

## Watkins, Emma (Agency)

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**Subject:** FW: Planning Committee meeting 21/01/21, St Nicholas CIW Primary School

**From:** Ruth Evans [REDACTED] >

**Sent:** 19 January 2021 15:09

**To:** Planning <[Planning@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk](mailto:Planning@valeofglamorgan.gov.uk)>

**Subject:** Planning Committee meeting 21/01/21, St Nicholas CIW Primary School

I ask that members of the Planning Committee take the following comments into account when considering the planning application in respect of St Nicholas CIW Primary School (2020/00874/RG3 and 2020/00954/CAC).

I do not, in principle, object to the construction of a new primary school for St Nicholas; the current building is clearly not fit for purpose and should be replaced, although not necessarily on the same site. However I have serious concerns about the impact of this proposal on traffic and pedestrian safety on the A48 and within that part of the village surrounding the school.

The new school is intended to accommodate twice the current number of pupils, and is bigger than is needed for the village and surrounding area. Although local new housing developments mean that, in time, more children will live locally, they will make up (as they do now) the minority of the total number attending the school. Most pupils currently travel some distance to access the school, and this will not change. Most of them arrive at school by car because there is no convenient bus service, especially since the only bus route through St Nicholas (the X2) now travels along the A4232 rather than the A48 through western Cardiff, where so many pupils live.

Whilst the design of the new school introduces a limited drop-off and pick-up area, many parents will still need to park, particularly where nursery pupils are involved. These youngest children have not only to be taken by their parents to and from the school building itself, but they also need to be helped in and out of cars and car seats. So additional traffic and additional parking needs - and the problems these present - are inevitable, as acknowledged in the Report to Planning Committee that you will consider on 21 January.

The application includes a solution to these problems which is comprised of the creation of a one-way system along School Lane and Unnamed Road, and the pedestrianisation of the eastern end of School Lane where it meets the A48.

I have several concerns about this solution:

### Access to and from the A48

- All traffic will be forced to use what is the single most dangerous exit onto the A48 from this part of the village, especially when turning right. This exit is one that most residents do not currently use, as sight-lines are very limited and many cars on the A48 are travelling over the 30mph speed limit. For the person trying to get onto the A48, it's necessary to pull out quite a long way into the eastbound lane to see any safe distance. And for traffic on the A48 (even if it's travelling at or below the speed limit), there is very little time to brake or otherwise avoid a car pulling out. I do not use this exit, even if it would be the most convenient for me: it is simply too risky. I'd recommend anyone who is proposing that it should be the sole exit from this part of the village should actually try it out first!
- Similarly all traffic will be forced to use one, rather than the current three, entrances into the area around the school, and will often have to queue on the A48 to turn right into the western end of School Lane. The A48 is busy most of the time, not just during the school-run; limiting access to a single entrance will cause queuing, delays and potential for accidents at any time, especially since the 30mph speed limit is often broken by traffic passing through the village too fast on what appears to be a wide, fast, open road.

### Parking and access within the village

- Parking along the roads of the one-way system and Ger y Llan is very limited. Cars will be forced to circulate looking for the few available spaces, which will fill up very quickly: there simply isn't the parking capacity for any more cars than there are now, and nowhere to create additional parking space.
- Inevitably gridlock will ensue at school run times, resulting in: residents unable to access or leave their homes by car; non-school vehicles such as delivery vans prevented from going about their legitimate business; parents of pupils becoming frustrated and angry because they can't complete the school run quickly and efficiently; traffic being forced back out onto the A48 to try again from the western end of School Lane; vastly increasing amounts of pollution from idling engines.

#### One-way system, pedestrianisation and access to the village

- Church Row and Meyrick Cottages line the central part of School Lane, which is, along its length, narrow with no footpath. At this part, it is made even narrower by residents' cars being parked along one side of the road. If residents are forced to turn right into Church Row to park (most turn left at the corner of Well Lane at the moment), they will inevitably leave their cars further out into the road in order to get out through the driver's side door, exacerbating this problem. It already sometimes impossible to drive along this stretch of School Lane, but currently there is always the option to travel around the front of the church instead. The one-way system will mean that all traffic, including the emergency services, will have to travel along this narrow, congested part of School Lane to get to almost any property in this part of the village. How will this be possible when, for example, road maintenance is being carried out; someone is moving house, a resident's car has taken up too much space, or it's school run time and the road is gridlocked? This won't be an occasional problem: it will be an issue at least twice every school day. For any resident taken ill at the wrong time, it could be fatal.
- Large farm machinery regularly accesses farms and farmland north of the village by travelling along to Well Lane using the eastern end of School Lane (i.e. past Ger y Llan). There is no other access to these farms. It is already impossible for such vehicles (or any other large vehicles such as road maintenance lorries, recycling lorries, moving trucks etc) either to drive along the Church Row section or to turn left from there into Well Lane. The one-way system effectively permanently prevents them from ever being able to travel along Well Lane to their fields and property.
- Currently, although there are undoubtedly problems with parking and congestion at school run times, residents have the option of three points of access to the A48 and options of moving around either side of the church. If one of the roads is busy or blocked (for example by a large vehicle) there's always another way to go. The proposed one-way system removes these options permanently, making traffic movement around this part of the village much more inconvenient and constrained all day, every day, not just when the school run is happening. It's a sledgehammer approach which is unnecessarily restrictive and incorporates dangerous changes.
- The current foot access along the A48 into this part of the village is undoubtedly in need of improvement, but pedestrianising the eastern School Lane access to the A48 is an excessive solution. Improving and pavements on the A48 and creating a pedestrian walkway in School Lane would help, as would installing mirrors so that traffic and pedestrians can see each other at that junction. Additionally, a pedestrian access from Cae Newydd into Ger y Llan or onto the track running off Well Lane into the field north of Cae Newydd (bordering the boundary of the development and Llan-yr-Afon) would provide a much safer and pleasanter walk for pupils and residents, and would make the "walking bus" idea much more viable. Have the landowners for either of these routes been approached?

Ultimately the question has to be asked "is this the right and the best location for the new school and the residents of St Nicholas?" Although I can see the advantages of the school remaining in its current position, those advantages are overridden since it also clearly presents problems which are only surmountable by making traffic problems permanently worse both in the village and on the A48, potentially endangering lives and increasing the likelihood of traffic accidents. Other locations which have better access should be considered for this school.

Thank you for reading this email.

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