

In 2024, the Diocese of Guildford approached the Parish Council (PC) to explore the future use of the former school site. Diocesan personnel attended a PC meeting in November 2024 at which they were proposing to develop the site for housing, including a new vicarage. They also stated that they would require the village to agree to an application to remove the educational covenant before proceeding any further.

Following that meeting, the PC set up a working group to carry out research into the historic and current situations regarding the school site. The working group's remit was to report back to the PC and **not** to make any recommendations.

The PC's intentions thereafter would be to seek the views of villagers before coming to any decision regarding the site.

The PC recognises that in seeking the views of the village, it will be important for all research to be available and to hold a village meeting that is specifically devoted to discussion about the school site.

That is the stage that has now been reached.

Diocese of Guildford Comments and Proposal

During initial discussions with Alex Tear (Director of the Diocesan Board of Education) he stated that the Diocese does not have the necessary funds to refurbish the school building. He added that school places are not really needed either for Reception, Key stage 1 or Key stage 2 school children, as there are surplus places within a 5-mile radius of Dunsfold. He also suggested that there is sufficient pre-school and nursery provision but did not provide figures to support this assertion.

During further discussion with Mr Tear and other Diocesan personnel, it was clear that they have no intention of returning the school to the village. The following was their final offer:

1. The original classroom at the front of the building with an area of additional floor space to create a bathroom and storage would be transferred to the Parish Council as a freehold property. This could be used as a community facility or as a 1 bedroom flat managed by the council.

The building would be renovated to the highest standard, comply with its Grade Two listed building status in a similar style to the work already completed on the old school house.

This work, both internal and external, would be funded by the development of the rear portion of the old school into a residential property. There would be no development costs to the parish but the PC would be responsible for their own legal

costs in the transfer of the property.

2. A four-bedroom house to be built at the rear of the site.
3. The Diocese would sell both the four-bedroom house and the development of the rear part of the old school building. This would fund the works, as outlined in para 1. The Diocese would retain any financial gain.
4. These proposals would be subject to agreement from the village that the PC would support an application from the Diocese to the Secretary of State for Education to release the site from its educational covenants. (Section 554 application).
5. All of this proposal would be subject to contract, approval of the Charity Commission and the Department of Education.