertainty that has been caused for the future of that school too.

In my opinion as chair of governors for Ysgol Croesor, the school is in an ideal position for Foundation Phase.

The building is in good condition, it has a new roof, floors, extension, including a comfortable office, store room and lobby. There are new toilets in the school, one of them for disabled persons. The entrance has also been adapted for disabled access. We have an excellent playing field. Canolfan Bryn Gelynnen has recently opened, and there is a hall available for the school children. The school is rich in resources, and the present staff are very careful of the school and ethos.

Croesor Chapel remains open, and the children hold services there for the public.

Many children were born here recently, and their parents are eager to be able to walk them to school and for them to attend school in the village for them to be part of the village.

As our late chairman Merfyn Williams said – it's important to keep the school open, it's the heart of the village and it is nice to hear the sound of children playing in the yard.

If the school closes, it will be the end. There will be no re-opening. (carrying children under 5 years old in a school bus or taxi is not allowed).

But if the school is kept open there is a strong hope the school will thrive as a happy focus to the village and local community, as there was before this unnecessary and cruel attack.

Yours faithfully

Sian Cwper

9(c).

Name: Siân Cwper, Ysgol Croesor Governing Body

Date: 16/07/08

Format: E-mail

Language of response: Welsh

Response:

In our Governors Meeting, held today, the following proposal was unanimously passed;

'We, as Governors, don't believe that the future of Ysgol Croesor should be decided in void, and rather jointly with Ysgol y Garreg, and rather than close the school in August 2009, the future of the school should be part of the ongoing review of all the schools in the county.'

The 4 governors who could not be present also agree with the proposal.

Yours faithfully, Siân Cwper, Chairperson

12.

Name: Siân Cwper, Ysgol Croesor Governing Body

Date: 11/09/08

Format: E-mail

Language of response: Welsh

NOTE: This response refers to the Welsh Language Society's response (No. 13 below)

Response:

Dear Iwan Roberts, just a word to say that we, as governors, agree with what Ffred Francis says. Yours faithfully, Siân Cwper (chairperson)

10.

Name: Ffred Ffrancis, Cymdeithas yr Iaith (Welsh Language Society)
Date: 03/09/08
Format: E-mail
Language of response: Welsh
Response:

Dear friends

Could you please convey the following to the relevant Education Officers as the Welsh Language Society's formal objection to the intention to close Ysgol Croesor. We gather that the statutory consultation period ends at the end of this week, and we wish to declare our support for the school governors decision that the school's future should be considered at the same time as that of the neighbouring schools with whom Croesor co-operate. These are the grounds for our objections -

1. A WHOLLY INADEQUATE CONSULTATION PROCESS

1(1) It was a major mistake for the Council to rush to consult on the future of Ysgol Croesor during the last three weeks of term and during the summer holidays. The fairness of the entire Council agenda is judged according to the fairness of the initial steps. It could be argued that it was fair to proceed with agreement in the case of Rhydyclafdy, but the situation is different at Croesor. We accept that the Council has every reasonable right to consider the future of Ysgol Croesor considering the low pupil numbers but - insisting on proceeding urgently to consider the school on its own, that could be done during the autumn term following thorough preparation and having given parents and governors a fair opportunity.

1(2) A clear indication of the unfair rush and lack of preparation was that the formal consultation meeting could not be organized at a time when the chair of governors could attend. It was decided at the Council meeting held on June 19th to commence a consultation process a month before the end of term. We do not believe that the Council fully appreciates that there is a basic difference between the level of necessary preparations for an informal public meeting on the one hand (of which the Council has organized dozens) and a statutory consultation meeting on the other. In this instance, the Council has a statutory duty to prepare detailed papers and provide an opportunity for everybody to respond. Proceeding to organize the only statutory consultation meeting in the chair of governors' absence – due to lack of time to make proper arrangements – more or less invalidates the process.

1(3) It is true that the chair was notified of the meeting, and had explained that an important family commitment prevented her from attending, and the chair read out a letter at the meeting. But not even the chair of governors had received a copy beforehand of the Council's consultation document on the school's future, and therefore it was not possible to deal with the matters raised before hand in your letter or question officers on the points raised at the meeting.

1(4) Parents and the local community were expected to send in responses afterwards – but during the summer holidays!

1(5) No effort was made to seek broader responses e.g. the Welsh Language Society has clearly expressed its interest in the county strategy as well as in the fate of this particular school by holding a public meeting at the school this year, but the Association did not receive any invitation to respond.

1(6) No effort was made to invite general comments from the public either, and this is surprising considering the amount of public interest in the strategy and considering that this was the initial local test as regards changes. This evening (Wednesday evening 3rd September), I have examined the Council web-site to try and obtain a copy of the document and information on this statutory consultation process. I turned to the section "Education and Learning">Schools>Schools Re-organisation>Consultation and again the "most recent" section and the explanation on the "Democratic Process" and "2008 consultation." It is stated that one section was up-dated on 29/5/08 and that the aim was for the Scrutiny Committee to discuss the issue on 5th June (!) and the up-dated section on 05/06/08 stated that the full Council would discuss the matter on 19 June! The latest section on "Consultation" was up-dated on 31/03/08 and the Section on "The Democratic Process" concludes with a report about the Education Scrutiny Committee on 5th June. Using the Council's internal search engine to look for "Ysgol Croesor", the only reference is to a general paper on Re-organisation that expired on 5th June. The Council has not only failed to obtain public responses for their scheme for Ysgol Croesor, but I cannot find any reference to the fact that there is a statutory consultation period or a copy of the document on which this process is based. It is quite possible that it will be stated that it is difficult for officers to up-date public information during the summer holidays. If so, WHY WAS IT DEEMED ACCEPTABLE TO EXPECT PARENTS, GOVERNORS AND THE PUBLIC TO PARTICIPATE IN THE PROCESS DURING THE SUMMER HOLIDAYS? Even the Welsh Language Society were unable to contact the school during the summer holidays to discuss developments.

2. APPROACHES OTHER THAN SCHOOL CLOSURE WERE NOT CONSIDERED

2(1) The Council has presented a short-sighted case for closing the school - based on the existing situation rather than how it could be. There is no meaningful discussion and solutions other than closing the school.

2(2) It is true that there has been a considerable reduction in numbers, but this is mainly due to future uncertainty. The school was first threatened with closure in the fifties. Whilst other schools hold centenary celebrations, Croesor can celebrate fifty years of a fight to save it from closure! Over the years, there has been a rise and reduction in numbers – very often in response to public indications given on the school's future e.g. an increase in the 80's kept the school open. The Council should not disregard such a future possibility.

2(3) The school has co-operated with and shared headship with Ysgol Y Garreg, Llanfrothen. Indeed, the Council's consultation document published in November 2007 identified Croesor, Llanfrothen and Penrhyn as an educational group and that solutions for the entire group should be considered.

2(4) For instance, we propose the possibility of federalizing the three schools (based on the pattern of Ysgol Carreg Hirfaen) with K.S.1 children of Llanfrothen and Croesor being taught on one site, and K.S.2 pupils on the other site with one site opening and closing 10 minutes before the other to enable parents to drop off and collect children from both sites. We do not argue that this necessarily the best solution in this case – we only offer an example of all possibilities for consideration. The Council has not held such a study and therefore the consultation process cannot be considered as valid in terms of contents, or time-table.

2(5) We therefore agree with the governors of Ysgol Croesor that the best solution would be that the Council recognizes that this rushed effort towards consultation has been a failure and that officers should propose to the full Council that they intend to withdraw their intention to close the school and instead consider the future of Ysgol Croesor at the same

time as the future of other schools in the area is under consideration. In the meantime, the Council should promote all possible co-operation between the schools so as to provide pupils with the most wide-ranging educational experiences.

3. THE SCHOOL'S IMPORTANCE TO THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

2(1) Ysgol Croesor is a Welsh School at the heart of the community. There is every visible sign of the Welsh language within the building and every Welsh medium communication indicates how the entire community could be in the future and a sign of hope for the future.

2(2) Other developments in the village clearly show that Croesor is not a community that has lost the will to live. The school should be developed to promote the community's development more broadly.

Yours sincerely

Ffred Ffransis
Welsh Language Society