

Notes from Cabinet Meeting at NPT on 1st October 2014

Vote to go to consultation on school closures

Present

BRAG members and villagers attended a protest objecting to the closures before the meeting. Only a small number of people representing each of the five schools involved were allowed into the public gallery. Those in the public gallery are allowed to observe only and cannot interact with the meeting in any way. Dianne, Dafydd, John and Paul observed from the public gallery along with half a dozen other Bryn Residents.

Council Officers and Councillors were present in the meeting. Only David Williams was present from the Bryn Councillors.

Notes

The meeting started with those in the meeting declaring any possibly conflicting interests. David Williams declared his Governor role with Cwmafan School. Other councillors also had governor roles. It was agreed this was not a conflict of interest.

Two councillors were there to ensure fair play but were not able to vote. It was these two councillors (both non labour) who asked the most probing questions and had clearly done their homework.

Each school was then addressed in turn starting with Bryn. No one spoke in support of Bryn, not even David Williams. Good arguments were put forward in the defence of each of the other schools.

David Williams did speak on behalf of Pontrydyfen.

The questions asked about Tonmawr suggested there was a very poor case for closure since when the costs of the special needs unit was removed, as this would still be required, there were no savings to be made and the education standard was higher than the school the pupils would be moved to.

The Councillor for YGG Cwmgor had also clearly done her homework and ripped the proposal apart, pointing out many errors and omissions in the proposal for this school.

Based on the support in this initial meeting for Bryn School, it would be closed now if the vote had been for action not consultation.

As it turned out, the vote for consultation was unanimous for all five schools.

Before the vote, A Thomas had reminded the cabinet that it was for consultation and all options should be consulted on along with any new ones that may appear through the consultation process.

Bryn residents now need to embrace those consultation full on if we are to retain any services or community within the village.

The public meeting will now go ahead for Thursday 9/10/14 at 6pm in the Village Hall (while we have one!). Planning meetings ready for this public meeting will be called and will involve BRAG and other supporters of action.

The Council will also call a public meeting, which they will run as part of the consultation process.

Paul Bulmer

1/10/14