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You Ref: 2020/00874/RG3

Date: 31<sup>st</sup> August 2020

Dear Miss King

**Planning Application by Vale of Glamorgan ("the Council") Expansion of St Nicholas Church-in-Wales Primary School ("the School")**

I would like to object to the proposed expansion of St. Nicholas Church school on the grounds that the planning application does not adequately address the following concerns:

1. Safety of the children at the school;
2. Safety of residents within the immediate area;
3. Restricted access for emergency vehicles during drop-off and pick-up times;
4. A drop-off zone on the school site controlled by the school
5. The ill-conceived idea of a voluntary one-way system on local roads controlled by the school
6. Parking and traffic chaos at drop-off and pick-up times.

**Objections 1 and 2 - Safety of children at the school and safety of local residents**

There is imminent danger to children of the school and local residents during drop-off and pick-up times. Parents or guardians of the children jostle for prime position performing 3 point turns and reversing round corners to turn round prior to these times. Then there is a rush to get away. There is a severe risk that a child or local resident may well be knocked down. There are no footpaths going from the school to Ger-Y-Llan so children must walk on the road. An accident waiting to happen. The Transport report does not seem to address adequately the problem with lack of footpaths and road width. The PAC report totally dismissed my previous concerns with glib statements that the road infrastructure is typical for a rural setting which might be OK for a small school but certainly will not work for the expanded large school being proposed. There is an inference that pedestrians and cyclist will have an effect of reducing the speed of the traffic. A feeling that it would be alright as there have been no fatalities and no Personal Injury Collisions (PICs) is not acceptable. I note the Vale of Glamorgan have not requested an input from the police on this matter. This needs to be done before this application is approved by the planning committee. Great store has been put on the wonderful ill-conceived voluntary one-way system controlled by the school. I would point out the staff at the school have no legal jurisdiction outside the school premises

and would leave themselves and the Vale of Glamorgan Council exposed if anything they did caused an accident.

### **Objection 3 - Access for Emergency Services**

I could not find any mention of access considerations for police, fire and ambulance vehicles during drop off and collection times. I believe it is unlikely that they would be able to get through to all residents in the local community thus endangering local residents and for that matter children at the school. The PAC report again dismisses this comment. A statement is required from the emergency services that they have looked at this and are happy with it before the planning application is approved by the planning committee. Worth noting is that the voluntary one-way system will not be known to the emergency services using their Satnavs.

### **Objection 4 – Drop-off zone on the school site**

The idea of a one-way drop-off system through the school grounds will in reality not work and certainly be difficult to set up and control. Furthermore, this will only be suitable for dropping off as collection will require the parent or nominated responsible adult to be outside the school gates when the child is released from school. It was considered at one of my schools in South Gloucestershire and rejected by the governing body, supported by the local authority, on the grounds of health and safety in that it was impossible to adequately segregate the children from the cars in a safe manner. In my 30 years as Chair of Governors I do not know of any school where parents are allowed to drive into school to drop off and pick up their children as a matter of routine. Another factor that must be considered is that parents love to talk and stay longer than they should resulting in a significant back up of traffic and parents resorting to parking in the surrounding streets which brings me back to my safety concerns above. The school needs to produce documents (including the Travel Plan) on how this will work before the planning application is approved. I do not believe the governing body has fully addressed this and my concern is that they are leaving themselves and the Vale of Glamorgan Council vulnerable.

### **Objection 5 – Voluntary one-way system on local roads**

The Local Highway Authority (LHA) and the PAC report put great store on the ill-conceived voluntary one-way system controlled by the school to mitigate objections 1, 2, and 4 above. This will not work. The school have no jurisdiction outside the school premises. The school and the governing body are leaving themselves vulnerable if anything they do causes an accident. Reliance on people being sensible and obeying instruction is questionable, as has been seen during the recent Covid-19 pandemic.

### **Objection 6 - Parking**

The additional cars rising from an estimated 40 to 119 as a result of the expansion would gridlock the surrounding roads at starting and particularly at finishing time as well as during any special events going on at the school. Ger-Y-Llan already has a significant number of cars parked up at collection time and with the expansion this will become intolerable. Ger-y-Llan is used already extensively for parking at school drop off and pickup times and whilst most drive sensibly turning round at the end of the cul-de-sac, there are a few who travel at speed with little consideration for the local residents or the safety of children in the vicinity. They have been known to park across drives and are abusive if asked to move.

### **My Background**

I moved from South Gloucestershire to St. Nicholas in December 2018. In Bristol I was chair of Governors for a Secondary school as well as chair of governors for a number of primary schools over the last 30 years. I have also been involved extensively in multi-academy trusts so I completely understand the need for additional school places and pleased that section 106 money will be made available with the balance from 21<sup>st</sup> Century Schools.

In summary I consider that before it goes to the planning committee then the following must be addressed:

- Written input from persons of authority in the police, fire and ambulance services about the safety of children and residents and access to residential properties in this locality relating to this planning application. This should also address the unofficial one-way system. This will protect the Council and School should a problem arise in the future.
- A detailed document from the School and the Education department of exactly how they will implement the unofficial one-way system and manage the on-site drop-off zone. This should include the Travel Plan. This should be a prerequisite of the planning application and not an after thought.

I trust that the Planning Report to the Planning Committee will adequately address my deep concerns.

Yours sincerely

A black rectangular redaction box covering the signature of Geoff Howell.

Geoff Howell

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