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Mrs Emma Watkins
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Dear Mrs Watkins

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

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

1. I have been made aware that the original TA was mainly an office based exercise prepared with one morning and no afternoon site visit to St Nicholas during school collection times (paragraphs 1. 1. 4 and 5. 2. 11). It does not take into account the parking of parents' cars scattered all over the village twice a day causing absolute chaos. Both at the morning drop-off and afternoon pick-up times, parents park wherever they can, even if they are obstructing the road and other driveways of residents in the village because space is already so tight. They hurry out of their cars and walk along the already busy and obstructed roads – because there are not pavements/footpaths all the way around the village – dodging cars that are fighting for limited spaces in order to drop-off/pick-up their children. This is of course putting the lives of children and their parents at risk because it would be all too easy for an accident to happen and the life of a child to be lost. Once parents have dropped-off or picked-up their children, they then sit in gridlock before being able to make it onto the A48. This whole process lasts for at least 1 hour in the morning and in the afternoon. During this time, given that there are obstructed roads and blocked driveways, it makes it impossible for the residents of St Nicholas to come and go as they please. This limited space is barely able to function as it is, let alone if the school was expanded and the number of parents arriving and leaving increased in an already extremely limited space. The TA has seemingly completely ignored this current reality. Given that there is not only the issue of the current traffic load within a small village and limited space, but there is also the issue of child safety when walking to and from school – this safety issue is gravely concerning and has worryingly, also been ignored. We should be prioritising the safety of our children and making it a paramount concern rather than ignoring it – as the TA has done.
2. It is not necessary to expand the school by the amount proposed to meet the needs of Vale of Glamorgan residents. Children are currently already transported in large numbers from the City of Cardiff to make up sufficient numbers to make the school viable. There has historically, not been enough children in St Nicholas for a school to be viable in the first place, so children have been transported from Ely and St Fagan's to St Nicholas in order to make the school viable. It makes no sense in this day and age why children are being transported far away from their homes to attend school, when schools closer to their homes could be expanded to accommodate them instead. Expansion of St Fagan's Church in Wales primary school or other similar schools nearer their homes would make far more sense, not only saving the time for these children and parents to commute,

but also reduce the number of bus or car journeys and be far more environmentally friendly. This proposed expansion is contrary to the environmental policies of the Welsh government and the Vale of Glamorgan Council (VOGC).

3. In paragraph 2-4 of the TAA, it estimates that 22 pupils living in the land to the east of Bonvilston will walk 2 km to and from school along the A48 to St Nicholas school and that a further 7 pupils will walk even greater distances to school. This makes absolute no sense. Surely the council and AECOM do not think that parents will actually walk at least 2km to and from school, twice a day? Especially given the busy roads they will have to walk along and enduring all weathers. This is a gross misconception, and nobody in his or her right mind would commit to this. Has this just been overestimated in order to underestimate the number of cars expected at drop-off and pick-up times? Also, regardless of the workforce being encouraged to work from home during the current COVID-19 pandemic, if children are still expected to attend school then it certainly does not mean that parents will automatically walk their children at least 2km to and from school each day. It appears that these assumptions have been fabricated in order to play to the narrative that will suit the proposals rather than having any foundation to them.
4. I cannot find any mention of access considerations for police, ambulances and fire service vehicles, especially during drop-off and pick-up times. I cannot see how these emergency vehicles will have appropriate emergency access during these extremely chaotic times of at least one hour twice a day with obstructed roads, double parking and blocked driveways. If emergency vehicles cannot access the residents of St Nicholas or even the school or children who have potentially been involved in road traffic accidents caused by the extreme situation we have been forced into, then that is undoubtedly gross negligence and is quite frankly indefensible. It is essential that the planning committee obtain written reports from the police, ambulance and fire services taking into account the considerations for the increased danger to life and lack of ability for the emergency services to respond adequately. As far as I can see, these dangers cannot be mitigated under the current plans and I am shocked at how a planning committee could pursue a plan that willfully endangered human life.

Could you please ensure that the full copy of this letter will be made available to all members of the planning committee well before its meeting to consider this proposal, so that all members will have a sufficient opportunity to read it?

Yours faithfully

Dr Fiona Williams.