



TIPTON ST JOHN
CHURCH OF ENGLAND VA PRIMARY SCHOOL

24th June 2016

Dear Parents / Guardians,

Please find below a Q&A sheet which has been written after some open conversations and One to One sessions. We realise that these responses may not answer all your questions, however we hope you find them useful.

- **How do the Governors feel about this?** Very Sad. It is not what we have been working towards. The objective was to move the school to a new site in Tipton. Also a little angry that the safety issues have not been taken more seriously by government
- **How long have the governors been working on this?** For a long time! There are notes in the governors' files going back 30 years. Exeter Diocese has been very supportive in several rounds of bids for rebuilding since 2003. However the option of a move to Ottery has only come to the fore since we received the notification from Lord Nash that there is NO funding to relocate within Tipton.
- **Is the move a done deal?** No it is not. There are many uncertainties and elements which are not yet finalised, e.g. the final site has as yet not been decided. There are limited options and a limited time scale. If Governors decide to go to formal consultation, there is a 6 month statutory process of discussion to go through.
- **Will Tipton become part of Ottery Primary School?** NO it will not, it will be Tipton St John School moving with the same teachers, same ethos and same church status. The school will not be part of the existing Ottery Primary School and will have a different catchment area.
- **How will the school keep its church links?** The school will still be a VA Church of England school, we will still have a SIAMs inspection, and although we won't be as close to Tipton church there are many VA schools with outstanding in SIAMs even when situated some distance away from the church.
- **We chose Tipton as it is a small school, how will this change with more children?** One of the reasons our small school is successful is not necessarily the size but the school's ethos, with every child being known and celebrated as an individual - that would still happen and will still be the case. Any growth in pupil numbers would be gradual with the new building for 210 children, which would build into single class cohorts. The government classes 210 as a small school and doesn't fund schools any smaller than this as the economics of small rural schools means many are struggling. The economic fact of small rural schools means many are struggling.
- **Why haven't the community been consulted and considered by the Governors?** For over 30 years they have tried to find a way for the school to be re-built in Tipton, but have recently exhausted their last potential option when Lord Nash replied saying there is no national funding. The governors have always considered the community but had to be at a stage that they knew this was a viable option before opening it for consultation; this is why we are only now at the stage that we can release the information to parents and the community. There will be a formal consultation period, but we are encouraging the community and parents to comment at this stage as well. The governors will consider the community implications but have to put the children's needs as their priority.
- **Can't we stay as we are?** Having received an Environment Agency report stating "This site has a significant threat to life," and knowing that we cannot even replace the ever decaying buildings on the lower site, there is a real risk that when we lose the bottom site building the school will have to reduce to a 2-class



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school which isn't a viable school. Staying as we are isn't a long-term option, and with the safety implications is not in the children's best interests shorter term either.

- **Is this really about solving the lack of places in Ottery?** No, our Governors are trying to solve the problems at Tipton School. A new school building is going to be built in Ottery St Mary regardless of our decision – the difference is it could be our school, if it isn't it will be a new "free" school.

To enable you to gain additional information and to ask any other questions we have two open meetings scheduled for this week.

Yours sincerely

Colin Butler
(Executive Headteacher)

John Sherwood
(Chair of Governors)