

Herefordshire Schools First

Bulletin 3
4 February 2008

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Dear friend

This week's SchoolsFirst bulletin includes:

-- **Matthew Engel's brilliant piece in the MoS** on the possible closure of Fairfield School

-- A bumper crop of important new documents, including the **Government paper instructing councils to reduce school capacity**, the **Staunton-on-Wye demographic analysis** and the very supportive **letter from Prof Dix of the Institute of Education**

-- Welcome clarification from the Council that **"recalled" really DOES mean "withdrawn"**

-- Notice of the **mass family rally and march in Hereford on February 13th**. Apparently it is taking ages to confirm the details because of official red tape, but I will send out full information ASAP.

[NOTE: If you want an example of breathtaking political hypocrisy, compare the Government paper with Schools Minister Jim Knight MP's letter warning councils not to close rural schools. Both are on the site.]

Please circulate this to friends and fellow supporters. Ask them to sign up on the website. And if you have any ideas for the site and the Bulletin, please email me details on the above address.

Thanks,

Jesse

STOP PRESS

I have just found the Orwellian **"Every Child Matters: The Primary Capital Programme"**. This is the Government document that instructs local education authorities to prioritise the removal of surplus places, due to falling birth rates. We will post this soon on the site—for an early copy please email me.

NATIONAL NEWS

In the morning, this headteacher was told his school was one of the best in England ... In the afternoon, he was told it would be closed - Matthew Engel, *Mail on Sunday*
At 57, Chris Barker has near shoulder-length black hair and is widely admired for his charisma, his originality ... and his results.
http://www.dailymail.co.uk/pages/live/articles/news/news.html?in_article_id=512020&in_page_id=1770

Don't close rural schools says Minister – *Guardian*

Schools minister Jim Knight is writing to all local authorities in England to remind them that they should not close rural schools. The move comes after a campaign to prevent the closure of rural schools.
<http://education.guardian.co.uk/schools/story/0,2249145,00.html>

Labour should value village school benefits – *Daily Telegraph*

How hollow the promise now rings. Fresh into power, Labour's then schools minister, Stephen Byers, pledged in 1998 to give "tough new protection for village schools". "Closing a village school can be a death-blow to the community," Mr Byers observed. He was absolutely right. Weekend reports of a new purge of village schools on economic grounds

suggest that up to 300 are already being targeted for closure and the total could reach 1,000.

<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/opinion/main.jhtm?xml=/opinion/2008/01/29/dl2901.xml>

LOCAL NEWS

Schools plan is "totally withdrawn"

– **Hereford Times**

DRAFT plans to close or merge 37 schools have been totally withdrawn, according to a senior LEA officer. Massive opposition to January's review forced the LEA into a re-think, admitted George Salmon in Bromyard. He faced a "fresh sheet of paper", and was looking for debate and dialogue for the next review, proposed for September.

http://www.herefordtimes.com/search/display.var.2011681.0.schools_plan_is_totally_withdrawn.php

Church group will monitor schools plan

– **Ledbury Reporter**

CHURCH of England school headteachers and governors will meet every month to discuss the ongoing Herefordshire schools review. Ian Terry, education director for the Hereford Diocese, called more than 60 heads and governors of together for a meeting at Hereford Cathedral, despite the withdrawal of the initial proposals.

http://www.ledburyreporter.co.uk/news/herefordshireschoolsmerger/display.var.2010311.0.church_group_will_monitor_schools_plan.php

SchoolsFirst.org.uk has been set up to act as a central information point for the many different local campaigns to save Herefordshire schools. If you have any ideas or information, or are planning any events, please email them in!

And finally: please visit the site, log in—and ask your friends to do the same. We need all the support we can get!

RADIO

You and Yours - BBC Listen Again

Hundreds of schools face threat of closure or merger

Several councils have announced plans to merge or close schools to deal with a decline in pupil numbers. Campaigners argue children risk missing out on the benefits smaller schools can bring.

http://www.bbc.co.uk/radio4/youandyours/its/01/2008_05_mon.shtml

NEW DOCUMENTS ON THE WEBSITE

Letter from Prof Shirley Dix of London University

Demographics relating to Staunton School

Staunton-on-Wye Primary School's analysis of demographic trends

Every Child Matters: The Primary Capital Programme

Government document that instructs local education authorities to remove surplus school places to save money.

EVENTS

SAVE THE DATE: 13 Feb 2008

Family Rally and March in Hereford

Details to follow!!