

[REDACTED]

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**From:** John Droog <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 08 September 2015 20:26  
**To:** Eirian Lightfoot  
**Subject:** RE: Meeting - 15 September 2015

Many thanks Eirian.

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**From:** Eirian Lightfoot [mailto:Eirian.Lightfoot@wrexham.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 08 September 2015 11:07  
**To:** [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Meeting - 15 September 2015

Dear Mr Droog

Further to our earlier telephone conversation, this is to confirm that a meeting has been arranged between John Davies, Dafydd Ifans and yourself on Tuesday, 15 September at 11.00 am to discuss school site issues.

The meeting will be held in John's office, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Lambpit Street.

Look forward to meeting you then.

Kind regards  
Eirian

**Eirian Lightfoot**

Secretary to John Davies, Head of Lifelong Learning / Ysgrifennyddes i John Davies, Pennaeth Dysgu Gydoloes  
Children and Young People Service / Gwasanaeth Plant a Phobl Ifanc

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**From:** John Droog <[REDACTED]>  
**Sent:** 04 November 2015 20:11  
**To:** Eirian Lightfoot  
**Subject:** RE: St. Mary's Catholic Primary, Lea Road, Wrexham

Thanks Eirian – in the diary.

Kind Regards,

John

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**From:** Eirian Lightfoot [mailto:Eirian.Lightfoot@wrexham.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 04 November 2015 08:03  
**To:** John Droog  
**Subject:** RE: St. Mary's Catholic Primary, Lea Road, Wrexham

Dear Mr Droog

Further to our telephone conversation this morning, I am pleased to confirm that a meeting has been arranged for Friday, 13 November at 1.00 pm in John's office, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Lambpit Street.

Many thanks for your help.

Kind regards  
Eirian

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**From:** John Droog [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 04 November 2015 04:58  
**To:** Eirian Lightfoot  
**Subject:** RE: St. Mary's Catholic Primary, Lea Road, Wrexham

Good Morning Eirian,

Unfortunately on Thursday I have a prior commitment, however I can be available Friday at any time after 10.00am.

I am travelling for most of today, however I can be contacted on 07770 982975 to discuss alternatives if required.

Kind Regards,

John

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**From:** Eirian Lightfoot [mailto:Eirian.Lightfoot@wrexham.gov.uk]  
**Sent:** 03 November 2015 16:46  
**To:** John Droog  
**Subject:** RE: St. Mary's Catholic Primary, Lea Road, Wrexham  
**Importance:** High

Dear Mr Droog

As you are aware, I have been asked to try and arrange a meeting between yourself, John and Dafydd.

Can you please let me know if you are available on **Thursday, 5 November at 2.30 pm** ?

The meeting will be held in John's office, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Lambpit Street.

Kind regards  
Eirian

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**From:** John Davies  
**Sent:** 03 November 2015 15:40  
**To:** John Droog  
**Cc:** Dafydd Ifans; Eirian Lightfoot  
**Subject:** RE: St. Mary's Catholic Primary, Lea Road, Wrexham

Hello John,

Apologies for not being able to respond sooner.

Many thanks for the comprehensive update and congratulations on managing to make such progress in a short space of time.

I will ask my secretary, Eirian, to contact you to arrange a meeting for us as soon as possible so that we can progress as you suggest.

Regards,  
John

**John Davies**  
Head of Education / *Pennaeth Addysg*  
Children and Young People Service / *Gwasanaeth Plant a Phobl Ifanc*

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**From:** John Droog [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 23 October 2015 05:27  
**To:** John Davies  
**Cc:** Dafydd Ifans  
**Subject:** St. Mary's Catholic Primary, Lea Road, Wrexham

Good Morning John,

Further to our recent meeting, which I felt to be very productive, I attempted to convene a meeting with the Bishop & Director of Education for the Diocese. Conscious of the timescales, I approached from a different direction & met with the Chair of Trustees for the Diocese. I have now received written communication confirming the Diocese's position, namely:

- i. Agreement in principle to the release of the current site as the Diocesan contribution to the development of a new site
- ii. Maintaining the faith based Catholicity of the new school
- iii. Retaining the two Catholic primary schools within the Wrexham centre

In addition there is a requirement for title of the land on which the new school occupies to be transferred to the Diocese upon completion.

I was hoping that we could perhaps meet in the coming days to establish whether there is a common position acceptable to both parties, which could then form the basis of a heads of agreement document. This can then be used to develop more detail over the coming weeks.

The next meeting of the Diocesan trustees is in December. Provided we can establish a common way forward, I would like to confirm formal agreement at that meeting.

While I recognise the timetable does not present much opportunity for delay, I would like to assure at this stage that there is personal commitment to the project and a preparedness to work with all interested parties.

Kind Regards,

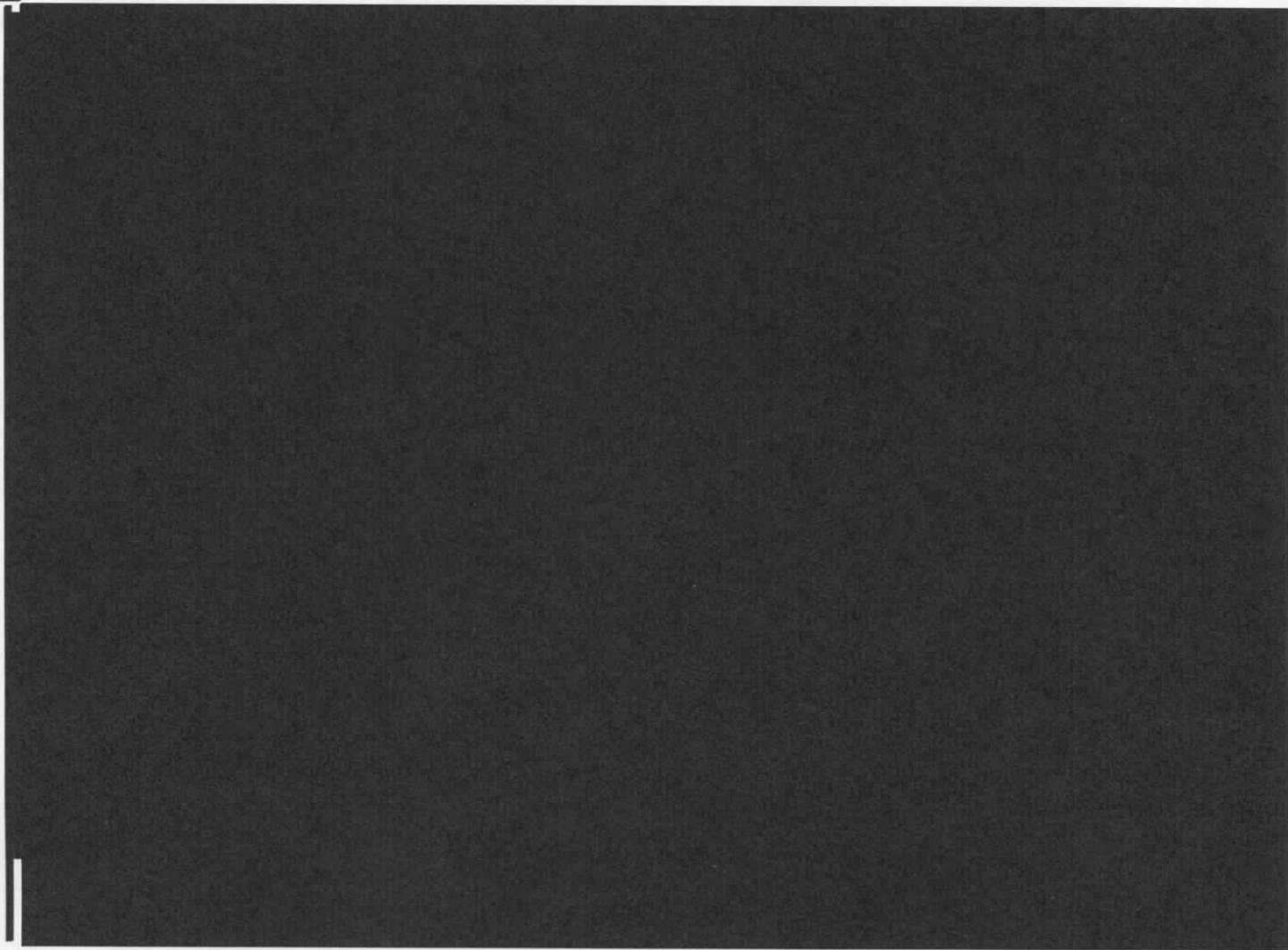
John

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**From:** John Droog [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 16 December 2015 06:23  
**To:** Leader  
**Subject:** St. Mary's Catholic Primary School - "info"

Morning Mark,

As far as I understand the current position:

1. The trustees of the Diocese met December 10<sup>th</sup>
2. The trustees were presented with a single page document from the Director of Education for the Diocese (Rita Price)
3. Rita did not attend the meeting, so the only information available on which to base the direction of catholic education in the Wrexham was the single page document
4. The written information presented to the Diocese comprised:
  - a. A statement to say that both St. Mary's & St. Anne's are oversubscribed
  - b. Re-development of the Groves site for a two form entry primary to replace the existing St. Mary's
  - c. The continuance of St. Anne's, however with a recognition that a full single form entry was required
  - d. The possibility of a third primary school to cater for additional residential developments at some point in the future
  - e. A recommendation to commence a more detailed dialogue with the LA over the Groves site

5. No real detail with regard how the catholic education provision was to be developed in terms of population growth, finances and timescales was provided
6. The Bishop has ultimate responsibility for the pastoral care within the Diocese and from what I gather, the information was insufficient on which to form a considered opinion

It is important to note that the lack of any decision regarding more detailed talks between Diocese and LA arises through the hierarchical structure of the Diocese. It is not a rejection of the proposal to relocate St. Mary's to a new site, but a requirement for more information on how the new St. Mary's and St. Anne's will operate and what drives the potential for a third primary in Wrexham.

As I mentioned the hierarchical structure does to some extent limit the access to the Bishop to provide direct information or enter in to direct negotiation, however I don't think it precludes providing a general vision of the redevelopments plans for the town centre and broad elements of the LDP in terms of proposed population growth. Additional to this is the need to highlight the change that has gone on with town centre primary education places, from a surplus to a deficit in quite a short space of time. These, in their own right, are crucial elements and help to provide a context, which I feel is missing at the moment.

An invitation to both Rita Price & the Bishop as part of an exercise to communicate to stakeholders in the Wrexham town centre town centre redevelopment would be of benefit.

Cathy Coppack at Bishop's House would diarise appointments.

Please do feel free to call to discuss further.

Many thanks,

John

## Karen Kilcoyne

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**From:** Eirian Lightfoot  
**Sent:** 23 December 2015 16:10  
**To:** John Droog; curia@wrexhamdiocese.org.uk; headteacher@stmarys-wxm-pri.wrexham.sch.uk; [REDACTED]  
**Subject:** Relocation of St Mary's  
**Importance:** High

Dear Mr John Droog, Bishop Peter, Rita Price, Rachel Acton and Father Simon Treloar

I have been asked to arrange a meeting between yourselves, Councillor Mark Pritchard, Mr John Davies, Mr Dafydd Ifans and Councillor Michael Williams to discuss the relocation of St Mary's.

I am pleased to let you now that **Wednesday, 6 January at 4.15 pm** has been identified as a suitable date.

The meeting will be held in meeting room 2, 3<sup>rd</sup> floor Lampit Street, Wrexham.

Can you please let me know if you are able to attend this meeting.

Kind regards  
Eirian

### Eirian Lightfoot

Secretary to John Davies, Head of Education / *Ysgrifennyddes i John Davies, Pennaeth Addysg*  
Children and Young People Service / *Gwasanaeth Plant a Phobl Ifanc*



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*Nodwch, ni fydd negeseuon e-bost heb pwnc, yn anffodus, yn cael ei gyflwyno i'r cyfeiriad e-bost*

## Information Paper

### Proposed Replacement to St. Mary's Catholic Primary School

*Prepared by John Droog, Chair of Governors, St. Mary's Catholic Primary School, 30<sup>th</sup> Dec 2015*

#### Executive Summary

In consultation with the Life Long Learning Dept. of Wrexham County Borough Council, a proposal has been developed for the relocation of the existing St. Mary's school to a new, purpose built, full two form, facility on the redundant Groves school site.

The proposal aims to be compliant with the identified Diocesan requirements with regard Catholic education. Arising from the primary proposal is the further longer term opportunity to work with the LA to develop a coherent strategy for catholic education encompassing both primary and secondary provision across Wrexham.

The following paper considers the existing St. Mary's site, reviewing adequacy of provision against the 2013 Estyn report, 2010 EC Harris Condition report, 2014-17 Asset Management Plan, 2015 Fire Risk Assessment report, surrounding area development proposals and projected numbers on roll through to 2020.

Consideration of the wider political situation shows a narrow window of opportunity. Current plans for town centre redevelopment are supportive of faith based education within the town centre. The population and demographic changes over recent years have created a deficit of primary education places within the Wrexham town. That deficit extends to faith based provision.

The offered location for a full two form plus nursery school to replace the existing St. Mary's facility is of comparable geographic distance to the Cathedral. Agreement has been reached with St. Anne's Governing Body to maintain existing catchment boundaries.

Necessarily there has been a modification of stance with regard provision of primary school places within the town centre due to increasing population over recent years. High levels of Polish, Portuguese & Filipino economic migrants have significantly increased the Catholic population within the town centre. Good evidence exists regarding the strength of faith based education, with a focus on standards and behaviour when compared to community schools. Relocation of St. Mary's can & should be considered as part of a wider strategy, expanding St. Anne's to as full single form entry school with the prospect of a third Catholic primary school to the south of Wrexham, driven by construction of residential units under the 2013-2028 Local Development Plan.

### **Current Catholic primary education provision in Wrexham**

A replacement for St. Mary's has been under discussion for 10 plus years. The site is generally recognised as presenting ever more difficulties, both in terms of resource adequacy and more recently its location with the built environment.

Funding within the Diocesan education programme is currently understood to be directed to a new primary school in Bangor. Any replacement for St. Mary's or expansion of St. Anne's must therefore present no additional financial burden to the Diocese.

Within Wrexham, two Catholic primary schools exist. Both are operating over the standard numbers in terms of annual intakes. Both are experiencing increases in percentage of Catholic pupils on roll. For St. Mary's expansion to a full two form entry is required, bringing total numbers to 420 plus nursery. For St. Anne's the need is for a full single form entry, moving to 210 exclusive of nursery. In reality both schools are operating at this level of intake now. For both schools there is a clear need for expansion to cater for the already increasing numbers.

The present St. Mary's site has been in existence for over 100 years. Latterly, driven mainly through the increasing catholic population of Wrexham, the numbers on roll have increased. Effectively the school is over subscribed. Currently the school has 417 on roll, including nursery, with 96% of the Catholic faith. This has increased from 93% in 2013, the date of the last Estyn inspection.

The increase in numbers, over the standard 45, up to levels approaching 60 in foundation phase will impact fully in academic year 2017/18. The 'top block' area for years five & six cannot accommodate more than 98 pupils. In September 2017, the projected numbers will be 113<sup>1</sup>.

As the school effectively moves to a full two form entry of 60 pupils, based on existing demand it is viewed as not being possible to conduct whole school assemblies from September 2018.

In conclusion, the present resource cannot physically support the required school population by September 2017 unless additional classroom space is created. Against the background of the EC Harris condition report<sup>2</sup>, plans for an expansion to the top block area coupled to a more formal allocation of green open space were documented<sup>3</sup>. While not satisfactory, the proposed expansion did at least give some breathing space – it was not considered to be a long term solution.

Costing of classroom expansion to accommodate increased year five & six numbers is estimated to be in the region of £60 to £70k. A plan to create a more dedicated green area of Bellevue Park for the school's use is currently being discussed with Offa Community Council & WCBC Parks & Leisure Dept. Again, not an entirely satisfactory solution, the proposed fenced area will go some way to improving child safety. Expected cost is £23k, however this may be partially supported through grant funding through the landfill tax scheme.

These additions have to be set against the condition of the remaining buildings and changing nature of the surrounding area. The fire assessment report<sup>4</sup> of October 2015 concluded the premises to be classed as 'High Risk'. Although work is progressing to address many of the immediate requirements, it is important to note since the last inspection made in 2011, changes to legislation and best practice make the school less compliant from a fire safety perspective. This trend is expected to continue, with the building's increasing unsuitability to provide safe accommodation for its occupants becoming more evident.

Over the recent years, a number of residential developments have been granted planning permission. These, combined with the expansion of the Island Green retail park and potential changes to parking permissions surrounding the school are now impacting on the ability of parents to safely drop children off at school. It is feared that once the student accommodation block, adjacent to the school on Lea Road proceeds a further impingement of safe access to the school will result. The health & safety audit of June 2015, specifically identified the risk from vehicle movements and accordingly a traffic risk assessment is to be conducted through the LA.

In late 2014, St. Mary's was one of only 8 schools across Wrexham to be categorised as a 'Green' school under the GWe system, defined as **"A highly effective school, well run, strong leadership, track record in raising standards"**. Practically this means the school has the ability to operate with minimal external support. It would be reasonable to conclude therefore that a relocation to new premises could be accommodated and managed by existing staff.

#### **St. Mary's & St. Anne's – a shared vision**

Arising from a joint meeting, chaired by the Diocesan Director of Education in late 2013, a discussion paper<sup>5</sup> was produced summarising the key elements of development of Catholic primary education within Wrexham. This was brought to the attention of the WCBC Lifelong Learning Dept. in January 2014 with a joint meeting including Diocesan Director of Education, Head teachers and governor representatives from both schools. Arising from that meeting was a clear message from the LA: both schools needed to form the basis of a coherent strategy for Catholic education within Wrexham. Practically this meant improving working relationships and channels of communication.

In response a programme has been undertaken to foster stronger links and is now bringing positive benefits in terms of day to day closer working relationships and a shared vision for Catholic primary education. Representatives from the Governing Bodies of St. Mary's & St. Anne's now meet on a monthly basis. At teaching level numerous examples now exist where purchased teaching resources are evaluated and shared, which in turn improves the frequency of contact and a more structured development of best practice. In summary, the focus over the past year has been one of sharing information, shaping policy & identifying best practice with the aim of producing a mutually supportive approach to individual school progression.

### **Catholic education demand allied to Wrexham town centre provision**

Through economic migration of recent years, the population of Wrexham has increased. With a high proportion from strongly Catholic countries, it follows that the demand for faith based places in both primary and secondary has increased. As highlighted previously, the percentage of Catholic numbers on roll has increased from 93% to 96% in two years. This closely tracks the numbers of EAL pupils. This has steadily risen over recent times:

Year 2 (2015/16)	55.2% EAL
Year 6 (2015/16)	40% EAL

The increasing demand for Catholic primary education places is mirrored at St. Anne's. As with St. Mary's, the school is oversubscribed. The Catholic population has risen from under 30% to the present level of 58%. Again the significance of EAL pupils is noted.

The picture of oversubscription is common within the faith sector across the Wrexham town centre.

The LA has a statutory obligation to match provision with demand. Currently this is not being met. Admission over standard numbers is being permitted as there is no practical alternative.

For St. Anne's, the need to accommodate full single form entry has been recognised for a number of years. Architectural drawings have been compiled, with location on the current site easily accommodated. Funding has still to be confirmed, however through discussion between the two governing bodies it is evident that the Diocesan contribution of 15% of the budgeted £300k can be achieved through existing school funds. Relocation of St. Mary's and expansion of St. Anne's does give a total of three form entry across the town centre and would effectively cater for current demand levels.

### **Catholic education provision allied to Wrexham LDP**

The construction of Local Development Plan 2 is set against a context of Welsh Government's rejection of Wrexham's previous LDP submission, itself replacing the Unitary Development Plan of 1996 to 2011. Background Paper No. 1<sup>6</sup> provides significant detail on population projections, including economic migration. This, coupled to impact on employment and housing, allied to Wrexham's importance within the North East Wales Border & Coast Spatial Plan Area does appear to confirm Welsh Government's conclusions regarding future growth for the area. For the period 2013 to 2028 covered by LDP 2, a requirement for approximately 12,000 new homes will need to be catered for. Economic migration is not predicted to be at the same levels as in previous years, however, there is still an expectation that the past 10 year average of 630 is realistic. These will be mostly of working age, implying a continued growth in young families across the Wrexham area.

Expected housing development is expected to be concentrated more to the south of the town, making the most of the A483 road communication link.

As stated previously, the current requirement for some 90 Catholic primary places to be offered annually within the town centre can be achieved through relocation of St. Mary's and expansion of St. Anne's. This however does not consider future potential growth for the Catholic population over the period covered by LDP 2. A third Catholic primary school may be needed if population growth is supplemented by further economic migration. At this stage an awareness of this potential requirement will suffice. In broad terms funding for the construction of a new school would have to

be based on Section 106 agreements with developers, ideally targeting a 30% contribution, of which half would be considered as the Diocesan contribution.

#### **Potential relocation site for St. Mary's**

The former Groves school site is protected under a covenant for educational purposes. In November 2015, it was confirmed that the site was to remain under the ownership of WCBC and not to be transferred to Coleg Cambria.

The former Groves school site is located within an area of Wrexham that is to be re-developed over the coming years, with a number of projects designed to enhance the town centre for both residents and visitors alike.

The existing building is essentially derelict. Demolition and replacement with an iconic new build would complement the overarching plan for the surrounding area.

St. Mary's governing body have been advised by the Diocesan trustees that any replacement for the existing primary school is subject to the following conditions:

- The existing St. Mary's site should be considered as the 15% financial contribution towards a new build
- Ownership of the land on which the replacement school resides is to be transferred to the Diocese
- That two Catholic primary schools are maintained within the town centre, i.e. no negative impact on St. Anne's through replacement of St. Mary's

Discussions between representatives of the LA and St. Mary's governing body have been guided by the above conditions. No objection to the three conditions has been raised by the LA. The governing body of St. Anne's has been appraised of the proposal and agreement has been reached to maintain existing catchment boundaries.

It is accepted that the former Groves school site will accommodate a new primary school plus some form of other development. To date no firm details on the use of the remaining land have been provided, however residential, leisure or educational developments appear to be under consideration. St. Mary's governing body has been appraised of the site and the potential for redevelopment. To date no objections have been raised, indeed the governing body is unanimous in support of relocation to a new build on the former Groves site, providing the Diocesan conditions are met.

The need to maintain the close link between school and Cathedral is well understood. The former Groves location, while some 600m from the Cathedral, compared to the 400m of the existing St. Mary's site, is still accessible on foot. Additionally, the proposed redevelopment of the surrounding area will provide significantly better opportunities to support teaching staff in the delivery of diverse, high quality education.

## Next steps

The opportunity to relocate St. Mary's primary school to a new build within a prime town centre location has arisen only recently. The need to evaluate and confirm the validity of the proposal is subject to very short timescales, measured in days rather than weeks or months.

Discussions to date highlight a good degree of commonality between the LA and school's governing body. The school is well run, it provides a very good standard of education, but the building and its location present increasing challenges. There is an understanding that no real alternative location apart from the former Groves site exists within an acceptable walking distance of the Cathedral.

It is accepted that from a Diocesan standpoint, the potential for relocation of St. Mary's has to ideally complement, not detract or adversely affect Catholic education provision across Wrexham. For the LA the pressure to increase the number of primary education places within the town centre is of high priority.

It is hoped that this paper provides the basis and a context for detailed, constructive discussions involving key stakeholders. There is an acceptance that relocation of St. Mary's forms part of a wider picture with regard education provision. The window of opportunity to agree to enter into more substantive and detailed discussions surrounding design, funding and project timescales is small and consequently does demand a high degree of focus and commitment from decision making stakeholders.

## Next steps

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## References

1. St. Mary's Governing Body Estates SAC minutes, November 2015
2. Condition Report, EC Harris Built Asset Consultancy, March 2010
3. St. Mary's Governing Body Asset Management Plan, 2014-2017
4. WCBC Fire risk assessment report dated October 2015, with review conducted 01/07/15
5. Paper titled 'Catholic Primary Education Development' December 2013, produced by John Droog, St. Mary's Governor
6. Population and household projections with dwelling & employment impacts, Background paper No. 1, published March 2015 & produced by The Corporate Research and Information Unit, Conwy

**Karen Kilcoyne**

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**From:** John Droog [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 03 January 2016 19:55  
**To:** Leader; John Davies; Dafydd Ifans; Michael Williams; [REDACTED]; [REDACTED]  
'STMARYSRC Headteacher Mailbox'  
**Cc:** Eirian Lightfoot  
**Subject:** Potential relocation of St. Mary's Catholic Primary School  
**Attachments:** st. mary's relocation paper.docx

Dear All,

In preparation for the meeting on Wednesday I have drafted a paper, hopefully providing more background for the need to relocate St. Mary's set against the current demand for the expansion of town centre primary places, but within the context of town centre redevelopment, LDP2 and Catholic education development.

Ideally, the document can be used as a basis for discussion, but in the meantime, please do feel free to contact me with any errors or corrections required.

Kind Regards,

John Droog  
Chair of Governors  
St. Mary's Catholic Primary School  
Lea Road,  
Wrexham



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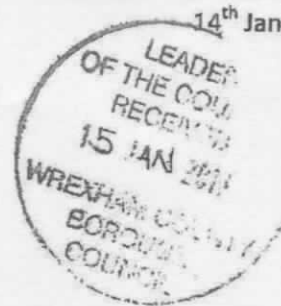
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Response drafted  
by DI and  
sent via MP.

JD

Cllr Mark Pritchard,  
Wrexham County Borough Council,  
The Guildhall,  
Wrexham LL11 1AY



14<sup>th</sup> January 2016

Dear Councillor Pritchard,

S. Mary's Catholic Primary School

Thank you for the invitation to the meeting last week at which together with the Council Officers you were able to talk through and discuss the proposal and offer with regard to a possible relocation of S. Mary's School, the assurances regarding S. Anne's School and the thoughts of a possible third school

For clarity sake it would be most helpful if the proposal and the detail you were able to give was to be in writing. As you will appreciate any project of this size and complexity as well as the impact on the Catholic community in Wrexham and its environs would have to be discussed by the Diocesan Trustees who would want as much detail as was available when we spoke, as well as the further information you agreed to provide. Re-statement about the apportionment of cost would be more than helpful too; as would clarification about what facilities would be shared with any other establishment on the whole site; the projected square meterage of the foot-print of the school and its immediate associated facilities; as well as some indication as to the relative location of the establishment(s) on the site.

You spoke of there being a fairly tight time frame in which these initial discussions were to take place. It would be helpful if could provide that, as too the projected timeline for the whole project, should it go ahead.

Should there be any further specific points especially those which might arise from the detail you are able to provide the Diocese will be in touch with you again. In anticipation, thank you.

Yours sincerely,

The Rt. Rev'd Peter M. Brignall  
Bishop of Wrexham

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28 January, 2016

Ruth.Kellett@wrexham.gov.uk

Dear Rt. Rev'd Brignall

St Mary's Catholic Primary School

Thank you for meeting with my colleagues and me earlier this month. As requested, I am providing you with further information regarding our detailed discussions. As you will no doubt appreciate, some of the finer details of such a complex proposal are yet to be worked through, but I will endeavour to capture the broad principles which were highlighted during our discussion.

I outlined to the meeting Wrexham County Borough Council's firm intentions to redevelop the former Groves School site for education purposes. I, together with officers of the Education Department, acknowledge that St. Mary's R.C. School is suffering from a number of issues related to its popularity and subsequent oversubscription in terms of pupil places. This is a pattern we recognise across a number of town centre schools. It is also acknowledged that the site of the current school, whilst convenient in relation to St. Mary's Cathedral, presents a number of limitations which hinder further development.

The Council is keen to move fairly quickly to begin the redevelopment of the former Groves site and wants to explore with the Diocese of Wrexham, the possibility of re-siting an enlarged St. Mary's R.C. School onto one part of the site. The Council is committed to using the whole site for education purposes but sees more than one school sharing the area. The Council is keen that the first school to be developed on the site occupies the corner of Chester Road and Powell Road, near to the current school building. The Council is unable to provide a firm view on the potential locations of any other school building on the site but subject to planning, would envisage other facilities being at the other end of the site, sharing the school fields with St. Mary's R.C. School.

We discussed the provision of a 420 pupil-place primary school with an additional 60 nursery places. Such a school would occupy a footprint of approximately 3,400 m<sup>2</sup>, including yard space. Such a project would be expected to cost around £5.5 million, without accounting for land values.



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The costs of the project would be met by Welsh Government, the Diocese of Wrexham and Wrexham County Borough Council. This is normally provided by an 85% grant from the Welsh Government and 15% provided by the Diocese and WCBC. The majority of the 15% is usually provided by the Diocese as the asset would belong to them. The current indicators from the Welsh Government are that any projects brought forward before 2019 (Band B of 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools) would only attract a 50% intervention rate from them. The Council is willing to explore the possibility of utilising the current St. Mary's site for its own purposes, but makes no firm commitment in this regard. It was agreed that both parties would seek independent valuations of the Lea Road site.

The timeline for the project is wholly dependent on the availability of funding from all partners. Once it has been established that Welsh Government is a potential source of the majority of the funding, the business case process takes 10-12 months before reaching a point where tenders can be prepared. As long as planning permission is applied for in tandem with this process, then the build can commence immediately after the business cases are approved. The build would take approximately 12 months using traditional methods, though modular contractors can halve this time and achieve a result which is of equal quality.

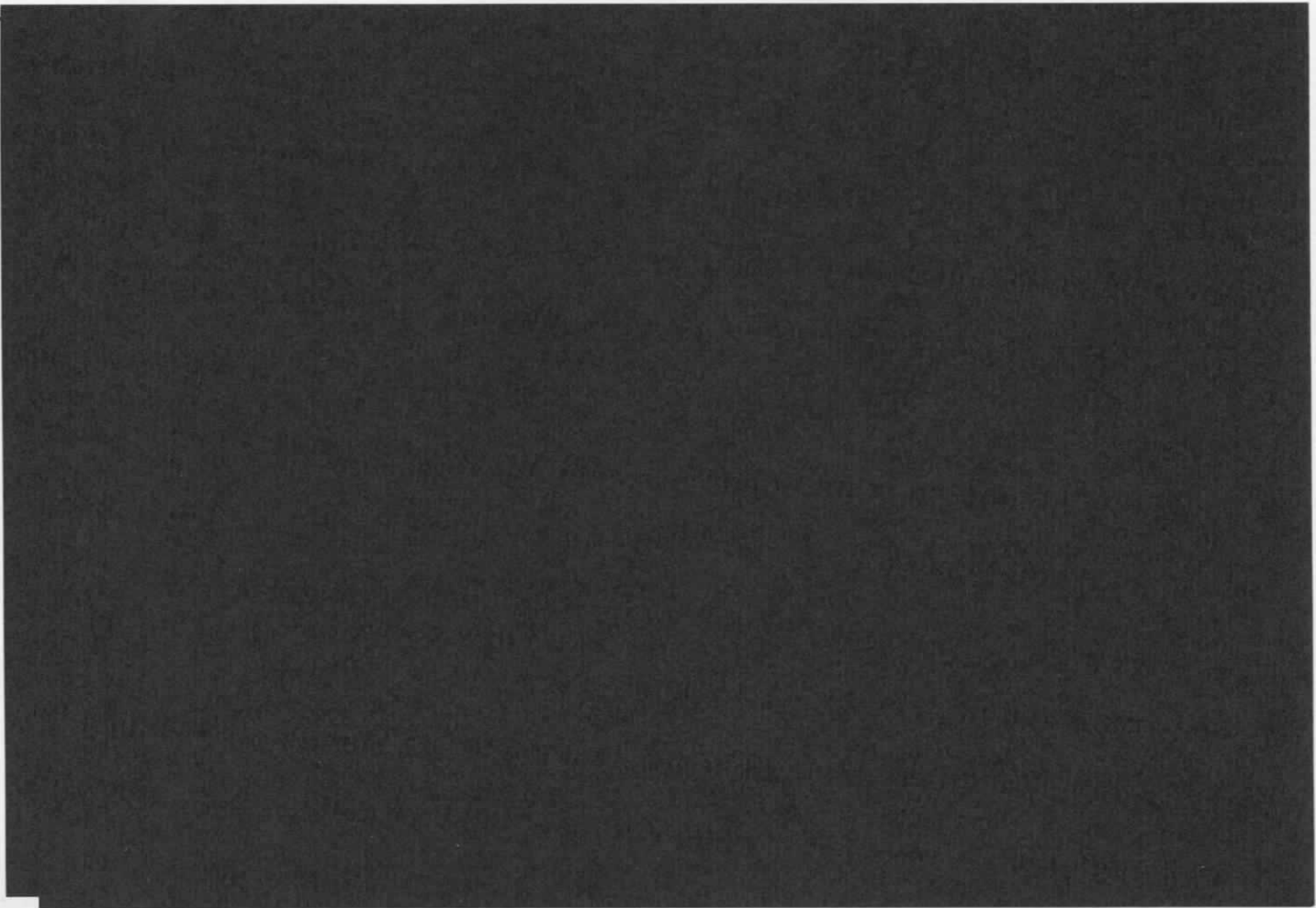
I close by reiterating that WCBC is committed to this project, whilst at the same time remains keen to ensure that the Groves site is not left unused for an extended period of time. I look forward to hearing the outcome of your discussions with the Diocesan Trustees.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Mark Pritchard

Leader of Wrexham County Borough Council



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**From:** John Droog [REDACTED]  
**Sent:** 23 March 2016 06:09  
**To:** Phil Wynn; Mark Pritchard  
**Subject:** Groves site and St. Mary's Catholic Primary relocation

Dear Both,

I understand from the earlier conversation with Phil that the Groves site is due to be discussed by the Executive Board tomorrow. I feel that in view of the discussions that appear to be happening concerning the immediate future of the Groves site it would be prudent to put on record the position of St. Mary's school from the perspective of the Governing Body.

The need to relocate St. Mary's to a more appropriate site has been recognised for at least ten years. The existing site cannot continue to be considered as a suitable location. Phil, you are very aware of the issues regarding the lack of suitable outdoor space to effectively deliver all elements of the curriculum. You are also aware of the significant access & parking issues facing parents dropping off and picking up their children. The location issue is further compounded by the increasing numbers of parents wishing to send their children to the school. Remember, in spite of the issues presented by the inappropriateness of the site, the school is classed by GwE as a 'green' school. This is a real testament to the efforts and competency of the staff and highlights the good potential for the school to transfer to new premises and to continue to succeed and prosper.

The Groves site is viewed by St. Mary's Governing Body as a once in a lifetime opportunity to move to a much more suitable site from an education perspective, but still being able to maintain the close links with the Cathedral. The potential for relocation to the Groves site has been considered a number of years ago, previous to my time on the governing body. The discussions between the school and local authority did not progress to any great extent, primarily due to the governing body rejecting the idea of using the existing building. Relocation would be dependant on a new build. The concept of relocation of the school to a new purpose built facility remains the strong preference for the governing body and Diocesan Trustees.

Phil, Mark, as you are both very aware there is a deficit of primary places within the town centre as of today. Schools within the town centre have been forced to accept over their standard number for several years now. St. Mary's now has numbers on roll at 417, inclusive of nursery. The school has a clear demonstrable need to move to a full two form entry, i.e. intakes of 60 per year, bringing the total to 420 plus nursery. This would represent a significant step forward for faith based education within the town centre.

A number of discussions have been held between representatives of St. Mary's governing body and local authority, commencing in September of last year. Those discussions have been productive and demonstrate a clear willingness by both parties to work together. That dialogue was facilitated by your efforts Phil and as I mentioned earlier, the governing body is appreciative of the support you have shown for the school. In the early part of 2016 after the Executive Board's decision to redevelop the Groves site, I did feel that real progress was being made and that there was genuine support from all parties for a new faith based school to be built on the site. As mentioned previously, St. Mary's needs are immediate; delay is not in the best interests of the school.

The support shown by you both over recent months for a relocated St. Mary's has been visible and is very much appreciated. For its part the school's governing body has been consistent in approach. It is requested that same consistency is maintained by the local authority and that your continued support is provided to bring a much needed new school to the town centre. The betterment and future of a large number of young people within the Wrexham town centre is very much linked to your deliberations at this point. Please continue to support the school through relocation via a new build on the Groves site – it is a once in a lifetime opportunity, we cannot let it slip by.

Kind Regards,

John