

**Objections to the Statutory Notices on the Proposal to Close the Schools of Bala Town and Establish a Voluntary Controlled Welsh Medium 3-19 Learning Campus (VC, Church in Wales), on the Existing Site of Ysgol Y Berwyn to open in September 2018**

218 objections were received and they were arranged under the following headings:

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|-----------------------|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Church Status      | 4. Concern over losing the investment               | 7. The Statutory Process |
| 2. The Welsh Language | 5. Ysgol Y Berwyn Governors' Suggestion of a Review | 8. General               |
| 3. Land Ownership     | 6. 3-19 Model                                       |                          |

Comments Code	Comments	Number of objections including the comments	Gwynedd Council's Response
<b>1</b>	<b>Voluntary Controlled Status (VC – Church in Wales)</b>		
1.1	<p><b>OBJECTIONS CARD</b></p> <p>I am in favour of closing the schools in order to establish a lifelong learning school in Bala. I am against the proposal to designate a (VC) church status for the proposed school.</p> <p>I am in favour of a community school status that will not formally affiliate the school with any specific religious body.</p>	154	<p>Gwynedd Council notes this comment and the objection to designate a Voluntary Controlled (VC) Church status for the 3-19 Learning Campus.</p> <p>See Gwynedd Council's response to the comments in paragraph 1.2-1.26 below.</p>
1.2	<p>I was astonished and concerned when I heard about the County Council's proposal to submit an education plan which would mean that all secondary and primary education in the Bala area would be provided in a church school! In Bala of all places, the breeding-ground of independence and Methodism and a town bordering on the area where the tithe trouble occurred. It is an entirely incomprehensible situation; it seems that the council and the church are sticking two fingers up at the people of Bala and the area. There is no justification for the school to be a church school. You have enraged people with the plan to such an extent that the council and the church's reputation will suffer for generations.</p>	1	<p>The need to determine the school's legal status is a matter that has received detailed consideration. This is a legal requirement and a period of pre-consultation must be held with the Church in Wales as part of the reorganisation process.</p> <p>Following initial consideration by the Cabinet in February 2015, it was decided to consult on imposing a Voluntary Controlled (VC) status on the Learning Campus.</p> <p>A period of statutory consultation was held between 13 March and 28 April 2015 with an open day in Ysgol Y Berwyn on 26 March 2015.</p>
1.3	<p>It is the council's responsibility to provide services and education that are acceptable to the majority of the local population. Nobody can assume that you are fulfilling this in this respect. I ask the council to ensure that the new school is released from the shackles of the church as soon as</p>	1	<p>Section 6 of the consultation document notes the factors and logic for imposing a Voluntary Controlled (VC) status on the Campus. The following were among the factors for imposing a Voluntary Controlled status on the Campus:</p>

	possible.			
1.4	I feel particularly disappointed that Gwynedd Council's Cabinet has recommended this status for the new school, rather than allowing it the freedom and right to reflect the character of the area. I fully oppose the possibility of placing a Church status on the education of children in Bala and Penllyn.	1		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>the joint provision that currently exists in the catchment area and the fact that there is already VA provision in the area</li> <li>the viewpoint of the Church following the pre-consultation</li> <li>similarity of community and Voluntary Controlled (VC) categories</li> <li>the opinion that the quality of education and resources is the most important factor in a school according to the initial assessment that was undertaken</li> <li>the strategic decision to ensure a continued choice of provision within a wider area in the south of the County</li> </ul> <p>In accordance with the Schools Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2013, schools are defined as:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Community</li> <li>Voluntary Controlled (VC) with a religious designation (Church in Wales)</li> <li>Voluntary Aided (VA) with a religious designation (Church in Wales)</li> </ul>
1.5	We are members of Capel Tegid and the children attend the Sunday School on a regular basis. We do not wish for the children to attend a church school. The area has a Welsh history and tradition which includes chapelry. We do not feel that the church can easily demand this.	1		
1.6	As the Governing Body of Ysgol Bro Tryweryn, we would like to express our support to establishing the Lifelong Learning School in the Berwyn catchment area and we welcome the long awaited investment in the area's education. We are completely unanimous as a Body that the proposed school should remain a community school as the existing secondary school and this school. That is, community provision as it stands in the area's current situation should be continued.	1		
1.7	As already expressed, the whole area is eagerly supportive of the proposed plans for the Berwyn campus to be realised. The structure of the site is in real need of investment and Ysgol Y Berwyn as an educational establishment needs to be re-established within its traditional boundaries. However, some concerns were recently raised about the new school, namely:- <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Ysgol Beuno Sant is the only Church school in Penllyn and it has a small number of pupils. Again, the new secondary school, which will include secondary ages, will be a Church School.</li> <li>This eliminates the choice and forces all children and young people in Bala and Penllyn to receive education in an establishment which has an Anglican focus and in an area that has a strong nonconformist tradition.</li> <li>Opening a new lifelong school in an area where all Churches in the catchment area, with the exception of the church in the town of Bala itself, were closed is strange.</li> </ul>	1		
1.8	It is unwise for an educational establishment to be connected to any religious faction as education should be open and available on the same terms to everybody./ I strongly object designating Church status on Ysgol	3		

This table indicates the main differences between the 3 categories.

	Community Category	Church Category (Voluntary Controlled (VC) School)	Church Category (Voluntary Aided (VA) School)
<b>Ownership of school land and buildings</b>	Local Authority	The Church owns the school building and the Local Authority owns the playing fields	The Church owns the school building and the Local Authority owns the playing fields
<b>Responsibility for funding</b>	Local Authority	Local Authority	Local Authority funds the running costs. 85% grant towards capital works, the Church funds the rest.
<b>Responsibility for employing and appointing staff</b>	Local Authority	Local Authority	The Church
<b>School Admissions Policy</b>	Local Authority	Local Authority	Governing Body
<b>Constitution of the Governing Body</b>	Representatives on behalf of Parents, Education Authority, Teachers, Staff,	Church governors in the minority	Church governors in the majority

	Y Berwyn. I strongly believe that it should be a community school. I do not believe that religion and education should be mixed./ In this current age, religion and education should not be mixed, and young people should have freedom of thought to decide for themselves whether or not they wish to follow a religious creed or not.			Community and Community Council		
1.9	The Governing Body of Ysgol Y Berwyn fully supports the proposal of Gwynedd County Council's Cabinet to reorganise education in the Berwyn catchment area and open a new lifelong learning school on 1 September 2018. But we fiercely object to the clause in the proposal stating that it will be a school with Church status (voluntary controlled). Following several meetings with County officers it was made clear to us that it is not possible to change the wording of the proposal without having to go through another consultation on a new proposal. The officers are of the opinion that there is no time to do this and the entire plan and associated £10 million investment would be at risk which in turn would raise a question about the future of Ysgol Y Berwyn sixth form, as well as the future of Gwynedd primary schools outside of Bala.	1		<b>Collective worship</b>	Satisfy legislative requirements for daily collective worship. The act of worship wholly or mainly of Christian nature.	Satisfy legislative requirements for daily collective worship. The act of worship wholly or mainly of Christian nature.
				<b>Curriculum and Religious Education</b>	Religious Education is a field within the school curriculum.  Religious Education syllabus agreed locally through SACRE.	Christian values and ethics will be an important part of the school's operation but will depend to a vast degree on the leadership of the Head teacher and Governors. Religious Education taught according to the syllabus agreed locally through SACRE.
				<b>Inspections</b>	Inspection from Estyn only.	Inspection from Estyn. Governing Body responsible for inspecting the religious character and worship practices of the school.
1.10	It seems as though changing to be a lifelong school is logical because of the evolutionary nature of education and it involves saving money in the field of education. However, changing from a community school to a VC Church in Wales school is more difficult to comprehend. If there is only one small Church school in Bala (a school that is apparently facing a reduction in numbers), why is it logical or rational to merge a successful secondary school, a primary school, nursery and 11+ provision and three successful primary schools that are not Church schools under the Church in Wales wing. Let alone the 18+ provision onwards.	1	<p>The Council and the Church in Wales are joint education providers in the Berwyn catchment area. Ysgol Beuno Sant is a Voluntary Aided (VA) School with a religious character (Church in Wales). This means that the Church has specific rights through the VA status, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Church has a majority on the Governing Body</li> <li>• the Church controls admissions</li> <li>• the Church is responsible for appointing staff</li> <li>• the school is responsible for Religious Education of denominational character. Christian values and ethics will infiltrate the school's operation and ethos and will be an important part of school life.</li> </ul> <p>The above would not be relevant to the Voluntary Controlled VC category.</p> <p>In comparison – the Voluntary Controlled VC status is very similar to the Community status with some variations:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• In a Voluntary Controlled VC School, the Church will have representation</li> </ul>			
1.11	I felt astonished and disappointed when I understood that the intention is to create a 'church' school. This would cause divisions whilst a non-denominational community school would unify the area. I was part of the discussions the last time (as a governor of Ysgol Bro Tegid) and I believe that all of the delay damages education in Penllyn but I am sure that it is possible to solve difficulties and to get the best answer for the area's youth.	1				
1.12	I am amazed that you and the Council are deciding to have a Church School as the only school in Bala and also for 11+ children in the parish of Penllyn. Every school should be free from every religious denomination	1				

	and therefore the Church in Wales should not be allowed to take the reins and force children in the area to receive education under its influence.		<p>on the Governing Body but this representation would be in the minority. At the moment, it is uncertain what size the Governing Body would be, but it is likely that it would have either 18 or 21 members and that the Church would have 4 out of 18 or 5 out of 21.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There would be a technical legal exercise of a conditional land transfer to the Church. Should the Church's educational provision terminate on the site the land will be returned to the ownership of Gwynedd Council.</li> </ul> <p>Otherwise – the following is true for both categories (Community and Voluntary Controlled VC):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the Council would control school admissions</li> <li>• the Council and governors would be responsible for appointing staff</li> <li>• in terms of collective worship, legislative requirements for daily collective worship will need to be met. Individuals have the right to be exempted from collective worship activities or religious education lesson the Head teacher and Management Team would be responsible for the day-to-day running of the school.</li> </ul> <p>Following the consultation period, meetings were held with representatives of the Church in Wales and it was agreed to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduce the representation of the Church on the Governing Body to two seats out of four and offer the other two seats to other denominations to reflect the area's character and traditions.</li> <li>• The Church is completely open to supporting any name that the Shadow Governing Body gives the Campus.</li> <li>• The Church is completely supportive to the development of the Campus as an establishment that will strengthen the Welsh language.</li> </ul> <p>Gwynedd Council notes the comments about Penllyn's dissenting and historical tradition. In response to these concerns, and following the statutory consultation period, the Church has noted that they are fully aware of the area's history and respect it. They are eager to ensure that the Campus reflects the area's history and traditions, and as noted above, following the statutory consultation period, they have proposed that a proportion of Governing Body representation comes from the dissenting tradition.</p>
1.13	I cannot comprehend how the Cabinet can decide that all Bala and Penllyn parents must send their children to a (VC) Church School from September 2018 onwards. Common sense shows that this is totally unfair. Indeed, forcing people to accept the beliefs of a single denomination alone is an unjust tyranny. This is a clear echo of the past prior to our democratic modern period today. I appeal to you to reconsider the situation without delay. Local opinion is that a <b>Community School</b> should be established which should have a non-denominational Christian ethos in all its activities.	1	
1.14	I am a parent of a child in Ysgol Y Berwyn and a member of staff at Ysgol OM Edwards. I am in favour of closing schools in the town of Bala and establishing a Lifelong School in Bala. I <b>STRONGLY OBJECT</b> to the proposal to impose a church status on the proposed school. I am in favour of a community school status that will not formally affiliate the school with any specific religious body.	1	
1.15	It is shameful that you are considering this, when the church at the beginning of the process had agreed to drop Ysgol Beuno Sant - should there be any mention of objection; this again demonstrates the power of the church against the wishes of local people	1	
1.16	I have previously drawn your attention to your underhand decision to designate the huge building as a Church School. The State Church has had very little influence on the Bala and Penllyn catchment area. It has been a nonconformist area for well over two centuries and the stalwarts of those denominations lived and worked hard here in order to cultivate and improve the residents' way of life here and beyond. By means of your deplorable decision, you are throwing all of this to the bottom of the waste basket of our area's history. Please open your eyes, read the history books and learn about what we are proud of here in Penllyn.	1	
1.17	You are taking for granted that everyone wants an ecclesiastical education. This is not true. Everyone has the right as individuals to follow religious beliefs or not, and therefore, it is not right that you are generalising future families/pupils.	1	
1.18	I find it difficult to believe that you are serious about imposing a church	1	

	status on Bala's new lifelong school. Only a small percentage of the community are members of the church and I believe that the majority of pupils, parents and residents in the area do not wish for the school to be designated a denominational status of any kind. I really cannot understand your decision to follow this path, but the truth will come out in time.		Similarly, the comments that education and religion should not be mixed have been noted, and they respond by stating that imposing a Voluntary Controlled status on the Campus would not give the Church in Wales control of the Campus. The Campus would be managed by the head teacher and the Governing Body in collaboration with Gwynedd Council.
1.19	I understand that the area's governing bodies were not supportive and I am yet to hear anyone speaking in favour of a Church status for the school.	1	Should the Cabinet decide that it wants to change the legal category, the following should be made.
1.20	If you proceed with this madness, a community's fury will demand answers and local and county councillors will have very complex questions to answer, let alone County Council officers who will be accountable for their decisions.	1	As part of the weighing up process, the Cabinet would need to assess the proposed model. This would be required in terms of a statutory arrangement to develop schools organisation proposals, but also, it would be required to do this in terms of the process to develop the business case which leads to a contribution from the Government towards the £10.27m required for the development. There are some models that currently cannot be achieved, for example - federalising the whole area because of the proposal to designate two different categories for the area. Schools from different categories cannot be federalised.
1.21	We will not be satisfied as a community until we understand exactly what is going on here, please wise up to this before it goes too far.	1	
1.22	I write to object to the Council's proposal to impose a VC church status on the proposed new school in the Berwyn catchment area. I warmly welcome the intention to create a lifelong school in the catchment area, as there is a genuine need to move quickly to secure quality educational resources in the area. However, it is a great disappointment that the diocese has pressured the Council into creating a church school, it is an even greater disappointment to understand that the Council has succumbed to such pressure. If this school opens under church control, no matter how limited that control is, it will be a shameful reflection of a lack of transparency in the County's scrutiny process.	1	In terms of the process afterwards - a second process of pre-consultation would have to be held with the Church, and then report back to the Cabinet on the Church's response to any new proposal. The Cabinet would then need to consider holding a further public consultation, before receiving a further report to consider this consultation to release a statutory notice. This would be a time slippage of approximately 10 months from the point where we are now.
1.23	I strongly believe that Bala needs to improve its education provision, and I do not want to prevent this. However, I am not of the opinion that our town needs a school that is based on religion. Bala has an excellent community that would benefit from a community school that would introduce our children to everything in life.	1	After statutory notices are issued - there would be a further report for the Cabinet before there would be a chance for the proposal to be referred to the Government for a decision. The Church has a specific right to refer proposals to the Government, and during the process they have noted that they would do this should they disagree with any recommended proposal. This referral would mean approximately 6/7 months of consideration by the Government. At the end of all this, the Minister can accept or refuse the proposal. Should the Minister refuse the proposal, the process of developing the proposal from the 1.24 start would then have to begin again and possibly the process of applying for funding from the Government. It is also possible for the proposal to become
1.24	As a member of the Berwyn governing body, the intention did not come to our attention until things went too far. Why give Church status to a school that provides education to the community of Berwyn?	1	

		<p>subject to a Judicial Review.</p> <p>Changing direction would mean that the Learning Campus will not open until at least September 2019.</p> <p>Should the Cabinet decide not to implement the Statutory Notice, the following will need to be considered:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>- A slippage in the timetable</li><li>- The need to consider other new models</li><li>- Impact of the Church's referral</li><li>- Risk of the Government refusing the proposal</li><li>- Risk of judicial review</li></ul> <p>It is acknowledged that a number of strong objections have been received during the objection period and that the decision in this matter is not easy.</p> <p>However, given the above and all factors which include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• the logic for imposing a Voluntary Controlled VC status on the Campus</li><li>• that the Church's number of designated governors on the Governing Body will be in the minority</li><li>• the fact that there is no new information that undermines the original decision to consult on the Voluntary Controlled VC status</li><li>• the concessions made by the Church in Wales</li></ul> <p>Gwynedd Council continues to be of the opinion that imposing a Voluntary Controlled (VC) status on the Campus is appropriate.</p>
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1.25	I cannot for the life of me understand why Gwynedd Council's Cabinet is thinking of designating a church status for the new school in Bala. The church has been closed for many years here in the village of Llanfor. The Church in Wales also owned the Village Hall. This was the meeting place for our community. At the turn of this century, the Church in Wales decided to sell the Hall and the Hall House. The community here in Llanfor has been ruined; we have nowhere to convene. And now here comes Gwynedd Council thinking of giving the new school a Church Status; to this establishment which considered money to be more important than rural Wales and its community. Remember our rich historic heritage.	2	<p>We note the comments – Gwynedd Council's Cabinet will need to consider all the comments received during the period for objecting to the Statutory Notice before deciding whether or not to implement the Notice.</p> <p>The reasoning for imposing a Voluntary Controlled status on the Campus is noted above.</p>
1.26	Should we continue with the proposed plan of a Lifelong School, the Church in Wales would have the right to appoint a proportion of the Governors (albeit not a majority). I doubt if this would be wise as the Estyn report on ysgol Beuno Sant (April 2014) notes the following: <i>Over a period of time, the governing body has not contributed effectively enough to determining the strategic direction of the school's work.</i> It was the Church in Wales that appointed the Governing Body of Ysgol Beuno Sant, and I ask would the governors appointed by the Church in Wales have a better understanding of their role in "determining the strategic direction of the work" of the Lifelong School? I now understand that the Church in Wales is willing enough to set aside its right to elect the number it would have the right to elect and is prepared to offer a seat to two from other denominations. Such insolence! How many other denominations does the Church in Wales assume there are in Penllyn? And in any case, my reason for objecting has nothing to do with my denomination not being represented, rather it is because the Dissenting Denominations in Wales have never called for schools with denomination status – despite Ieuan Gwynedd publishing essays on the matter once.	1	<p>It must be acknowledged that the Estyn Report on Ysgol Beuno Sant (April 2014) noted weaknesses in relation to the governing body of Ysgol Beuno Sant.</p> <p>Ysgol Beuno Sant is a Voluntary Aided School (VA), therefore the Church Governors are in the majority. It is intended to impose a Voluntary Controlled (VC) status on the Campus. Therefore the Church Governors will be in the minority on the Campus' Governing Body.</p> <p>The fact that Ysgol Beuno Sant has received a poor inspection from Estyn relatively recently does not set a precedent that would mean that the 3-19 Campus with a Voluntary Controlled status would perform badly educationally. A school is run and led by the Head teacher and the Governing Body in collaboration with the Council, be it a community status or a Voluntary Controlled (VC) school.</p> <p>Gwynedd Council's intention in reorganising the education provision in Bala is to ensure consistency and improvement in the quality of education. The school's leadership and management structure will be a strong tool to enable this.</p> <p>There is evidence for and against the quality of education in Church schools, and often numerous factors influence the quality of education.</p>
1.27	If it is mandatory to have a Church School, the Church should maintain it and all the spending on teachers' salaries and maintenance should come from the Church's treasure ship without assistance from Gwynedd	1	The arrangements for funding Church schools are determined by statute. It is not legally possible to have a Church Voluntary Controlled (VC) education provision where the responsibility for spending on teacher salaries and maintenance lies

	Council.		<p>with the Church.</p> <p>In the case of a Voluntary Aided school, there would be a capital grant of 85% of the capital costs, payable by Welsh Government, and the Church would pay the remainder. The Local Authority would continue paying the running costs.</p>
1.28	<p>For me, the idea is foolish and the Authority will lose an opportunity to create a non-denominational school that will satisfy the wishes of every individual. More than anything, the proposal will create an adverse environment at the beginning of what could be a new and adventurous phase history of education in Penllyn. I will not go into the feeling of hatred that existed towards the Church's uniform attitude in the past, feelings that continue to this day, rather, I appeal to the Authority to use common sense and to create a system it can be proud of for years to come.</p>	1	<p>Gwynedd Council acknowledges that strong feelings have been expressed in terms of the Campus' Church status. However, the reasoning for imposing a Voluntary Controlled status on the Campus is noted in 1.2 above.</p> <p>The Council is confident that the local community will come together and support the Campus as it is established, and welcome the £10.27m investment in the Campus, thus ensuring educational standards of the 21st Century, and resources for the use of the Community.</p>
1.29	<p>We have completed a questionnaire about this before and are disappointed that there was no reference to the feelings of local people in the consultation document. It is known that the Church has changed its mind and agreed previously to drop the status. The numbers attending Ysgol Bro Tegid are increasing at the moment, and the numbers attending Ysgol Beuno Sant are dwindling. It does not make sense that such a minority will have such influence at the new school.</p>	1	<p>Paragraph 6.1 of the consultation document notes that Gwynedd Council has undertaken an assessment of the need for education from different categories in the Berwyn catchment area. This was done by distributing the questionnaire to the parents of pupils at each of the six schools in the Berwyn catchment area, and 160 questionnaires were received.</p> <p>The main conclusion of the assessment was that the quality of education was the most important factor for parents in choosing a school for their child – with 79% of the responders saying that this was the most important factor at a school.</p>
1.30	<p>I strongly support a 3-19 school in Bala, but I am very concerned that it will be a Voluntary Controlled School (Church in Wales). I write to strongly object to the decision and I do not wish for my child's education to have a strong Christian and discriminatory ethos as part of the school's curriculum or as part of its pastoral care of pupils, staff and families", "within a context of a strong commitment to be a Christian community that discriminates".</p> <p>Additionally, I am not supportive of the fact that the governing bodies of such schools include governors that have been nominated by the Church. Although the Local Authority, parents and staff would be able to nominate governors, I feel that this would still lead to unfair bias in favour of the church when it came to decision making.</p>	1	<p>The implications of a Voluntary Aided, (VA), status is significantly more on the ethos and nature of a school, than in a Voluntary Controlled, (VC), school.</p> <p>It will be the Head teacher and the Governing Body who will be primarily responsible for developing the ethos and nature of the Learning Campus, and it should be noted that the Church Governors will be in the minority in a Voluntary Controlled, (VC), school.</p> <p>The Church in Wales have affirmed their desire and intention to work closely with the community in order to show that the intention is to co-operate to establish a Welsh Medium Christian School which serves the whole community and provides a quality education to all.</p>



			The number of Church Governors on the Governing Body of a Church school is determined by statute.
1.31	I recently read in the paper that Dr Andrew John, the Bishop of Bangor has confirmed a decline in Church membership and that the Church must aim towards the young. What is this apart from a relationship with a school to push its creed onto the children? Denominational religious schools should certainly be totally separate. I beg you to rethink and overturn the plan for the new school in Bala.	2	The comment is noted, but it must be borne in mind that current legislation includes Church schools in the education system.
1.32	We need the best education and opportunities for the area's children, and the community ethos of the rural schools, whose pupils will attend Ysgol Y Berwyn at 11 years old must also be considered. The parents of the area have chosen not to send their children to Ysgol Beuno Sant. They therefore need the option to choose not to send their children to a secondary school with a church status. Consideration should be given to the majority's wishes.	1	Before undertaking a statutory consultation on the matter, the Council held an assessment of the need for education from different categories in the Berwyn catchment area. This was done by distributing questionnaires to the parents of pupils at each of the 6 schools in the catchment area, and 160 questionnaires were received in response.  The main conclusion of the assessment was that the quality of education was the most important factor for parents in choosing a school for their child – with 79% of the responders saying that this was the most important factor at a school.
1.33	My children currently attend a community primary school in the Penllyn area, when they move to secondary school I wish for them to continue to receive their education in a community school.	1	Gwynedd Council recognises that the decision to impose a Voluntary Controlled status, (VC), will not please everybody, and that it will not offer the option of a Community category education provision for pupils aged 11-19 in the catchment. Nevertheless, the rural schools in the catchment, Ffridd y Llyn, Bro Tryweryn ac OM Edwards yn parhau i gynnig darpariaeth Gymunedol ar gyfer oedran 3-11
1.34	I wish for my child to have access to community education within a neutral learning environment not restricted to any single type of religion, those who are not religious, or those who do not believe. I believe that a single faith school would undermine the social cohesion that a multi-cultural society needs. Having an impartial option is important and having one school that is based on one belief would reduce the choice. / I am very much in favour of establishing faith schools in large towns and cities where there is sufficient population to make the choice of school a possibility, BUT THE MAIN AND MOST IMPORTANT ISSUE IS – they are in areas where the parents have the CHOICE between sending their children to a church school or to a Council-run school, a choice that would not be open to the people of Bala and Penllyn. / The result of a church status it to take the choice away from parents who wish to send their children to a school with no denomination, as Gwynedd Council does not provide non-denominational provision within reach of Bala.	3	However, the Voluntary Controlled (VC) category is very similar to the Community category, and the need to consider the Church provision in south Meirionnydd, in light of the reorganisation of the nearby Gader catchment area must be borne in mind.  In a rural area such as South Meirionnydd, because of the population and the travelling distances it is not possible to have a provision which offers more than one choice for everyone.
1.35	In Bala town, parents had the choice to send their children to one of two	1	

	primary schools, with only a small percentage of the community now choosing a church education. If the Council's plans go ahead, the parents of secondary school pupils will not have this choice. Everyone will have to send their children to a church school, or arrange for their children to move to another catchment area. This causes sadness and concern for a large number of parents who have already contacted me to voice their concerns.		
1.36	I wish to express my categorical objection to the proposal to make the new school in Bala a Church in Wales / VC school. What right does the Church have to insist upon having a part in the education of our children? This is a secular society and there is no demand at all for the intervention of any religious establishment in our education system. Especially in a rural area where we cannot choose our schools.	3	
1.37	Not only does this impose a voluntary status on a primary school, it also imposes a voluntary status on a school with KS3 and KS4 pupils, pupils, of which some attend Sunday Schools and services at dissenting churches. This is not acceptable at all. Should the plan be given the go ahead, this would be the only Lifelong school in Wales with a voluntary status.	1	
<b>2</b>	<b>The Welsh Language</b>		
2.1	I am very concerned about the implications of changing the school's status from a naturally Welsh speaking school to a Welsh-medium school. In the subject of which I am responsible (Business), a high proportion choose to sit the exam through the medium of English. Forcing pupils to study through the Welsh language only could create difficulties for pupils from mainly English backgrounds, as well as for those who wish to study at Universities in England. More Sixth Form students now choose to study courses at English universities. I feel that the status of a Welsh-medium school could be a threat to several pupils that would be attracted here from the Corwen, Cynwyd areas etc.	1	There is no intention to change the linguistic status of any of the schools in question - Ysgol Bro Tegid, Ysgol Beuno Sant or Ysgol Y Berwyn.  Therefore, the concerns raised in relation to the linguistic status of the Campus are ones which will not be realised.
	I would like to note that creating a Welsh School status in the Bala area, along with the recent trend to enforce 'Welshness' has and will affect people from the Corwen area and beyond. Of course, a lifelong school is needed in the Bala area which should be a naturally Welsh speaking community school.	1	
<b>3</b>	<b>Land Ownership</b>		
3.1	If there is any other consideration that is not known to the public, it	2	There is no legal matter involving land ownership at Ysgol Y Berwyn or Ysgol

	should be made known at once. Ysgol Y Berwyn and Ysgol Beuno Sant are currently on sites that are very close to each other. It was suggested in the press that something wasn't quite right. I wonder whether there is a legal matter involving the land which would mean relinquishing the new school to the supervision of the Church in Wales?		Beuno Sant which means that Gwynedd Council must, (or is pressurised or influenced to), designate a Voluntary Controlled (VC) status for the Campus.  The reasoning for designating a Church status has been noted in Section 6 of the consultation document, and land ownership is not a part of any of those considerations.
<b>4</b>	<b>Concern over losing the investment</b>		
4.1	I would also like to express my concern regarding the funding/grants for this school being held back or even lost. Ysgol Y Berwyn really needs investment, and I would not like for any discussions regarding the school's status to affect plans to open this school in September 2018.	1	The Council agrees that it is necessary to invest in the educational provision in the town of Bala.  The Council will have to consider many factors when deciding on the status of the Campus, and this includes the implications of the Voluntary Controlled status and the proposed timetable.
4.2	I hope that my objection to a church school in terms of status does not mean losing an investment for the Community school in Bala. However, the practical influence of the Church in Wales will be minor, as it will only have two nominated governors. At present, it is important to secure the procurement of the necessary funding to develop a new school. The uncertainty and lack of expenditure over the past years on Ysgol Y Berwyn has definitely negatively impacted the staff's spirit and the quality of the building.	1	
<b>5</b>	<b>Ysgol Y Berwyn Governors' Suggestion of a Review</b>		
5.1	I call on Gwynedd Council to commit to holding a further consultation process with the local community once the new school has been opened, to highlight the Community's desire regarding the school's status - and also to commit to change the status to a Community School if the result of the process shows that this is the Community's wish. Such a consultation should be held as soon as possible and most certainly within the first two years.	1	The Governing Body of Ysgol Y Berwyn suggested that Gwynedd Council review the success of the Campus within two years, of its opening, such a review to include education quality and the legal status Voluntary Controlled, (VC Church in Wales), of the Campus.  It is a policy of Gwynedd Council to undertake a review of any new schools, following re-organisation, and that within a reasonable period of their opening
5.2	The Governing Body of Ysgol Y Berwyn have suggested a compromise, which is that the County, as part of the proposal to re-organise education in the area, binds itself legally (with a time limit of no more than 2 years), to consult with parents, proposed parents and citizens on the Church status of the school, and that they in an objective way measure their opinion. If the majority are in favour of changing the school status to a Community one, then Gwynedd Council will commence the process to ensure that. Without this guarantee, the Governing Body of Ysgol Y Berwyn will not support plans for education in Bala .	1	This is in order to ensure that schools provide quality education, a proficient pupil experience, and operate effectively.  Such a review will be undertaken of the Campus, and if the Campus is designated Voluntary Controlled, (VC), any review will assess this aspect of the educational provision as well.  Gwynedd Council will consider all comments received in this context when making a final decision in relation to the matter, that is to implement the

5.3	I write to you to support the compromise suggested by the Governing Body of Ysgol Y Berwyn, which is that the County, as part of the proposal to re-organise education in the area, binds itself legally (with a time limit of no more than 2 years following the opening of the new school), to consult with parents, proposed parents and citizens on the Church status of the school. I ask you to consider this very carefully in order to gain the support of many of the area's citizens.	1	Statutory Notice
5.4	I ask the Council to ensure that the new school is released from its Church constraints as soon as possible	1	
5.5	The Governing Body of Ysgol Y Berwyn fully support Gwynedd Council's proposal to re-organise education in the Berwyn catchment area and to open a new 3-19 school on 1 September 2018. However, we strongly oppose the clause which states that the school will be one with Church (voluntary controlled) status. Following a number of meetings with County officers, it was made clear to us that it is not possible to change the proposal without conducting a new consultation on a new proposal. It is the opinion of officials that there is no time to do this and that the whole proposal and investment of £10m will be at risk which will once again raise a question on the future of the 6th form at Ysgol Y Berwyn, in addition to the future to the primary schools in Gwynedd outside Bala	1	
5.6	Llanuwchllyn Community Council continue to strongly support the principle of re-organising education and welcome the long-awaited investment in Penllyn; and we do not wish to see any further delay in seeing the proposal coming to fruition. <b>However</b> , we ask for a guarantee that the question of Church status is reviewed within a reasonable time following the opening of the new school – a review which will consult fully with the citizens of Penllyn.	1	
5.7	It is clear from the letters that I have read in the press, that there is considerable concern regarding the future of Ysgol Y Berwyn and its Church status following education re-organisation in the Berwyn catchment area and the opening of a lifelong school in 2018. At this date the site and buildings of Ysgol Y Berwyn will be the property of the Church in Wales, although the public will be responsible for the maintenance and repairing costs. It is the intention of Gwynedd Council if need be following the views after consultation, is to commence on the	1	

	<p>process of changing the Church status during the following two year period.</p> <p>According to the Education Act 2011, it is the responsibility of the Governing Body to make an application to change the school status and not the Council. I wonder whether the new Governing Body of Ysgol Y Berwyn and its percentage of Church members will be happy to do this? If an application is made, the Church in Wales will not easily agree to lose some of its wealth. A number of questions need to be answered, and the citizens of Penllyn should be told the truth. It is the responsibility of Cyngor Gwynedd to operate transparently and for the benefit of the public, and not behind closed doors for its own benefit.</p>		
5.8	<p>I was disappointed to read the letter of the Chair of Governors in Y Cyfnod, which suggested that it would be better to accept the Church status at this time and to conduct another consultation in two years! What sense is it to do this at a time of austerity and cuts which the Council faces? The letter notes that it is not possible to change the wording without conducting another consultation and it is the opinion of officers that it is too late to do that and that the whole proposal would be at risk. Is it not Gwynedd officers who initially suggested the proposal in nay event without considering the local view nor consulting at that time? In addition on what basis do they say that the proposal is at risk and who at the Assembly is threatening this?</p> <p>There are a number of questions to be asked and councillors and officers will need to answer them one day. I therefore appeal to you to make the correct decision and not to designate Church status on the new lifelong school in Bala.</p>	1	
5.9	<p>I am surprised that Gwynedd Council have decided on the option of placing "Church" status on the Bala lifelong school. This is totally stupid in 2015! Nevertheless, I do not wish to put at risk the proposed investment as the Council have not spent any money on the buildings of Ysgol Y Berwyn for a number of years and the investment is one desperately needed. Because the Council have forced us to this decision I wish to declare my general support to the investment in the Lifelong school and ask the Cabinet to include a condition with the proposals to ensure that there will be a consultation with the community regarding the Church/Community status within a reasonable period of time of the</p>	1	

	school opening (2 years) in order to obtain the view of the area's citizens. I believe that the Council has acted unfairly in this matter and I suggest that an internal review should be undertaken in order to understand what has happened here.		
5.10	During a meeting held on 6 July 2015 between the Head of Gwynedd's Education Department and representatives of Penllyn school's governing bodies; it was made clear that it is not possible to oppose the Church status "voluntary controlled" to the proposed lifelong school without placing at risk the application by having to recommence the consultation process. Education Department officers failed to make it clear why this option was chosen, and although I oppose the "Church" status I do not wish to place at risk the proposed investment. Therefore I wish to make clear my general support to the investment in a lifelong school and ask the Cabinet to include a condition with the proposal to ensure that there will be a consultation with the community regarding the Church/Community status within a reasonable time of the opening of the school (that is 2 years) in order to obtain the true viewpoint of the citizens in the area.	1	
5.11	I hope that there will be certainty as to a review of the Church status once the lifelong school is opened.	1	
5.12	As a Board of Governors we are very keen to get rid of the Church status as soon as is legally possible. We plead that the Education Department add a condition to the legal agreement. That is that there will be a commitment to ascertain the views of parents and of the area, as to whether or not Church status should proceed, or should the school revert to a community school in the Berwyn catchment area.	1	
5.13	I have also heard that the best option is to accept the proposal at this time and within, say, two years, raise the matter again and seek to change the voluntary status of the school to that of a Community school. Is this correct? Is this how the citizens of Penllyn are supposed to operate? Is it by deceit that we ensure that we manage to secure a new school? I am surprised and embarrassed by such thoughts.	1	
<b>6</b>	<b>3-19 Model</b>		
6.1	Your plan to close the schools in the town of Bala and to merge them all on the Ysgol Y Berwyn site is a big mistake. From experiences of doing this in other towns the classes are larger, discipline is lacking, truancy and	1	Using a 3-19 Model will not lead to larger classes in the secondary age sector. In the primary age, merging the current primary provision will lead to improved consistency in class sizes and will increase the capacity for children of the same

	bullying increases, and less able pupils are left behind.		<p>age to be taught in the same classroom.</p> <p>Although the number of schools in Wales that use the 3-19 Model is limited at present, there is no evidence that discipline is lacking, that truancy and bullying are increasing and that less able pupils are being left behind.</p> <p>Securing an atmosphere and ethos that ensures that the school operates effectively and that the pupils are happy is an integral part of the work of establishing the 3-19 Campus by the Headteacher and the Shadow Governing Body, and also the teachers that will teach on the Campus every day after its opening.</p>
6.2	As a parent in the area, I object to the plan to reorganise education in the Bala area. There is a significant increase in the number of children born in the area over the past three years and primary school places will be necessary and then secondary school places. Your data is dated, and therefore your plan and decisions are based on incorrect factors. In addition to this, acting on such an idea that will be analysed within our generation as a genuine worry will lead to reliable results from the children, parents and the future of our community. The model of Welsh education that has been used for generations has benefitted our children, our societies, our language and our country. Rather than looking into the structures of successful schools within the UK and in countries such as those in Scandinavia, or those based on the philosophical foundations of Therezita Pagani or Waldorf Steiner. Not much time has gone by since other countries looked at the system in Wales as a system to replicate. Unfortunately, your belief in restricting our country's national bank of academic intelligence by forcing each school to follow the national curriculum, and your recent trend of following the crowd rather than leading in the field will put our system at risk.	1	<p>Gwynedd Council has considered the current available data that projects the demand for education in the Berwyn catchment area over the next years.</p> <p>Although the traditional model of education in Wales - namely education through primary and then secondary school has existed for some time in Wales - the educational provision in the town of Bala is inconsistent in terms of results and the use of resources, is dated and is unfit for purpose. It is not sensible to have two primary schools so close to each other, and the number of pupils at Ysgol Y Berwyn is comparatively small, and therefore it makes sense to merge the resources; not only the physical resources such as the school's structure and infrastructure, but the 3-19 Model also brings additional benefits in terms of improving the educational quality which includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- sharing staff expertise across all sectors</li> <li>- more appropriate class sizes with children of the same age being taught in the same class</li> <li>- pupils' achievement can be discussed across both age sectors and good practice can be shared</li> <li>- there would be improved continuation and consistency in every aspect of the curriculum due to it being programmed across the Campus</li> </ul>
<b>7</b>	<b>The Statutory Process</b>		
7.1	I write to you to urge you not to impose Church status on the Berwyn Lifelong School. I understand that this decision was made in a secretive and unfair way. I would like to know who started the discussion about the Church and who agreed with the Church that you will impose Church status on the school. Is this a compromise with the Church as there will be no Church status in the Gader catchment area???? I am very disappointed that the Councillors have let this happen – and have	1	<p>The relevant legislation and the School Reorganisation Code makes it clear that the quality of education is the most important factor when re-organising education.</p> <p>There has been no agreement between Gwynedd Council and the Church in Wales to eliminate Church education provision in the Gader catchment area, provided that Church provision is part of any reorganisation in the Berwyn</p>

	jeopardised an area which genuinely needs a Community Lifelong School.		catchment area.
7.2	The agreement you have reached with the Church in Wales is the worst possible insult for us in Penllyn. There must be some at Gwynedd Council who have heard of Michael D. Jones and others who fought tirelessly against the influence of the Church? Have you not heard of the “revolt schools” that were established in locations such as Llawrybetws? This is as traitorous as <i>Brad y Llyfrau Gleision</i> (Treachery of the Blue Books) and I beg you to seriously reconsider.	1	The decision to consult on a 3-19 Voluntary Controlled Campus, (VC), and then to publish a Statutory Notice in order to implement the Proposal was not one of compromise.  At no time have there been any discussions with Welsh Government regarding the legal status of the Campus – whether it be Community, Voluntary Controlled (VC) or Voluntary Aided (VA).
7.3	It is with great sadness that I read of Gwynedd Cabinet’s decision to designate Church status on the new school in Bala. I understand from one local Councillor that he was not at all aware of this intention. I ask where is democracy? Local Councillors should be aware of every decision made which affects any local development..	1	The decision to consult on the Voluntary Controlled (VC) Campus basis was made following consideration of the following factors: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the joint provision that currently exists in the catchment area and the fact that there is already a VA in the area</li> <li>• the viewpoint of the Church following a pre-consultation</li> <li>• similarity of community and Voluntary Controlled categories</li> <li>• the opinion that the quality of education and resources is the most important factor in a school according to the initial assessment that was undertaken</li> <li>• the strategic decision to ensure a continued choice of provision within a wider area in the south of the County</li> </ul>
7.4	What has happened behind the scenes for something so odd to happen? Has Gwynedd Council’s Education Committee all together lost their senses?	1	
7.5	If your intention is realised, then as a Council and Councillors you will be guilty of sacrificing our history and traditions here in Penllyn on the altar of Church threats, and if the rumours are true, by our Assembly in Cardiff.	1	
7.6	The fact that the situation has developed gradually without much warning and only limited questioning raises the need to ask a number of questions.	1	Prior to holding a period of statutory consultation, Gwynedd Council held several meetings locally, between December 2013 and March 2015, and these included Catchment Area Review Panel meetings, meetings with local Councillors and meetings with local Head teachers.
7.7	I understand that the Governors of Ysgol Y Berwyn and the other schools which feed it, (with the exception of Ysgol Beuno Sant), and indeed local representatives on the County Council, were all at the beginning opposed to the Church having any role in the re-organisation, nevertheless there is no sign that Gwynedd Council’s Cabinet has responded appropriately. It is a matter of concern to everyone that local views should be respected, and I would very much appreciate if light was shed on the matter by those who are dealing with this matter.	1	During these meetings, the following were highlighted: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the joint provision in the catchment area</li> <li>• the statutory need to hold a period of pre-consultation with the Church in Wales</li> <li>• the differences between the various categories</li> </ul>
7.8	I support the investment to establish a Welsh Medium learning campus for pupils aged 3-19 in Bala, BUT I am totally opposed to its church status. The school should be a community school which adheres to the traditional Christian ethos of Penllyn, and which is at the same time totally non-denominational and not a school, which if rumours are true,	1	As part of the statutory consultation, a 66-page document was produced explaining the consultation process and the intention in the catchment area. Section 6 of the document discussed specifically the need to decide on the legal category of any new provision, and noted specifically: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• the differences between the various legal categories</li> </ul>



	which is established under pressure of threats and deceit.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• other Church in Wales schools</li> <li>• the statutory requirement to consult with the Church in Wales</li> <li>• the factors to be considered when deciding on the legal category</li> </ul> <p>Therefore, the Council has completed the statutory process in accordance with the Schools Organisation Code (006/2013) and the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013.</p> <p>Following the consultation period, comments in favour and against the proposed status were received, and following detailed consideration of all comments received, the Council decided to issue a Statutory Notice which noted the intention to establish a Voluntary Controlled (VC) Status 3-19 Campus in Bala.</p>
7.9	I plead with you, (if the gossip is true), to stop bargaining our children's secondary education on a foundation of deceit and threats, and to concentrate on the values we deserve and are familiar with	1	
7.10	It is quite clear from reading the letters that the Church has long and strong tentacles – and that they are making every effort to gain control of secondary education in Bala. It is totally disgraceful that we as a community are forced – because of lack of time to accept this status.	1	
7.11	All of this emanates from a secret plan between the church and the council when re-organising education in Dolgellau. At the very least, the Council should have informed the Berwyn governors of the plan in 2014 when an agreement was made with the church without consulting with anybody locally	1	
7.12	If the information as to how the decision was reached is correct in the letters published in the press, then I am of the opinion that how you have operated is totally unacceptable and disgraceful.	1	
7.13	It is with great sadness that I read of Gwynedd Cabinet's decision to designate Church status on the new school in Bala. I understand from one local Councillor that he was not at all aware of this intention. I ask where is democracy? Local Councillors should be aware of every decision made which affects any local development.	1	
7.14	I understand that the plan emanates from the decision of the Assembly to fund a new school on condition that the Governance of the school was VC; out of control of the local authority – that is society itself. This is totally stupid, and without any democratic reasoning	1	
7.15	I am concerned regarding the proposal to allow the Anglican Church to govern the new school, totally contrary to the non-conformist tradition in the area. I understand that the plan emanates from the decision of the Assembly to fund a new school on condition that the Governance of the school was VC; out of control of the local authority – that is society itself. This is totally stupid, and without any democratic reasoning. If the County Council is not suitable to run a school, then it should not transfer the responsibility to anybody or other system without society's agreement.	1	
7.16	Following correspondence published on the Council's website, and which has been drawn to the attention of a wider audience by a letter in local	1	

	papers, that our community here in Penllyn has been used as a hostage by the Council during discussions to re-organise schools in the Dolgellau area. This is <b>DISGRACEFUL</b> . In addition, some Councillors have quietly <b>asserted</b> that all of this has been arranged in Cardiff Bay (between Government officials and the Church in Wales?) only a year before the matter came to Gwynedd Council's attention. If this is true it is <b>DISGRACEFUL</b> . If this money has been allocated for school re-organisation here in Penllyn, then it is ours without having to be subject to the wishes and whim of the Church in Wales. Otherwise one can allege that our governing system is corrupt.		
7.17	The Church is conducting a cynical campaign, and its attitude and behaviour is totally arrogant. It was clear to me having read the original document that the Council had no intention from the beginning to consider giving us a community school, and that this was the decision long before there was any consultation with the local community. If a VC school is the result then we can justly accuse the Council of wasting public money by undertaking a fake and pointless consultation. Local people clearly strongly oppose the proposal but a number are afraid of making a fuss especially since our Councillors have been persuaded that keeping quiet is best. This is very sinister. I am still to meet anybody who supports a VC school, but perhaps I do not mix in the right circles. Democracy has been ignored here, and the Council are responsible for this.	1	
7.18	I understand that the Governors of Ysgol Y Berwyn and the other schools which feed it, (with the exception of Ysgol Beuno Sant), and indeed local representatives on the County Council, were all at the beginning opposed to the Church having nay role in the re-organisation, nevertheless there is no sign that Gwynedd Council's Cabinet has responded appropriately. It is a matter of concern to everyone that local views should be respected, and I would very much appreciate if light was shed on the matter by those who are dealing with this matter.	1	
7.19	Being forced to have a lifelong school with church status (voluntary controlled) is disgraceful and it seems to be part of a secret plan. A school with church status was refused in the Gader catchment area and it is totally unfair to promise to the Church in Wales that they will have a school in Penllyn. How can ill-considered promises by school organisation	1	

	officials be a democratic way of working? This is another example of officials misleading local people in the process of school re-organisation in order to get their own way.		
7.20	I also had a conversation with my local Councillor. He argues that if we do not accept this proposal then the entire issue of a new Lifelong School in Bala will be refused by the Assembly. I would like to ask if this is true and on what basis? And if it is true, who in Gwynedd Council's corridors says it? Who, if anyone, amongst Gwynedd Council Officers says it, and who in the Assembly in Cardiff says this?	1	<p>The reorganisation process is a complex one, as it is dependent on following a statutory process and securing a financial contribution of £5.13m from the Welsh Government.</p> <p>If Gwynedd Council's Cabinet decides not to implement the Notice then this would increase the risk of losing the investment and realising the plan, as it would be necessary to re-start the process and consult again. In addition, the Welsh Government's contribution must be spent within a specific spending window.</p> <p>It will be a matter for the Cabinet, when considering implementing the Notice, to assess the risk and implications of implementing the Notice or not.</p>
7.21	In 2007, there was no mention of a Lifelong School in Bala, but rather talk about merging both primary schools, namely Ysgol Bro Tegid and Ysgol Beuno Sant. We were in discussions - and keeping minutes of those discussions - with the Governors of Ysgol Bro Tegid, the Governors of Ysgol Beuno Sant and the St. Asaph Diocese Education Officer, along with the Rector of Christ Church, Bala and the Head teacher of Ysgol Beuno Sant at the time. Although there was no pressure from the Governors of Ysgol Bro Tegid, Governors of Ysgol Beuno Sant, the St. Asaph Diocese Education Officer, the Rector of Christ Church and the Head teacher of Ysgol Beuno Sant together with officers from the Education Department, agreed that the proposed school at that time would NOT be one with a Voluntary Status. Therefore, I would like to know, what has changed? Is it the intervention of people from the Bangor Diocese and personnel at the St. Asaph Diocese? Were there discussions between Gwynedd Council Officers, the Llanelwy Diocese and the Governors of Ysgol Y Berwyn, Ysgol Beuno Sant and Ysgol Bro Tegid, not to mention the Governors of Ysgol Bro Tryweryn, Ysgol Ffridd y Llyn and Ysgol O. M. Edwards (as the proposed status of the Lifelong school affects the children from those schools too when they are old enough to transfer to the Lifelong School)? If meetings were not held, why not? Was it to keep everyone in the dark? Keep everything quiet? I hope that this is not the case, but I would like answers.	1	<p>There were initial discussions in 2007, prior to the Welsh Government 21 Century Schools Programme coming to power. The discussions developed after that, with the closing of Ysgol y Parc and spending £1m on Ysgol O. M. Edwards. In 2011, the Cabinet decided to undertake a consultation on the Lifelong Campus in Bala, but the matter was not taken further, due to the need to prioritise projects in other catchment areas and a change in the Welsh Government's funding programme.</p> <p>At the time, there was no intention to place a Church status on the Campus, but it must be borne in mind that the matter did not go as far as a period of formal consultation, and the Schools Standards and Organisation (Wales) Act 2013 and associated Code came to power following that.</p> <p>This meant that it was necessary to hold a period of statutory pre-consultation with the Church in Wales.</p> <p>When re-commencing the local discussions it was necessary to consider and consult yet again on the most appropriate model for the catchment area. This also meant considering developments and reorganisation in the nearby Gader catchment area, where the existing Church provision was coming to an end.</p> <p>Having re-commenced the discussion in the catchment area, several meetings</p>

			<p>were held with local Councillors and with Headteachers and Governors, where the need to consider the Church provision in South Meirionnydd was highlighted, along with other factors that led to designating the Campus as a Voluntary Controlled status.</p>																				
7.22	<p>Although I support the proposed investment for Bala in general, I am of the strong opinion that the consultation process was not clear enough in terms of the Council's intention to designate the new school as, 'Voluntary Controlled, Church in Wales' status, and that the area's residents did not have an adequate opportunity to voice their opinions on this specific aspect in time to influence the process. Also, from reviewing the public's responses to the proposal, it is clear that the Church in Wales has tried to unfairly influence the consultation process with several responses being submitted on behalf of the Diocese by people far from the community that the new school would serve, and that the Diocese had also threatened to stand against the reorganisation process in other parts of the county if the new School did not receive the preferred status. / The strong feelings of members of the (Llangywer) Community Council reflect the objections that are gathering Penllyn every day. Furthermore, it is regrettable that the situation has arisen at all. There is concern that there was a plan on behalf of an officer or officers to trick Councillors, Governors and parents about the church status and I request that Gwynedd Councillors hold a full investigation and take disciplinary action against those who allowed this situation to arise - and to report back to the Penllyn Councils on the investigation and the steps taken. The opinion was expressed that it seemed as though these Officer(s) had disrespected the area and had shown a lack of awareness of the area's history as a hub of Nonconformity.</p>		<p>Gwynedd Council disagrees with the comment that the consultation process was not clear enough in terms of noting the Council's intention to designate a "Voluntary Controlled" status for the 3-19 Learning Campus.</p> <p>Section 6 of the consultation document:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explained the difference between the different categories of schools</li> <li>• Noted the location of other Church schools in Gwynedd</li> <li>• Explained the pre-consultation process that occurred with the Church in Wales</li> <li>• Noted the factors to be considered when deciding on the legal category</li> </ul> <p>Gwynedd Council is satisfied that the consultation process was held transparently, and in accordance with the legal requirements of the Schools Standards and Organisation Act (Wales) 2015 and the associated Schools Organisation Code (2006/13).</p> <p>Several meetings were held locally and the following table displays the meetings that took place:</p> <table border="1" data-bbox="1223 903 2190 1241"> <thead> <tr> <th>Date</th> <th>Meeting</th> <th>Invited</th> <th>Nature of Discussion</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td>11 December 2013</td> <td>BCP</td> <td>Local Members</td> <td>Initial discussions</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20 March 2014</td> <td>BCP</td> <td>Local Members</td> <td>Church in Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6 May 2014</td> <td>CRP</td> <td>Headteachers, Governors chair, Parent Governors of all schools in the catchment in addition to; Local Members and representative of the Church in Wales</td> <td>Church category is an item on the agenda</td> </tr> <tr> <td>20 May 2014</td> <td>Headteache</td> <td>Heads of Schools Catchment</td> <td>Mentioned the</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Date	Meeting	Invited	Nature of Discussion	11 December 2013	BCP	Local Members	Initial discussions	20 March 2014	BCP	Local Members	Church in Wales	6 May 2014	CRP	Headteachers, Governors chair, Parent Governors of all schools in the catchment in addition to; Local Members and representative of the Church in Wales	Church category is an item on the agenda	20 May 2014	Headteache	Heads of Schools Catchment	Mentioned the
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7.23	<p>We have already expressed our disappointment regarding the lack of communication that occurred between the Education department and the stakeholders in the context of this extremely damaging Church status.</p>																						

7.24	<p>As a stakeholder of Penllyn I was extremely sad to learn that dubious confidentiality had occurred surrounding Gwynedd Council's decision to receive this bribe from the State Church. I beg of you Councillors and education Officers, stand strong against this totally undemocratic decision. I can assure you that Penllyn residents will not accept this bribe as it is an insult to all residents of Penllyn and the catchment area of the proposed school.</p>	4	<table border="1"> <tr> <td></td> <td>rs</td> <td></td> <td>possible different status</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>03 June 2014</b></td> <td>Headteachers Meeting</td> <td>Heads of Schools Catchment</td> <td>Mentioned the possible different status</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>12 June 2014</b></td> <td>BCP</td> <td>Local Members</td> <td>Mentioned the possible different status</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>13 June 2014</b></td> <td>Headteachers</td> <td>Heads of Schools Catchment</td> <td>Mentioned the possible different status</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>14 January 2015</b></td> <td>CRP</td> <td>Headteachers, Governors chair, Parent Governors of all schools in the catchment in addition to; Local Members and representative of the Church in Wales</td> <td>PowerPoint presentation with a slide to compare the different categories</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>5 February 2015</b></td> <td>Newsletter</td> <td>Schools and CRP members</td> <td>Identify the need for pre-consultation with the Church in Wales</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>11 March 2015</b></td> <td>premonition consultation</td> <td>Email to Heads of schools in the catchment area</td> <td>Premonition that the statutory consultation period begins</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>13 March 2015</b></td> <td>Consultation Document</td> <td>Document to all consultees</td> <td>Specific section on the Category</td> </tr> <tr> <td><b>26 March 2015</b></td> <td>Open day</td> <td>Open to all</td> <td>An opportunity for everyone to discuss, question officers, receive documentation</td> </tr> </table>		rs		possible different status	<b>03 June 2014</b>	Headteachers Meeting	Heads of Schools Catchment	Mentioned the possible different status	<b>12 June 2014</b>	BCP	Local Members	Mentioned the possible different status	<b>13 June 2014</b>	Headteachers	Heads of Schools Catchment	Mentioned the possible different status	<b>14 January 2015</b>	CRP	Headteachers, Governors chair, Parent Governors of all schools in the catchment in addition to; Local Members and representative of the Church in Wales	PowerPoint presentation with a slide to compare the different categories	<b>5 February 2015</b>	Newsletter	Schools and CRP members	Identify the need for pre-consultation with the Church in Wales	<b>11 March 2015</b>	premonition consultation	Email to Heads of schools in the catchment area	Premonition that the statutory consultation period begins	<b>13 March 2015</b>	Consultation Document	Document to all consultees	Specific section on the Category	<b>26 March 2015</b>	Open day	Open to all	An opportunity for everyone to discuss, question officers, receive documentation
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7.25	<p>It is not cost effective to close the town's schools and to build a new school. The only answer is to close all the catchment area's schools. Saying that they will be part of a federation is an excuse not to close the primary school in Llanuwchllyn, the school that no one can touch, as everyone knows.</p>	2	<p>Establishing the Campus will bring about annual revenue savings. If all the catchment area's rural schools close, and the educational provision transfers to the Campus, the revenue savings would be higher. However, the additional costs of building more provision on-Campus need to be considered, as well as the additional cost of travelling for children from the rural schools to the Campus, and the fact that the educational provision of the rural schools is good and consistent. Keeping the rural schools open also protects the viability of the rural communities in the catchment area.</p> <p>Federalising and establishing a joint committee means that the rural schools can have the best possible benefit from the investment in the Campus, all the while keeping their identity and protecting rural communities</p>																																				

7.26	The fact that I have to write this letter to you worries me greatly. Two years ago, we were facing losing our valuable school in the Parc village and now we have to face that the so-called lifelong school that was meant to have been built by this year (2015) remains in the consultation stage (the second as far as I know), and is going to be transferred completely to the Church? I wonder if the Church of England is the aforementioned?	1	Gwynedd Council acknowledges that some delay has occurred in the reorganisation of schools in the Berwyn catchment area. This was due to the need to prioritise other projects and a change in the Welsh Government's funding programme.  The delay is unfortunate, but since the beginning of 2014 the reorganisation process has re-started and has consistently and conscientiously followed a strict timetable.  The Statutory Notice imposes a Voluntary Controlled (VC), Church in Wales status on the Campus. The reasoning for this was explained in the consultation document.
<b>8</b>	<b>General</b>		
8.1	No military influence should be allowed in the vicinity of any school. Think about the future of Wales and its people.	1	The comment is noted, but it is not relevant in the context of the proposed reorganisation in Bala town.
8.2	I would like to state that I am in favour of reorganising the schools of Penllyn.	10	The comment is noted.
8.3	The responses should be from residents of the area, prospective parents and the parents of the area.	1	Any individual has the right to submit an objection to the Statutory Notice. It will be a matter for the Council to weigh up every comment, in terms of the nature of any objection and the residence of the respondent.
8.4	It is high time that the town has a new Campus for the lifelong learning school. There has been a serious lack of funding for the maintenance of Ysgol Y Berwyn over the last ten years whilst discussions have taken place.	1	Cyngor Gwynedd note this view, and accept that there has been little spending on the maintenance of Ysgol Y Berwyn over the last few years. If the Campus was to come to fruition, then Bala town, other pupils of the catchment, as well as the public would have a new resource with high class facilities

### Analysis of the Petition

**As part of the objections, a petition was received with 231 signatories who agreed with the statement:** *“We call upon Gwynedd Council to withdraw their recommendation to give church status to the proposed lifelong learning school (3-19) in Bala, and to announce its intention to establish the school as a community school that is not formally affiliated to any specific religious body.”* Within this petition comments were given by some of the signatories and this is an analysis of those comments:

Comments	Gwynedd Council's Response
No council has the right to force a Church school on any area. The area's traditional Christian ethos can be a natural influence on the school whilst it is also officially non- denomination.	The comments received in the petition support the comments received in letters and e-mail correspondence that have been noted and have received a response in part 1 above of this document.
No school should have a strong link with any religious body. People have fought for this right.	

Traditionally the Church in Wales has been opposed to the Welsh Language.	
Gwynedd Council HAS made another decision on our behalf! Religion is an individual's choice not a Council's.	
If Penllyn is far from the offices of Gwynedd Council in Caernarfon, it is an area that should be carefully protected.	
There is no demand for a church school in the area. An impact assessment should be published on each part of this process, especially to consider discrimination on the basis of belief and the Welsh Language.	
Enforcing the church's influence on children's education in this day and age would be a disgrace.	
No sense at all! Gwynedd Council needs to go back to school and read about the history of Penllyn.	
The education system should not force any child to come under the influence of the church – being part of a religious body is a personal choice.	
I do not believe that schools should be associated with a religious denomination.	
As a Gwynedd ratepayer, I wish to state my objection to this inexplicable decision. This school does not need any type of religious status.	
Although I am a committed Christian, I believe in the principle of separating the church from the state.	
In Penllyn of all places, if you know anything of the history of religion in Wales then the school should be a state school, free from the shackles of any denomination.	
No place for religion in education!!!	
The new school in Bala should be a community school and not affiliated to any specific religion.	
A Community School for the community!	
Look at the world today – what good is religion? Man created god, god did not create man! There is no need to link religion with our children's education.	
Disgraceful. There's no need for religion in our schools.	
Education should not be associated with religion. Religion should be an optional and personal matter.	
Our children do not need any influence from the Church of England in Wales. Gwynedd Council needs to look at the history of this area and the history of Wales! Shame.	
The idea that the Church in Wales can be part of a school without even discussing this with the area's residents is offensive.	
I used to go to Ysgol Y Berwyn and I can't believe in this multi-cultural age that a non-affiliated faith school would seek to behave like one. Schools are for educating and broadening young minds not closing them down by signing them up to a single dogma.	
Daily, mandatory, state education should be non-denominational. This is the great principle that people fought hard to secure.	
If this plan proceeds then there will be another Tryweryn on the nation's conscience, only this time it will be our own people who will have betrayed us.	

I strongly believe that the lifelong school should be a Community School. The majority of the pupils attending the school will have nothing to do with the church therefore why give it a church status?	
Tradition and the history of Penllyn and the wishes of the area's residents.	
Religion should keep out of education, especially in the 21 <sup>st</sup> century.	
As an area school receives children from all denominations and children without any association with any church, no specific denomination should be in control and every denomination should be equal.	
Well, what a stupid idea.	
Schools should be neutral places.	
I don't want to teach nor have my children taught in any school that is controlled by the church.	
It is not fair that the Lifelong Learning School is identified with one specific religious body at the expense of several other denominations which are more prominent in the area.	
I don't agree with it being a church school it should be a community school for all faiths and religions.	
I don't want my child to be sent to a Church school.	
I have a right in a democratic country for my children to receive an education that is not affiliated to any religious beliefs.	
I don't want a church school because if anything happens to the school we will have to start fund raising money for the school. Just let Gwynedd Council take the school over.	
This should be a school for the community, not a denominational school and the church is not known for its strong support to the Welsh Language or for using Welsh.	
No person should be forced to believe in any religion, not to mention young and vulnerable children of 3.	
A Community Lifelong Learning School for our Community.	
There is no state church in Wales and therefore a community school should not be affiliated to a religious body.	
I object to the church status of the lifelong learning school at Bala.	
Gwynedd Council has to talk with the people. There is no sense in church schools. Local people in Bala have been asking questions in 'Y Cyfnod', 'Y Cymro' and other newspapers – but there has been no response from the Council - Why? Ratepayers are entitled to answers. We do not live in the Romania of Ceauşescu.	
I totally oppose the idea of calling the New School in Bala a Church School. Only 40 children attend the Church Primary School in Bala. There has always been anger in the Penllyn area towards the Church because of the Anglicised nature of the Estate and the English education presented by schools in the heyday of the Sir Watcyn Williams Wyn Estate. Also, consideration should be given to all the parents that might have a different religious background.	
Grandmother to children in the school.	
It is not fair that a lifelong learning school for the whole community is affiliated to one specific religious	



denomination.

I am not willing for my children to attend a church school.

How could you do this in BALA - the home of Thomas Charles of all places!!!