

15th Sept 2017

Round House Capacity Campaign Update

We had a very successful meeting with officers and Councillors from Cambridgeshire County Council yesterday evening, and feel reassured that there will be additional places created for Love's Farm children due to start school in September 2018.

Unfortunately The Round House site isn't big enough to accommodate an expansion and so the solution will be a new school.

There isn't any other suitable land available on Love's Farm, but the Council are trying to secure land as close to the Love's Farm boundary as possible. It's looking like this will be on the Wintringham Park site, but close to Cambridge Road.

There are two trusts who have made a bid to run the new school, The Diamond Learning Partnership Trust who run The Round House (as well as Winhills and Middlefield), and The St Neots Learning Partnership who run Longsands and Ernulf secondary schools.

There is a public meeting on **Wednesday 27th September, 18:30 to 20:00** at The Bargroves Centre, Cromwell Road, St. Neots PE19 2EY where both trusts will present their proposals for the new school. Anyone is welcome to attend and we encourage anyone who is effected to come along.

As the new school wont be actually be within the Love's Farm boundary the campaign group are particularly interested in how each trust propose to manage the school so that pupils still feel part of the Love's Farm community. We are very keen that the new school feels part of Love's Farm, and children attending both the new school and The Round House feel part of the same community. We have been reassured that this is also a priority for the Council and will be considered as part of the selection process.

It will be up to the winning trust how catchment areas and admissions will be managed but it's been suggested that both schools may have the same catchment area, i.e. Love's Farm. If this is the case we hope that both schools will be integrated into the Love's Farm community, and equally attractive, and therefore families will choose the school closest to them. I.e. children living towards the South of the estate will choose to go to the new school and children living to the North of Love's Farm will choose to go to The Round House. Of course it's very difficult to predict if this will happen in reality.

In order to create places in time for September 2018 temporary Portakabins will need to be used and it's likely that these will be on a different site to where the permanent school will be, possibly one of the other school sites managed by the successful trust (e.g. The Round House, or Longsands). We have been told the temporary Portakabins will only be used for one year with the permanent new school ready to open from September 2019.

We realise it's going to be very difficult for parents to make a decision about applications for September 2018 entry without knowing the full details of the proposed new school. However we have been assured that parents will be given an opportunity to change their applications once details have been confirmed, even if that's after the initial admissions deadline.

We have also been told that the new school will have an intake for Year 1, as well as Reception in September 2018, giving the children who were unsuccessful in gaining a place at The Round House this year, a chance to attend the new school if they wish to do so.

We realise this is quite a lot of information for parents to digest, and there are still some crucial details missing. Please get in touch if anything is unclear or if you have specific questions or suggestions, we may be able to answer them ourselves, or if not can certainly pass them onto the Council. And we'll of course keep everyone updated once we are given more information.

The Round House Capacity Campaign has always been about community cohesion, and we do believe the proposed solution does have the potential to solve the problem, but only if it's managed in the right way with input from residents. We really want all children on Love's Farm to be given the opportunity to attend their local community school, and that will only be possible if the new school feels as much a part of the Love's Farm community as The Round House currently does.

As always please follow our Facebook page or website for more information and updates.

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