

Mickleham Parish Council

(www.micklehamparishcouncil)

March 2025 2.1 Appendix

Wednesday 11 March 2026

Geoff Black updated the MPC on the planned closure of St Michael's Infant School, Mickleham:

- Due to the declining birth rate and low demand for admissions the infant school in Mickleham is expected to close at the end of the academic year.
- The school would formally merge with another Church of England infant school in Newdigate.
- Helyn Clack, SCC Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Lifelong, was due to make the decision, but due to a conflict of interest with the forthcoming elections the final decision will be made by another councillor.
- Statutory notice for closure will be issued on 20th April and will run for 4 weeks.
- Both Geoff Black (GB) and Cllr Chris Budleigh will be attending the meeting tomorrow, 12th March.
- Due to late notification of the petition, there was not enough time to act during the consultation period.
- GB will raise the question with regards to what the proposal is to fulfil of school closure.
- There was a meeting last month, by Chris Coghlan MP in the Mickleham Village Hall on the Friday 27th February at 1pm to discuss the school, when members of the local community were present.
- GC raised a question on 27th regarding overall decision and the reply was the elected Councillors post May 2026 elections, will make the final decision.
- Whilst there was not sufficient notice given to Mickleham, prior to the consultation period, there is still time to make comments once the statutory notice have been issued on 20th April.
- Between now and the 20th April, the Community Action Group will gather evidence to support the claim for the school to remain open.
- GB believes the Council should not have decided to do this on the eve of a election and he has spoken to candidates from the Green Party and Reform, for Dorking Rural, and has had communication from the Liberal Democratic Party, who have all confirmed they were all opposing the closure to the school.
- An update of numbers for the school after Easter, is that there will only be Year1 children in the school, due to children moving schools earlier and St Martins recruiting last year from then Year1 pupils.
- The falling numbers has resulted in only 3 pupils signed up for September 2027 and that does not justify pursuing a legal battle to postpone the closure of the school if there is not the demand not sufficient time to draw interest in 3 months.
- Two counter proposals have been put forward:
 - First being a site for Special Educational Needs (SEN).
 - Secondly opening up an educational hub for special needs with specific learning difficulties.
- Funding would occur through the current process of free school route or private school.

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The positives of using the site as a SEN hub was discussed in relation to alleviating some of the pressures from mainstream school due to demand.

- The next step for the Community Action Group is to gauge interest from parents: MP Chris Coghlan has given the group a list of parents who are looking for a SEND school.
- The aim is to target those looking at flexi schooling, around special and specific learning difficulties as well, which covers areas such as dyslexia; dysphagia; and some of the non-disruptive elements.

Discussion around gaining support from the residents around the school, due to potential traffic and safety, where children need to drop off as close to the school. It was noted that there is room in the existing carpark which can be reconfigured to provide a safe turning point for dropping off and picking up.

- GB is in close communications with Alison Woods as Chair of the School Lane Road group.

WD (Chair) asked what support can the MPC assist with over the next four weeks.

- GB outlined the planned flyer campaign would cost around £50 to £100.
- MPC agreed to help with funding up to £100, if another source cannot be sort.

Mickleham Parish Council have submitted a note supporting the campaign.

The PCC, WRA, and St Michael's Nursery have all sent a report in as well, together with individual members of the community.

- GB said he was amazed by the amount of support that the group has received from the community and from all the parents.

WD thank GB for his time to come and update the MPC.

Geoff Black left the meeting at 7.48pm.