

Schools for the
Future says . . .

**Diolch
Thank
You!**

www.schoolsfuture.co.uk

The public consultation is over, our community plan is submitted and all your letters and emails of support will form part of the Council's consultation report released in July. Diolch yn fawr. Thank you for your support.

Based on that report the Director for Children and Schools will recommend a revised proposal that will be voted on by the Councillors on July 16th, and if the proposal is significantly different from the January proposal - let's hope it is! - it will have to go out to a further period of public consultation in the Autumn. In the meantime, the *Schools for the Future* steering group is continuing to refine and flesh out the community plan, particularly the details of how interactive and online learning can be introduced into our students' lives, and the finances and governance of the 6th form. And we are continuing to talk to the Council and lobbying politicians locally and nationally to gather support for the plan as a way forward for all the communities. If you have experience, expertise or ideas in any of those areas we would welcome new input and help. myvoice@schoolsfuture.co.uk.

So is YDS saved?

The original proposal was for YDS to lose its 6th form to a new 6th form centre in Haverfordwest and become an 11-16 school. We now know, and the Council has acknowledged, that would make it too small to survive. But our discussions with the Council have led to a new approach. If we combine the leadership and management of YDS and two of our local primary schools to create a split site 3-16 school, then that would give our community a school large enough to be sustainable into the future and give our children the advantages of this “all-through” schooling approach which has done wonders for standards in Scotland. So is YDS saved? Not yet, but we’ve had discussions with the primaries and it looks very likely that this approach will get the backing of the Council. There’s lots still to be sorted, but we hope to see this as part of the consultation report recommendation.

Is the sixth form saved?

We know the sixth form can’t continue as it is because with the numbers of students we have we can’t afford to give them the breadth and choice of subjects they need, but there is a lot of opposition in the community to solving that by busing them daily to a centralised 6th form in Haverfordwest. So the *Schools for the Future* plan proposes a novel approach: keep 6th form units on the school sites in St Davids, Fishguard and Haverfordwest, but manage and finance them as a single 6th form provider for over 500 students. That way we could keep a core of A-levels taught in St Davids, introduce online learning guided by teachers for minority interest subjects, and join together classes on the three sites using video facilities and/or physical travel for others. The Council has shown a lot of interest in this approach. Fishguard is solidly backing it. We have held talks with the Haverfordwest schools and governors about whether it meets their needs, and with Pembrokeshire College about the best ways to provide academic and vocational training and the implications for them if the currently proposed 6th form centre on the College site were not to go ahead. We continue to lobby for this as a solution that benefits students across the whole area, but at the moment it’s not clear which way this will go.

What about the Church?

The Church in Wales currently supports Ysgol Bro Dewi as a Voluntary Aided primary school and would like to offer the same support to a new 3-16 all-through school on the St Davids Peninsula. This could produce practical benefits by attracting students from out of catchment, but the Church is not able to proceed further until the future of the school is clear.

Will things ever be the same again?

Yes and No. Our school buildings and schooling system are well past their use by date, and they are not doing the best for Pembrokeshire children. The internet is opening up great opportunities, particularly for rural areas like ours, and our children need to be able to take advantage of those. Digital literacy is now as important as numeracy and literacy in life and work, and the internet opens up learning opportunities like never before. It’s also become clear just how important our school is to this community, and the community is to the school, and that neither can thrive without the other. So we need things to change to make online learning and community involvement part of the everyday life of the school, and we need the funding to build those into the structure of the new school. That will only be possible if the Council plan is changed to include 21st Century schools funding for St Davids as well as Fishguard and Haverfordwest, and that is what we are campaigning for. You can read the entire plan on the website www.schoolsfuture.co.uk. What hasn’t changed is that the heart of a great school is great teaching. Teachers are the foundation of our children’s education. What the whole plan is about, with its all-through schooling, digital technology, community involvement and 6th form reorganisation is providing the best environment and the best facilities for teachers to teach and pupils to learn.

What next?

We will organise another community meeting once the consultation report is out in July. Having a strong community voice at that stage will be vital to get the school our children deserve. So sign up to the website and stay up to date, and keep an eye out for new posters in mid July. Once again, diolch yn fawr. See you in July.