

# STEDHAM PRIMARY SCHOOL

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Headteacher  
Mr Malcolm Meaby

10th October 2019

Dear Parents and Carers

## The Future of Stedham School - Time to Have your Say

As you know, West Sussex County Council (WSCC) announced in July that they were considering a public consultation on the future of Stedham Primary School. We, the school governors, were baffled by this, given that Stedham is a strong and thriving school. It is a small village school and therefore has a relatively small pupil population; however, that is one of the things that is so lovely about Stedham, and one of the reasons why many parents choose it for their children. Every child is known and can therefore have their individual needs met.

Over the summer holiday we worked hard to engage with officers at WSCC education department to understand why Stedham had been chosen for consultation and to get our school removed from the list of “vulnerable” schools. We have had strong support and understanding from our local councillor, Kate O’Kelly. Despite this, we have been unsuccessful in halting the process; WSCC refused to engage with us and instead were determined to start their consultation, which they did on Monday, 7th October.

### What Happens Next?

WSCC wants to know what parents and carers, teachers, governors and members of the wider community think about Stedham Primary. After they have gathered this information they will make a decision about whether Stedham should be subject to change or left as it is.

We have until 25th November to have our say about the future of the school.

There are three things we can all do over the coming weeks to make sure that our voices are heard:

#### 1. Public Meeting



A University of Chichester  
ITT Partner School

- Come to the Public Meeting at Stedham School where we will have the chance to ask Council officers questions and to voice our concerns.
- The meeting will be held at Stedham Primary School on **Thursday 24th October at 6.30pm- 8.30pm**. Please do come if you can. It is important that we all stand together in support of our school. Please do also speak out at the meeting. This is our one chance to speak directly to those making decisions about our school.

## 2) Council Survey

- Go to the link below and click in the blue rectangle called Have your Say, On-Line Survey. You may want to wait until **after** the public meeting to do this so that you are armed with as much information as possible.

<https://haveyoursay.westsussex.gov.uk/strategic-planning-and-place/rural-and-small-schools/>

- The survey is split into two parts: the first asks for details about you and the second asks 5 questions about Stedham Primary School.
- The second section about Stedham is very short and the questions are narrow, so it is important that you make good use of the boxes left blank for your comments. (See guidance at the bottom of this letter).

## 3) Encourage the Wider Community to Make their Voices Heard

- We are sending a letter similar to this one to Stedham Parish Council members, who are very supportive and keen to help. We are also reaching out to local residents and to other local schools, asking them all to support Stedham.
- You could help by sending the link to friends and family and asking them to speak up for Stedham. If you know someone who would like to take part in the survey but does not have access to a computer there are paper copies of the survey available at Midhurst library.

We hope you feel as passionately about securing the future of our wonderful school as we do; if so, it is vital that you have your say. Please do feel free to ask any of the governors for further information. Alternatively, you can direct any questions to Malcolm Meaby who can pass them on to us. We are more than happy to help with anything we can.

Best wishes,  
Stedham Governors

David Furlow (Chair) [dfurlow@acs-schools.com](mailto:dfurlow@acs-schools.com)  
 Celia Billington (Vice Chair) [cecilie.68@hotmail.co.uk](mailto:cecilie.68@hotmail.co.uk)  
 Toni Barrington, Kirsty Booker, Malcolm Meaby,  
 Mel Nicholls, Katie Nicholson, Matthew Pitteway.

## Guidance on the “Have Your Say” Survey

### Background

In the Stedham section of the survey we have been supplied with a table containing colour coded boxes. This is described as a summary of the assessment of Stedham, conducted in April to June, analysed against the School Effectiveness Criteria.

For clarity we think you should know that this table is misleading for the following reasons:

1. The impact assessment from which this table is extracted did not include any visits to our school or any engagement with anyone at the school, staff or governors.
2. Two of the columns (relating to where current pupils live) are not relevant criteria according to WSCC’s own School Effectiveness Plan. There is no justification for their inclusion in the survey.
3. “Fewer than 100 pupils” is not flagged as a negative in the School Effectiveness Plan.
4. WSCC has not, when questioned, been able to tell us how they have reached their projected pupil numbers for 2022.

In other words, the table is misleading and unhelpful.

### The Questions

There are 5 questions in all. Questions 1 and 2 are straightforward.

Question 3 asks whether, in your opinion the school is financially viable. We believe this to be a ludicrous question to be asking of anyone other than school leaders and governors. WSCC obviously assumes that you will use the inaccurate and misleading information in the table to steer your choice.

Question 4 asks what organisational change, if any, you think Stedham should be subject to. Again, we feel that this is an unfair question to ask anyone not involved with the management of schools. On the plus side, there is a brief explanation of each of the options suggested to give you a bit of an idea of what they mean. However, should you wish to know more about any of these options, please get in contact with us.

Question 5 - is a blank box inviting you to express you own views and feelings about the school and about the consultation. This is the most useful question for getting our views heard so please use it!