

Appendix E – Comments from the Local Member

Comments from the Local Member on Ysgol Nebo Cabinet Report

11/05/26

I would like to thank the officers, school staff, the Governing Body, the community, parents and especially the pupils for their commitment and contribution to this process over recent months. While I acknowledge the work that has been done in conducting the statutory consultation and summarising the responses, I remain very clear in my opposition to the proposal to close Ysgol Nebo. This report itself demonstrates the scale of local opposition, with a large number of responses highlighting the educational, community and linguistic value of the school. It also recognises the school's role as the heart of the community, its contribution to the vitality of the Welsh language, and the possible impact on the wellbeing of children and vulnerable pupils should the school close. In my view, these are not secondary matters that can simply be mitigated later, but fundamental considerations that should be at the core of this decision.

The School Organisation Code sets a clear procedural presumption against the closure of rural schools, and I am not convinced that this high threshold has been met in the case of Ysgol Nebo. I remain of the view that not every alternative option has been fully or creatively explored. This is particularly true in the context of the option presented by the Governing Body to develop Ysgol Nebo as a specialist provision to support children with social, emotional and wellbeing needs. Rather than seeing this as a strategic opportunity, the report continues to assess it almost entirely on the basis of enrolment numbers and cost per learner. But at a time of significant growth in home education, increasing mental health concerns among children and young people, and more families seeking flexible and supportive provision, we must ask whether small schools like Ysgol Nebo could be part of the solution, rather than viewed as a problem to be removed.

Concerns still exist regarding the £95,000 maintenance figure noted in the consultation, with no detailed technical evidence published to date other than a visual site survey by Council officers. The report acknowledges that closing the school could have a negative impact on community use of the Welsh language and on the cohesion of the village. As a Council that consistently declares its commitment to the sustainability of Welsh-speaking communities, we must ask what message we send if we close a rural Welsh-medium school that continues to provide good education and is central to its community.

I do not deny that challenges exist at Ysgol Nebo, but I do not accept that closure is the only possible response, nor necessarily the best long-term response.

I urge the Cabinet not to proceed to the statutory notice stage, but instead to reconsider the alternative options in a genuinely open manner and give full consideration to a sustainable future for Ysgol Nebo and the community it serves.

Yours sincerely,
Councillor Dafydd Davies

Local Member for the Clynnog Ward