



GRAIG COMMUNITY COUNCIL

Planning Meeting Minutes held remotely via Zoom at 7pm Wednesday 5th January 2022

- 1. To log those present:** Cllrs Gregory, Thomas, Appleton, Jones, Whitfield, Tarr, Haigh, Cason and Clerk. Chaired by Cllr Tarr.
- 2. To receive apologies for absence:** Cllr Sayer.
- 3. To receive declarations of interest:** None
- 4. Planning - Applications to be considered:**

- a. 21/1084 - Bassaleg School, Forge Road, Bassaleg, Newport, South Wales, NP10 8NF
DEMOLITION OF EXISTING STRUCTURES, PROPOSED NEW TEACHING BLOCK AND ASSOCIATED WORKS INCLUDING NEW CAR PARKING AND DROP-OFF ARRANGEMENTS, FLOOD LIGHTING TO SPORTS PITCH, SUSTAINABLE DRAINAGE, LAND REPROFILING AND LANDSCAPING AFFECTING PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY 393/112

Application referred for consideration by full council

Comment:

Council would like to say that in principle it does support this much needed upgrade of the school but feels many issues the ward already experiences as the school has grown needs to be addressed prior to work commencing. Council is aware that many resident's - whilst supporting the upgrade in principle too, believe they have not had the opportunity to put forward their concerns because the initial consultation was not widely enough publicised, and they were not aware of how to make submissions.

There are many concerns regarding this application. The site backs onto, or directly affects over 150 properties, but also affects all Graig's other residents and the wider communities that travel through the village.

This is a large and complicated application with many aspects to be considered. It should be noted that many of the very real issues which are being experienced and have been in existence for many years as school pupil numbers have risen, will be much further exacerbated unless they are given priority and resolved.

Parking issues within the vicinity of the school, particularly by 6th form students:

Parking has been a massive issue for many years. 6th Form pupils often have cars and drive to school, so need to park. Since the former 6th Form parking area off The Griffin in the school grounds was abandoned by the school some years ago, the sheer numbers of cars being used dictates that pupils can only find spaces by using surrounding residential streets. Inconsiderate parking has led to the narrowing of residential areas where refuse lorries and emergency vehicles would be unable to pass or turn, make it difficult for residents to park and sometimes even blocking driveways. Now, the former parking area does not even appear on the new plans. Dedicated parking for 6th Form cars is essential, but there is no allocation in the application to address this. Currently, 6th form pupils are known to park in numerous residential areas but in particular: Court Crescent, Forge Lane, The Griffin, Vicarage Close, Graig Community Centre car park, alongside St Basil's Church on Caerphilly Road, Churchmead, Station Approach, Birch Trees and in the time restricted parking areas around St Basil's stores at Laurel Road/Church Crescent.

Possible solutions:

Council asks that consideration be given to re-instating the original car park and enlarging it to take as many cars as possible. It was originally abandoned because the school were concerned

there was no security fencing and gate to prevent unauthorised access to the school. This could be easily overcome by fencing off the area and using a security access system for those allowed to gain entry once parked up. Issue subsidised/free passes/buses.

Increased volume of traffic at start and end of school day/General traffic management/safety concerns about Bassaleg Roundabout following the Welsh Government's recent upgrade:

Traffic flow through the villages of Bassaleg and Rhiwderin are badly affected at school start and end times. Movement of traffic through the villages is generally high at all times of the day but is at a standstill or creeps through the villages for an hour before and an hour after school starts and finishes. It is not unusual to see traffic backed up from Bassaleg Roundabout to the Rhiwderin Inn at Rhiwderin eastbound, backed up on the A467 southbound back to the Jubilee Park/Rogerstone exit, and Forge Road northbound back to J28. This has been the case for many years as the school has grown and local housing developments increased. This has impacted on the volume of traffic in general and added to even more parents taking children to/from school by car. The busy pelican crossing outside the main gates and the traffic lights on Bassaleg roundabout disrupt the flow of vehicles travelling in both directions. The sheer volume of traffic encourages drivers to use rat runs elsewhere causing their own issues in order to try to get to work on time for example. Vehicles park on both sides of The Griffin which interferes with pupil's safe routes to school and traffic flow as this is a rat run to and from Cardiff especially at times the main route is congested. Laurel Road running through Bassaleg's housing estate is also a rat run as vehicles try to get ahead of the built-up traffic on Caerphilly Road eastbound increasing safety risks for pupils walking to school from the estate.

Parents picking up/dropping off pupils congest the roads for long periods in the areas of Carnegie Court estate, Park View, Court Crescent and The Griffin to name but a few. Parents of Carnegie Court are concerned for their children's safety when walking to school with all the extra traffic in their area. Parents picking up arrive up to an hour prior to pick-up to find a good spot to park.

Possible solutions:

Council suggests more priority be given to traffic management. Bassaleg roundabout now experiences the same issues as the former J28 roundabout with traffic travelling southbound on the A467 to turn off to Court Crescent or Bassaleg. Cars become stuck in 'no man's land' due to the traffic light controlled very short section of the roundabout just past the southbound exit to Forge Road. This is both very dangerous and prevents traffic from the A467 southbound outside lane from passing the waiting vehicles to continue travelling along Forge Road. A better and safer solution is desperately needed for this roundabout.

Council had previously suggested that the pelican crossing outside Bassaleg School main gates could be replaced with a pedestrian footpath, eliminating the need for disrupting traffic flow, but this was not seen to be considered. Could this be explored further as a better solution to the crossing? The bus stop pull-in outside the main gates of the school on Forge Road is always littered with parked cars waiting to drop-off/pick-up pupils and public buses are unable to pull in to drop passengers. Passengers have to alight onto a grass verge between parked cars and moving traffic. Another dangerous practice which further exacerbates the congestion. A solution is needed to direct school traffic away from the public roads and onto school property. A dedicated pick-up drop-off area is needed inside the school curtilage would keep surrounding roads from suffering the present levels of congestion and reduce parking issues, congestion and aid safety. Council is aware there is City Council owned land at the rear of the school which is not part of this application, but could be utilised if these suggestions cannot be accommodated on the currently proposed site. Consider subsidised/free bus travel for pupils. Encourage the use of public transport by giving subsidised/free passes/buses to pupils. This fits with the Active Travel Plan and use of electric buses would also fit in also with the City's Climate Emergency policy.

The new layout of the layby outside the front of the school:

The lay-by at the front of the school cannot accommodate the amount of school traffic being generated, as mentioned it is always littered with vehicles. This is dangerous for pedestrians, pupils coming from school having to manoeuvre between stationary and moving vehicles and bus passengers.

Possible solutions:

Consider extending the present bus bay and layby along the school perimeter to join up with the Court Crescent junction of the roundabout to give more parking and direct school traffic off Bassaleg Roundabout at the earliest opportunity.

Impact of proposed floodlighting on residences adjacent to school:

Council is concerned about any impact the lighting the central sports pitch will have on residences surrounding the school. In particular, the homes on The Griffin, Birch Trees and Caerphilly Road where the homes border the pitch area. This pitch is earmarked to also be used outside normal school hours and many residents have their main living and sleeping quarters at the rear of their properties. Any light pollution will greatly affect everyone. It appears Environmental Health have not objected, but Council is aware that some details for the lighting columns have not yet been submitted which could affect how the lighting will perform.

Possible solutions:

Consider a condition to the application that will ensure the columns are kept to the minimum height required, and any light source is directed onto the pitch surface only to eliminate any beams of light affecting residential homes. Consider a condition that the pitch is only to be used until an appropriate time each evening and on weekends to lessen the impact on residents.

Air pollution:

All the issues with traffic management as mentioned above has led to areas of Bassaleg having very high pollution rates, especially along the A468 Caerphilly Road. Monitoring at The Ruperra pub and in the area of the Post Office have already been flagged at high levels by the City's Environmental Officer and has needed to be reported as required. This is worsening as time goes on. The A468 is a busy trunk road serving areas of Caerphilly and also Bedwas, Trethomas, Graig-y-Rhacca and Machen. There are industrial estates in Bedwas and a stone quarry in Machen which generates heavy commercial traffic, almost all of which travels through Rhiwderin and Bassaleg. The quarry lorries in particular are large in size and number. Many cars from further up the valley also use the A467 to access Newport and the M4, adding to the congestion and pollution. Adding additional pupils to the school has generated a lot more traffic and will in future add even more. This is making the village's pollution issues even worse, and the congestion means cars and lorries are idling or slow moving at regular times, again, worsening the situation.

Possible solutions:

Removing the school traffic will ease the issues. Consider additional parking for the school 6th form drivers, put large pick-up drop-off points in the school grounds and encourage more use of the City's Active Travel Plan initiatives. Improve the safe routes to school so parents can be reassured their children are safe walking which will in turn reduce traffic. The current routes to school from almost all areas of the school catchment serving both Bassaleg and Pentrepoeth Schools are particularly poor or non-existent. Just 2 examples of this is the route from Afon Village where parents are expected to allow their children to walk along the riverside on a substandard path that is secluded, unlit and at present is closed because of river erosion to the path, and another is along Caerphilly Road from the Friendly Fox pub to the Ruperra pub which is a very busy trunk road including LGVs and quarry lorries driving very close to the pavement's edge which has no railing protection. The footpath is narrowed due to bank erosion debris and was earmarked as sub-standard over 20 years ago. Again, consider subsidised/free bus travel for pupils. Encouraging the use of public transport or giving subsidised/free passes/buses to

pupils which fits with the Active Travel Plan, use of electric buses would also fit in also with the City's Climate Emergency policy.

Noise pollution:

Obviously, construction noise, vehicle noise and increased pupils will all have an impact on noise pollution in the general school area. As will increased noise during the evenings if the sports pitch is opened to public use.

Possible solutions:

Consider imposing conditions on noise from construction and limit to appropriate hours, limit out-of-hours use of the sports pitch to appropriate hours.

Litter around the school and community:

Litter from the school is an ongoing issue at present and with larger pupil numbers is likely to be increased.

Possible solutions:

Consider conditions that ensure a suitable way to address this issue is found and becomes routine.

Flood potential:

Council is aware that The Griffin and the homes along it were subject to flooding from a small stream on the site and rainwater coming from the school. This has been addressed and is no longer an issue at present. Residents are concerned that proposed changes to the pitches could impact on the previous flood prevention actions taken and this could become an issue once more. This is something that could perhaps be checked to ensure the old problems do not recur.

Council feels this application seems not to have been designed with the impact on residents or the current traffic management issues being a major concern. Indeed, Council suggests the notion of this application could be considered to be disingenuous and duplicitous. It has also been noted that the school would only be upgraded on the understanding it would include taking more pupils.

At the initial consultation stage, my Council requested (and also offered to host at our community centre if necessary), a public consultation to give residents the opportunity to speak to the planning consultants and to study the plans. This was not taken up even though it could be carried out in a Covid-safe manner. My Council submitted concerns to the planning consultants at the original PAC stage and offered solutions and ideas for most of the issues. When the consultant's reports were published, Council were extremely perplexed that it's comments and solutions were barely recorded.

Council asks that as Newport City Council has expressed and advertised the wish of becoming net zero on pollution, it should prove it is doing all it can to reduce congestion by standing by these principles. That they allow Afon Village and Mount Pleasant pupils to have free school bus travel, especially on the electric buses that are being introduced. This would much reduce congestion, give parents the reassurance their children are travelling safely to and from school - therefore reducing the number of parents using their cars to do so, and assist with parking issues.

Council implores in the strongest terms, that as restrictions have eased so much, a consultation with residents must be carried out as soon as possible. This should be held at Bassaleg School, but if this is not possible, then Council's offer still stands to use Graig Hall. This is a huge development for a small village and residents have had very little opportunity to have their views taken into consideration. Council can see no reason why socially distanced consultations with residents cannot take place. Even if it leads to short delays with the planning process, it is felt that moving forward with resident consultations taken account of, would make for a much smoother process that residents would be supportive of rather than feeling they have been ignored.

In general Council agrees the site is in desperate need of upgrading, but this should not be at the expense of good design, consideration of the setting of the site and the effects it will have on the surrounding neighbourhoods.

This will be the single largest development in the area in many years, and residents will have to live with the outcome for many years into the future, yet they have not been consulted properly. To rush through this application in its current form could lead to many more issues long term.

Our City Councillor Mayor David Williams wishes to address the Planning Committee when this application is being determined and will write to the Planning Department to facilitate this.

- b. 21/1245 - 19 Burberry Close, Rogerstone, Newport, NP10 9JU
SINGLE STOREY REAR EXTENSION AND INSERTION OF SIDE WINDOW

Comment:


No objection to the proposed extension. No objection to the proposed side window, subject to neighbour consultation and agreement.

Planning can be viewed at: <https://licensing.newport.gov.uk/online-applications/search.do?action=simple&searchType=Application>

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If any members of the public or press wish to join this meeting remotely, please contact the Clerk at least 2 working days prior to this meeting being held, and an invitation will be sent for you to do so.

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