

NORTH YORKSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE

CORPORATE DIRECTOR MEETING WITH EXECUTIVE MEMBERS

20 October 2020

Kell Bank Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Member approval to consult on a proposal that the County Council should close Kell Bank Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School from 31 August 2021.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 Kell Bank is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary school in the Masham area, serving the settlements of Fearby and Healey. The school has worked collaboratively with the Federation of Snape Community and Thornton Watlass CE Primary Schools since 2015. All three schools share the same Executive Headteacher, although Kell Bank has not formally federated with the other two schools and retains a separate governing body. The three schools maximise available opportunities to bring together pupils to share activities and learning opportunities.
- 2.2 The School was last inspected by Ofsted in October 2013, when there were 45 pupils on roll. The overall effectiveness was judged to be 'Outstanding', as were all five contributory judgements. Under the current Ofsted Education Inspection Framework (introduced in September 2019), that level of judgement, given the significant weight on curriculum provision and the low level of pupil numbers at the school, would be difficult to maintain.
- 2.3 The number of children at Kell Bank CE VC Primary School has been falling over the past few years. At the beginning of September 2019, there were 15 pupils on roll in the school. This was well below the capacity of the school which could accommodate around 50 pupils. Since the start of this academic year there has been a further fall in numbers and in September 2020 the school had 6 pupils remaining on roll. The Governing Body and Friends of the School have been active in their collective efforts to raise numbers at the school through many initiatives over recent years but, with 6 pupils on roll and little prospect of recovery beyond this, the forecast financial position is one of increasing in-year and carry-forward deficits.
- 2.4 The October 2019 School Census recorded that the majority of primary aged pupils who lived in the school's catchment area at that time were attending the school (8 pupils attended the school out of a total of 11 pupils living in the school's catchment area). There is unlikely to be any significant new housing in the settlements of Fearby and Healey as they are not Designated Service Villages within the Harrogate District Local Plan.
- 2.5 On 15 September 2020, with only six pupils on roll, the full governing body met to discuss the future of Kell Bank School CE VC Primary School. They resolved unanimously to ask NYCC to consult on the potential closure of the school from 31 August 2021 in light of the current pupil numbers and the lack of progress in

achieving any alternative structural solutions. They submitted a formal request attached as **Appendix 1**. The consultation will seek views on the proposal that in the event of closure the catchment area of Kell Bank CE VC Primary School would transfer and become part of an enlarged catchment area for Masham CE VA Primary School which is the nearest alternative school. The Diocese is aware of the current circumstances of the school and is supportive of the proposed consultation regarding both the closure and the catchment area change.

- 2.6 This report seeks approval from Executive Members to consult on the closure of the school and the future catchment arrangements with effect from 31 August 2021 in accordance with the process and timescale detailed below.

3.0 Kell Bank CE VC Primary School

Pupil numbers

- 3.1 Kell Bank is a small 4-11 CE VC Primary School and currently has 6 children on roll. The school is located in the Masham area, serving families living in the parishes of Fearby, Healey and the surrounding area. The number of children at Kell Bank CE VC Primary School has been falling over the past few years:

	2014/15	2015/16	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20	2020/21
Reception	4	5	2	2	3	2	0
Year 1	4	4	5	2	2	3	2
Year 2	7	4	4	2	1	2	2
Year 3	4	5	3	4	2	0	0
Year 4	5	5	5	3	3	3	0
Year 5	6	5	5	5	3	3	0
Year 6	9	5	5	5	5	2	2
Total	39	33	29	23	19	15	6

- 3.2 There are currently 6 pupils on roll in the school. The school has 2 classrooms and so could accommodate around 50 pupils. It has a current published admission number of 5 pupils in each year group and so potentially could provide 35 places in total. Forecasts indicate that pupil numbers will not recover significantly in the longer term and may reduce still further.

Small schools

- 3.3 This proposal is not being brought forward due to any concerns about educational standards. However, the small size of the school and the very small number of pupils in each year group will limit the range of personal and academic challenges for pupils including opportunities for child-initiated play and interaction in early years. This is particularly the case now with only 6 pupils in total at the school, comprising two pupils in each of three year groups: Year 1 (2 pupils), Year 2 (2 pupils) and Year 6 (2 pupils).
- 3.4 The Ofsted Education Inspection Framework, introduced in September 2019, places significant weight on curriculum provision. Delivering a curriculum that has ‘breadth and ambition’ is a particular challenge for a very small school. For example, the National Curriculum for PE states that “pupils should be taught to play competitive games (for example, cricket, football, hockey, netball, rounders)”. With a pupil count of 6 (ranging in age from 5 to 11) it is very difficult for the school to provide meaningful opportunities for competitive sport.

Finance

- 3.5 Pupil numbers determine the school budget. With these low numbers, and a reduced budget, the school will have to reduce staff. The school has projected in-year deficits of £17.7k in the financial year 2020/21, £17.5k in 2021/22 and £30k in 2022/23, and cumulative deficits of £2k in 2020/21 and £19.5k in 2021/22 and £49.5k in 2022/23. These were based on pupil number assumptions of 16 in 2020/21 and 13 in 2021/22. The financial position in the longer term will deteriorate further as pupil numbers have fallen and there appears to be no reasonable prospect of recovery.

4.0 PRIMARY SCHOOL PLACES IN THE LOCAL AREA

- 4.1 There are 7 primary school within a 6 miles radius of Kell Bank (shown in **Appendix 2**). Across the area there are places available for all the pupils currently at Kell Bank CE VC Primary School (**Appendix 3**).
- 4.2 The nearest school to Kell Bank CE Primary School is Masham CE Primary School. Masham School has reached its published admission number in some year groups, although there is capacity in others. The School has a capacity of 116 pupils and a total pupil roll of 121 in September 2020. It is undoubtedly operating around capacity but this is due in part to attendance by pupils who reside in other areas. At the October 2019 census the total roll was 114 pupils of which 43 (37%) came from outside of the school's catchment area. At the same time there were 85 primary aged pupils living in the catchment area of Masham School and 11 primary aged children living in the catchment area of Kell Bank School. The conclusion is that Masham CE Primary School, as the nearest alternative school, would be the appropriate choice to adopt the existing Kell Bank catchment area as an addition to its existing area in the event of a closure.
- 4.3 There is currently capacity in some year groups at Grewelthorpe CE, which is the next nearest school. There are also places available at St Nicholas West Tanfield CE, Thornton Watlass CE, Kirkby Malzeard CE, Snape CP, Fountains Earth Lofthouse CE, Middleham CE and Spennithorne CE. These schools were all judged 'Good' in their last Ofsted apart from Middleham which was judged 'Requires Improvement' in November 2018 and Spennithorne CE which was judged 'Requires Improvement' in May 2019.
- 4.4 Parents will be able to express a preference for any local school and if there are places available they will be accepted. Schools may agree to accept local children above their admission number.
- 4.5 **Appendix 4** provides projected numbers based on forecast birth rates, with potential additional pupils from outstanding housing permissions and proposed housing allocations in the Harrogate District Local Plan.

5.0 CONSULTATION PROCESS AND TIMESCALE

- 5.1 Should a decision be made to initiate a consultation on the proposed closure of Kell Bank CE VC Primary School, a period of six term-time weeks is recommended. A draft timetable is set out below. A draft consultation document is attached at **Appendix 5**.
- 5.2 A separate staff consultation process, including a meeting for staff and their professional associations and unions, would run in parallel with the consultation on the closure proposal.

5.3 The final decision on closure would be taken by the Executive (or by the Executive Member for Schools if there are no objections during the representation period).

5.4 Suggested key dates are shown below:

Approval to Consult by Executive Members	20 October 2020
Consultation opens (6 weeks during term time)	2 November 2020
Public meeting (arrangements tbc but may need to be held virtually)	17 November 2020 tbc
Consultation closes	14 December 2020
County Council's Executive considers consultation response	26 January 2021
Executive decision to publish statutory notices	26 January 2021
Publication of statutory notices	5 February 2021
Representation period starts (4 weeks)	5 February 2021
Representation period ends	5 March 2021
Final decision by County Council's Executive	23 March 2021
Proposed school closure date	31 August 2021

5.5 The Diocese have confirmed that the school site, other than the playing field, is vested in the Diocesan Board of Finance. The County Council owns the playing field. The owners will take decisions about the future use of the school site and buildings after the closure proposal has been determined.

6 RECOMMENDATIONS

6.1 That the Executive Member for Schools provide approval to consult on proposals that:

- Kell Bank CE VC Primary School should close on 31 August 2021
- In the event of closure Masham CE VA Primary School should become the catchment school for the existing area served by Kell Bank CE VC Primary School

Stuart Carlton
CORPORATE DIRECTOR – CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICE.

Report prepared by Sue Turley, Strategic Planning Officer

Action AgreedExecutive Member
Date: 20 October 2020

Action RequestedCorporate Director
Date: 20 October 2020

APPENDIX 1



Kell Bank C of E Primary School,
Healey, Masham, Ripon,
North Yorkshire
HG4 4LH
Inspire • Enrich • Shine
Email: admin@kellbank.n-yorks.sch.uk
Tel: 01765 689410



Stuart Carlton
Director of Children's Services
North Yorkshire County Council
County Hall,
Northallerton
DL7 8AD

Date 15th September 2020

Dear Stuart,

As chair of governors at Kell Bank Church of England Primary School, Healey, Masham, North Yorkshire, it is my sad duty to inform you that today, Tuesday 15th September, 2020, an extraordinary meeting of the full governing board met to discuss the future of Kell Bank and its viability to sustain an all-round educational experience to what is now a roll of six children.

A resolution was passed unanimously to request the LA to begin consultation on the closure of Kell Bank to be implemented on the 31st August 2021..

We have been faced with dwindling numbers at our school over the past few years as young families are finding it increasingly difficult to stay in our rural villages and with the ever increasing costs of suitable housing, the fact is there are very few young families remaining.

Without going into great detail, the whole school community, parents, staff and governors have given more than 100% of their energy over the years into trying to keep the school viable but there has now come a time when we have to admit that with six children at school, we cannot continue.

Therefore, it is with a heavy heart Stuart that I pass this information on to you.

Kind Regards

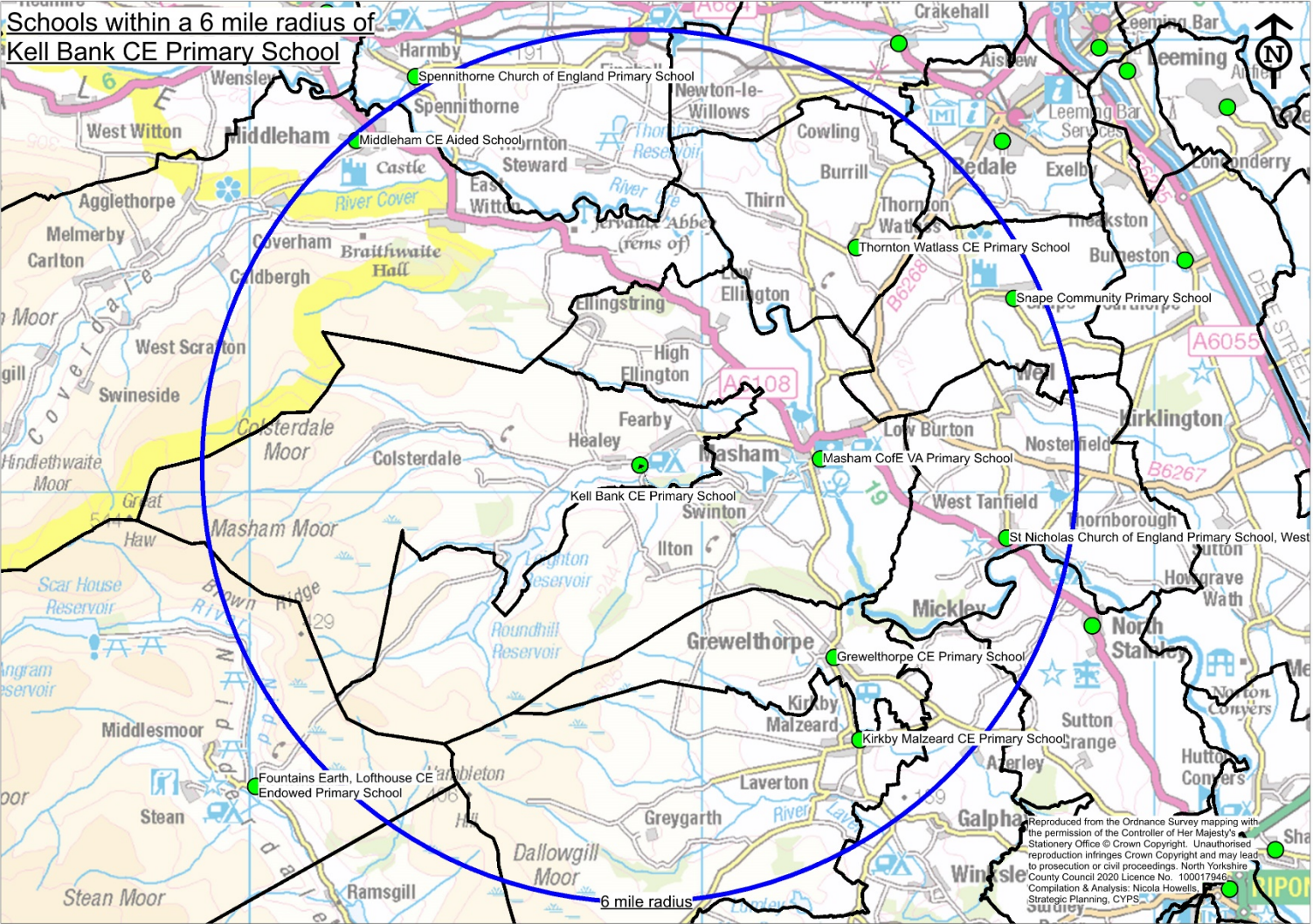
Jeff Loveday

Chair of Governors.



Appendix 2

Schools within a 6 mile radius of
Kell Bank CE Primary School



Appendix 3: Primary School places in the local area September 2020

School	Distance by road from Kell Bank School (miles)	Reception	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6	Total on roll
Kell Bank CE	N/A	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	6
Masham CE	2.8	Places	Places	PAN	PAN	Places	PAN	Places	121
Grewelthorpe CE	5.8	PAN	Places	PAN	Places	PAN	PAN	PAN	75
St Nicholas West Tanfield CE VC	6.1	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	36
Thornton Watlass CE	6.7	Places	Places	Places	Places	PAN	Places	Places	27
Kirkby Malzeard CE	7.2	Places	PAN	Places	Places	PAN	PAN	Places	85
Snape Community	7.5	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	24
Fountains Earth Lofthouse	7.9	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	16
Middleham CE VA	11.2 via Main Road	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	45
Spennithorne CE VC	11.3 via Main Road	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	Places	28

PAN = School year group is at published admission number, all applications will be dealt with on an individual basis and Admissions Team will have discussions with appropriate Headteacher to see if the school are in a position to admit additional pupils in that year group.

Appendix 4: Pupil number projections, including future demand from housing developments

	Masham CE VA	Grewelthorpe CE VC	St Nicholas West Tanfield CE VC	Thornton Watlass CE VC	Kirkby Malzeard CE VC	Snape Community Primary School	Fountains Earth Lofthouse CE Endowed	Middleham CE VA	Spennithorne CE VC
		Federated with Fountains CE School, Grantley, Ripon	Federated with Kirby Malzeard	Federated with Snape	Federated with St Nicholas, West Tanfield	Federated with Thornton Watlass	Federated with St Cuthberts, Pateley Bridge	Federated with Spennithorne CE	Federated with Middleham CE VA
Distance from Kell Bank School by road (miles)	2.8	5.8	6.1	6.7	7.2 via Thorpe Road	7.5	7.9	9 miles via Ellingstring & 11.2 via main road	11.3 via main road
Last Ofsted inspection	Good July 2019	Good March 2017	Good March 2019	Good November 2017	Good March 2018	Good May 2018	Good April 2017	Requires Improvement November 2018	Requires Improvement May 2019
Net Capacity (total places at the school)	116	70	70	51	105	52	42	78	83
Current pupil roll 20/21	121	75	36	27	85	24	16	45	28
Current capacity -/+	-5	-5	34	24	20	28	26	33	55
Pupil roll 2021/22	126	73	37	25	84	27	14	46	29
Pupil roll 2022/23	124	66	32	25	81	26	14	50	30
Pupil roll 2023/24	125	60	31	21	78	25	13	51	30
Pupil roll 2024/25	122	59	28	21	82	27	12	55	29
Pupil roll 2025/26	119	56	28	20	79	27	13	51	29
Potential additional pupils from housing *									
Pupils from outstanding permissions by 2025/26	17	1	12	1	13	1	2	4	2
Potential pupils from future housing – Local Plan (over 15 yrs)	12	0	3	0	12	0	0	0	0

*Based on 1 primary-aged pupil from every 4 houses

DRAFT



Consultation Document

Proposal to close Kell Bank Church of England

Voluntary Controlled Primary School

from 31 August 2021

Kell Bank Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

October 2020

This paper sets out details of a proposal to close Kell Bank CE VC Primary School, Healey, Masham, Ripon, North Yorkshire, HG4 4LH, with effect from 31 August 2021. It gives the background to the proposal. There will be a public meeting/virtual public meeting on:

Tuesday 17 November 2020 at 7pm (Fearby Village Hall, Kell Bank, Fearby HG4 4NF) **Both date and location are to be confirmed**

The Current Position

Following discussions and working closely with the Church of England Diocese of Leeds, North Yorkshire County Council is consulting on a proposal to close the school.

The Local Authority has reflected on the school's position and agree with the conclusion reached by the Governing Body that the school is not viable financially as a result of a falling pupil roll. Although educational standards at the School were judged 'outstanding' in October 2013, numbers have fallen to a level where it will be difficult to provide a high quality of education for pupils in the future.

The Local Authority and the Governing Body of Kell Bank Church of England Primary School have not reached this position lightly.

Pupil Numbers

The number of children at Kell Bank CE VC Primary School has been falling over the past few years. In September 2020 there were a total of 6 children on roll in the school. The school has two classrooms and could accommodate around 50 pupils. Forecasts indicate that these numbers will not recover

significantly in the longer term and may reduce still further.

In these circumstances, it is difficult to deliver quality education and a broad curriculum.

The Financial Position

Pupil numbers determine the school budget. With these low numbers, and a reduced budget, the school will have to reduce staff. The school has projected in-year deficits of £17.7k in the financial year 2020/21, £17.5k in 2021/22 and £30k in 2022/23, and cumulative deficits of £2k in 2020/21, £19.5k in 2021/22 and £49.5k in 2022/23. These were based on pupil number assumptions of 16 in 2020/21 and 13 in 2021/22 so the position will be significantly worse now that pupil numbers have fallen and there appears to be no reasonable prospect of recovery.

The Proposal

For the reasons above it is proposed that Kell Bank CE VC Primary School should close with effect from 31 August 2021.

It is also proposed that the catchment

area of Masham CE VA Primary School would, in the event of closure, be extended to include the current Kell Bank School catchment area.

Masham is the nearest alternative school to Kell Bank School. Masham School has reached its published admission number in some year groups, although there is capacity in others. The School has a capacity of 116 pupils and a total pupil roll of 121 in September 2020. It is therefore operating around capacity but this is due in part to attendance by pupils who reside in other areas. At the October 2019 census the total roll was 114 pupils of which 43 (37%) came from outside of the school's catchment area. At the same time there were 85 primary aged pupils living in the catchment area of Masham School and 11 primary aged children living in the catchment area of Kell Bank School. The conclusion is that Masham CE Primary School would be the appropriate choice to adopt the existing Kell Bank catchment area as an addition to its existing area in the event of a closure.

The County Council would welcome views regarding this catchment area proposal as part of this consultation.

For children currently at Kell Bank CE VC Primary School, North Yorkshire County Council will work with each family to try to meet their individual preferences for other schools. Staff and governors at Kell Bank CE VC Primary School are also committed to supporting families in their choice of school and in making a smooth transition in the event of closure.

Other primary schools in the local area are:

Masham Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School, 1 Millgate, Market Place, Masham, Ripon, North Yorkshire, HG4 4EG

Grewelthorpe Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School, Cross Hills, Grewelthorpe, Ripon, North Yorkshire, HG4 3BH

St Nicholas, Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School, West Tanfield, Ripon HG4 5JN

Thornton Watlass Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School, Thornton Watlass, Ripon, North Yorkshire, HG4 4AH

Kirkby Malzeard Church of England (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School, Church Street, Kirkby Malzeard, Ripon, North Yorkshire, HG4 3RT

Snape Community Primary School Ings Lane, Snape, Bedale, North Yorkshire, DL8 2TF

Fountains Earth Lofthouse Church of England Endowed (Voluntary Controlled) Primary School, Fountains Earth, Lofthouse, Harrogate, North Yorkshire, HG3 5RZ

Middleham Church of England (Voluntary Aided) Primary School, Park Lane, Middleham, Leyburn, North Yorkshire, DL8 4QX

Spennithorne Church of England Primary School (Voluntary Controlled), Spennithorne, Leyburn, North Yorkshire DL8 5PR

All these schools were judged 'Good' in their last Ofsted inspections with the exception of Middleham CE School which was judged as 'Requires Improvement' in November 2018 and Spennithorne CE School which was judged as 'Requires Improvement' in May 2019.

Parents have a right to express a preference for any school. For community and voluntary controlled schools, the Local Authority is the admissions authority and will meet that preference, provided there are vacant places or the school is happy to admit above the published admission number. In the case of Voluntary Aided schools, the governing body decides the conditions for admission to their particular school. Some schools may be able to admit over their published admission numbers for some year groups.

Eligibility for home-to-school transport will be determined in line with the County Council's current home-to-school transport policy and procedures, based on travel distances from each child's home address and individual circumstances.

Where a child attends a school, which is not their normal school or nearest school, parents are normally responsible for making transport arrangements.

North Yorkshire County Council's Admissions Team is always happy to give advice to parents – please contact Karen Crossland on 01609 534825 or Lisa Herdman on 01609 534953.

Staff

A separate staff consultation process will run in parallel with the consultation on the closure proposal.

The Building

The Diocese have confirmed that the school site, other than the playing field, is vested in the Diocesan Board of Finance. The playing field is owned by the County Council. Decisions about the future use of the school site and buildings will be taken by the owners after the closure proposal has been determined.

What Happens Next?

Your views about this proposal are welcomed. You can complete and return the attached response sheet by email or post, or submit an online response.

Email responses should be sent to: schoolorganisation@northyorks.gov.uk

Paper responses should be returned to North Yorkshire County Council at the address below:

Online responses may be submitted by following this link:

#####

**The closing date for responses is
14 December 2020**

All responses to the consultation received by this date will be considered by the County Council's Executive on 26 January 2021.

If the County Council's Executive decides to proceed with the closure proposal, then statutory notices would be published in the local press on 5 February 2021. These notices provide a further four weeks for representations to be made. A final decision would then be made by North Yorkshire County Council's Executive Committee on 23 March 2021. If agreed the school would close on 31 August 2021.

Key Dates

All dates subject to approval at each stage.

Consultation opens	2 November 2020
Public meeting at Fearby Village	17 November 2020 tbc

Hall or Virtual? tbc	
Consultation closes	14 December 2020
County Council's Executive considers consultation responses	26 January 2021
Statutory Notices published (4 weeks for representations to be made)	5 February 2021 to 5 March 2021
Final decision by County Council's Executive	23 March 2021
Proposed school closure date	31 August 2021

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Kell Bank CE VC Primary School
A consultation on whether the school should be closed

Observations and/or suggestions:

Interest/Status

e.g. Parent/Governor/Teacher/Community

Name of School

Signed

Date:

Name (Block Capitals)

Address:

.....

.....

Postcode:

To help us assess whether we have provided clear information, please let us know whether you found this consultation easy to understand? YES/NO

Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

.....

Under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, responses to the consultation may be published on the County Council's website where it may be accessed by members of the public.

You may submit your response via email at schoolorganisation@northyorks.gov.uk or alternatively send this response sheet to the following "FREEPOST" address. You do not need to use a postage stamp.

FREEPOST RTKE-RKAY-CUJS

Kell Bank

Strategic Planning

North Yorkshire County Council

County Hall

NORTHALLERTON

DL7 8AE

Or go to:

XXXXXX and submit your response there

To be received by no later than 14 December 2020