An e-mail to Joy Morrissey MP From Viv Nicholas and Ekta Kaur Ross

Copy Aleksandra Turner Date 24th April 2023

**A NEW SCHOOL FOR BURNHAM**

Dear Joy

It was a pleasure to have the opportunity to talk at length with both Aleksandra and yourself on Saturday at the celebration of the 50th anniversary of Lent Rise School. The energy, expertise and inclusiveness of the School was evident to us all and it sets a fine example to all of its neighbouring primary schools. Such qualities have prospered also in our secondary schools – Burnham Grammar School opened in 1960 and Burnham Upper School in 1969 and it a matter of great regret that we have yet to find a way to reopen the non-selective secondary school which was closed in 2019 when it also should have had the opportunity to celebrate its own Golden anniversary.

As you explained you have been devoting a great deal of your attention to Iver and Denham which have been somewhat neglected in recent years and the closure of Evreham School in 1989 undoubtedly has contributed to its misfortune. And, of course, many members of Burnham’s community are determined to ensure that it does not suffer such an unfortunate outcome as a result of the closure of its non-selective secondary school.

I mentioned that I had responded to an on-line consultation on Buckinghamshire Council’s latest strategic and transport plans and in both cases expressed my concern as to how tightly focused was their thinking in regard to its core of Aylesbury, Wycombe and Amersham and its inability to also embrace its peripheral communities such as in Burnham. It does seem that their concerns do not extend to south of the M40 and they are not at all mindful of The Elizabeth Line.

Last month we made contact with the seven primary schools that are closest in proximity to both of Burnham’s secondary schools and asked them to provide their first understanding of the transitions of their Year Six pupils to the local secondary schools. A complete spreadsheet is attached but the summary below illustrates how many of the 399 children are expected to travel to Slough and Maidenhead and the low take up by Bucks. parents of places in Bucks. secondary schools. In addition – over one fifth of the children had not yet been awarded a place and almost certainly all of those children will not be allocated grammar school places.

School Type and Location (Number) Pupils Allocated  
  
Slough Secondary (10) 101  
Maidenhead Comp. (5)   96  
Bucks, Grammar (4)   59  
Bucks. Secondary (4)   26  
Slough Grammar (4)   12  
Other   16  
Not Known   89  
  
TOTAL 399

We will liaise with all seven school during the course of this term to learn more as to all of the forecast transitions to secondary schools and be paying particular attention to those parents and/or children who are challenged in some way or other in making a potentially successful transfer. Transport costs/complexities could perhaps be serious issues and we would be concerned should any parent judge it appropriate to adopt a ‘home schooling’ approach.

Furthermore, whilst national demographic trends indicate that this academic year is the ‘bulge’ year for Year Six children, our research indicates that we do not anticipate any decline in Year Six numbers for the following four years and by that time we may well be seeing more clearly the impact of The Elizabeth Line on our local population.

You may recall that I spoke of a vision of Burnham becoming A Learning Village whilst our fellow steering group members are encouraging us to direct our attention to the immediate future on the reopening of Burnham’s non selective secondary school which will work very closely with the proximate Burnham Grammar School whilst focusing on a more vocational curriculum, adult education and making provision for a special educational need which requires more support within our wider community.

We also reflected on how difficult it has been since the School’s closure in 2019 to make any progress with national, regional and local government and agreed that it would be a sound step forward to arrange a meeting with Tan Dhesi MP where we can all share our concerns as to the future of education provision in both Slough and Burnham.

With best wishes

Viv Nicholas Ekta Kaur Ross