

## NOTES POINTS FROM MEETING WITH NEIL CALVERT 19 / 09/ 08

Attended by: Neil Calvert, Anne Ewing, Catherine Bisset, Kirsty Wells and Gill Gracie and Ed Molyneux.

- NC opened with questions about the number of pick-ups and drop offs at the nursery by car. The group confirmed that probably the majority of parents used cars, because many drop off / pick up en route to / from work. NC proposed that, in view of this, a central village location might not be critical. The group highlighted the preference for a central village location is less about beginning and end of day and more about the wraparound care with school and pre-school. That said, it was agreed that difficulties with a near-village location might be overcome with a minibus arrangement.
- NC suggested that other groups within the village might be willing to cover statutory places (e.g. playgroup). We highlighted that this is a bit of a red herring since only 5 of the children in Janette's care use nursery for statutory hours only - that leaves 21 children in the nursery and 18 children who use the school pre-school thanks to the nursery's wraparound care who could not be accommodated in playgroup sessions as they are run currently (or even if afternoon sessions as well as morning sessions were offered).
- Aside from council options NC advocated approaches to local landowners re leasing a piece of land - particularly Barbara Jackson (who owns the stables on the road out to the Broomlee Centre. Other contacts (as far as we know) are Mrs King (Cottage Farm), Jim Weir (Whitfield), Sandra Downie.

**ACTION:** Suggest we agree who should get in touch with these individuals when we meet on Tuesday (does anyone know them personally - or know someone who does?)

- NC confirmed that is unlikely that the nursery would qualify for (or want to - proximity to builders yards) lease / buy piece of land on Deanfoot Road designated for 'employability'
- **ACTION:** Re meeting with Council officials on Tuesday - NC said that he would do his best to attend. If he can't attend, we asked that he find some other way to add his voice in support.
- The group also flagged the economic case for support: the closure of the Village Nursery will mean the loss of 9 jobs locally. It is also likely to mean that, in families where both parents work, one parent may give up work rather than opt for an unsatisfactory childcare arrangement. In other families, mothers may choose not to go back to work as soon as they might otherwise have done. Over time, the impact on the community may be profound: families leaving the village / others choosing not to buy houses here – and the sense of community that comes from village children staying in the village during the day and forming relationships there will also be lost.

We also talked about funding options:

- NC suggested talking to Sam Smith in the council's planning dept re EU funding
- He highlighted that there is money to fund local projects in a pot of money levied re quarries / landfill - West Linton qualifies for this - Jean Robertson in Borders council is the person to speak to

- NC confirmed that it is also worth researching Rural Development Programme (Scottish Gov) and Equalities (Scottish Gov - re women back to work / also support for children with additional needs)
- Kenny Paul / Alice Hamilton could be a source of other small grants (Margaret Harrison in Community Council is responsible for AH, Church is responsible for KP)
- NC confirmed that re-inventing the nursery as a development trust / other form of social enterprise might optimise the nursery's funding options. NB we need to be realistic about the funding we could hope to raise in short time frame - but still of interest if a temporary building / site is being used on the understanding that a long term site / permanent building will go ahead once the school is built.

**ACTION:** We need to get the ball rolling now to explore short term and long term funding options – for the nursery as a business and for alternative operating models. Way forward to be agreed at next action group meeting on Tuesday.

After the meeting we also talked about the money involved in running the action group. Only costs we have incurred so far are domain name and laminating (as far as we know), but we need to keep a record of these and have an agreement to share across the group

**ACTION:** need to agree this in principle when we next meet. Anne has very kindly offered to keep a record of the money side of things for us.