

Miss Jessica King
Planning Department
The Vale of Glamorgan Council
Dock Office, Barry CF63 4RT

2 Sept 2020

Dear Miss King

Planning Application 2020/00874/RG3 by Vale of Glamorgan Council (VOGC): proposed expansion of St Nicholas Church-in-Wales Primary School to accommodate an extra 108 pupils

I wish to object to the above planning application on the grounds listed below.

1. It is not necessary to expand the school by this amount to meet the needs of Vale of Glamorgan residents. Children are already transported from the City of Cardiff to make up sufficient numbers to make the school viable. If children were not transported to St Nicholas from outlying areas, there would not be enough pupils attending the existing school to make it a viable proposition. It would be far more environmentally friendly and safe for children living in Cardiff to attend schools locally rather than need to be transported in such numbers to a school far away from their homes. Expansion of the St Fagan's Church in Wales primary school or others nearer their homes would be a far more practical solution, and would reduce the number of short car and bus journeys required to transport children living in the City of Cardiff to attend school. **This proposed expansion is contrary to the environmental policies of the Welsh government and VOGC.**
2. **The village constitutes a conservation area and has very narrow roads that cannot be widened.** Most of the roads around the church and school areas do not permit 2 vehicles to pass safely, thus preventing 2-way traffic flow. It is already gridlocked at school opening and closing times with cars and pedestrians. Driving to and from my home at these times is a nightmare as cars are parked all over the place, making the negotiation of a safe passage on the road through the unruly mess of traffic almost impossible. It is further complicated by the movement of parents and children on the road - they often appear very suddenly and sometimes run out from in front of and behind parked cars. There is already a situation of a bad accident, possibly fatal, waiting to happen. Comments made by residents to parents asking them to park in a more disciplined or considerate way are always responded to by the statement that there is simply insufficient room to park and that they are doing the best that they can. If the proposal to expand the school (doubling its size) should proceed then the competition for parking spaces on the roads, pavements, grass verges and house entrances (which are all already saturated) will increase exponentially, thus massively increasing the dangers to parents and children.
3. I understand that the Transport Assessment (TA) is mainly an office/desk-based exercise prepared without a site visit to St Nicholas during school collection times (paragraphs 1. 1. 4 and 5. 2. 11). It does not refer to the parking of parents' cars all over the village and the current chaos in the village for an hour twice a day around school opening and closing times. Their normal practice is for parents to park wherever they can – usually obstructing the road – and walk their children to or from school before returning to their car and battling through the heavy gridlocked traffic to try and get out onto the A48. It is already extremely difficult for traffic to get out of St Nicholas onto the A48 in either East or West directions, due to the heavy volume of traffic on the A48, the very poor visibility from all of the road junctions between the school and the A48, and the sheer number of parents' cars trying to get out at the same time, and these difficulties already cause significant traffic queuing within the village at school start and stop times. Expansion as proposed would dramatically and exponentially increase the current vehicle exit problems. **In view of these considerations the Transport Assessment is completely flawed and thus completely unreliable.** Paragraphs 5.2.11 and 5.2.12

seem to assume that cars arrive, collect children immediately and leave in a very orderly manner. Each parent simply does not and will never collect each respective pupil from the school gates at that family's fixed, predetermined time with synchronous military precision. They usually arrive early, park wherever they can, in whatever manner they are able, walk to the school and then collect their children following conversations with other parents. The total duration of residence of the parents visit to the village to collect their child is thus seemingly usually 15-30 minutes. As a consequence, all the roads in the village at present become completely congested, with many being impossible to drive-through. **This is the current reality which the Transport Assessment ignores.** The TA estimates that the number of pupils generated vehicles in the afternoon will increase by 133% from 51 to 119 (tables 5-2, 5-5 and 5-6). **This would result in absolute bedlam if this expansion should be permitted, due to the exponential rise in competition for parking, the rush towards any available spaces, road rage and consequent danger to children's safety.**

4. The above factors already make it extremely difficult for residents to access their properties for an hour at school opening and an hour at school closing times each day. The proposed school expansion would make such access markedly more difficult. Of even greater concern is that **emergency vehicles will be unable to gain access to residential properties, the school, or pupils** who may be involved in road traffic accidents as a result of the traffic bedlam. **This may seriously endanger life. I think it imperative that the planning committee should seek written reports from the police, fire and ambulance services concerning these increased dangers to residents, parents and pupils. I am frankly unable to see how these unacceptable risks to life could possibly be mitigated. If the VOGC planning committee should go ahead and grant planning permission for this proposal, in the knowledge of these manifest dangers, then in my view it will assume legal responsibility for any mishap that might occur due to its willful creation of these predisposing conditions.**

Can you please confirm to me that you will make the full copy of this letter available to all members of the planning committee well before its meeting to consider this proposal?

Can you please also confirm that you will inform me by e-mail to [REDACTED] of any significant events (eg planning committee meetings) that are open to any further input from the public by letter, e-mail or attendance?

Yours faithfully

Dr Paul Williams
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