

No.	Response
1	<p>As a former pupil of Skelton cum Newby School I am very interested in saving it. Four generations have from my family attended the school my father my selve my children and my daughters children. I was Foundation Governer for over 12 years and am very sorry to see it closed if at all possible it would be nice to see it open up I would be so happy.</p>
2	<p>Comments re the proposal to close Skelton Newby Hall CE VC Primary School:</p> <p>That the school has already closed now even before the official closing date in August seems to be damming in many ways. Not much of a proposal then, more a forgone conclusion.</p> <p>Reading the consultation and listening to local residents indicates that the running down of the school and the declining number of pupils has been going on for several years.</p> <p>The declining numbers was a warning sign of a problem quite a number of years ago. Why was this not followed up rigorously. Ofsted has also highlighted this issue and made parents understandably wary. Patents looking for an educational future for their children in a positive and dynamic school have not chosen Skelton Newby Hall.</p> <p>The failure of the North Yorkshire education services, the Church of England, the federation with Sharow, the ethos of the school and or some undisclosed fundamental reason has led to the school being closed.</p> <p>As there are 26 primary aged children residing in the catchment, that should be a good foundation for a viable school.</p> <p>Parents should be able to access a local school for their children in the rural environment they choose to live in. It is important that they should be part of the social group of the village.</p> <p>Plenty of primary schools do not have such an amazing outdoor space for educational and development opportunities, away from the pollution in towns that has recently received a lot of National press coverage.</p> <p>It is important to get these first few years right.</p> <p>Is it too late to have a school in Skelton-on-Ure?</p>
3	<p>We are writing to share our Parish Council's submission, on behalf of the community of Skelton-on-Ure, to the consultation on the proposed closure of our school, Skelton Newby Hall Primary School, and the changes to our school catchment area.</p> <p>We would be grateful if you could confirm receipt of this letter.</p> <p>Should you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact us.</p> <p>See Appendix C1</p>

4	<p>Yesterday the sun was shining and the lovely field at Skelton Newby Primary school was abuzz with the sound of happy children. Ironically the need for this space was required to hold an 'explorer day' which included a few of the local primary schools that obviously do not have the space which is still on offer at Skelton Newby Primary School.</p> <p>If the powers that be have their way this space will soon no longer be available and as a result local children will lose out. Irrespective of the 150 years history that the school has, it has been sadly let down in the past 10 years. A stand-alone school it was a successful and happy place for generations of children but of recent years this has not been the case. On the retirement of the last stand-alone headmaster it was placed into a federation arrangement with Sharow. Being the smaller of the two schools Skelton Newby fell into a shadow in the partnership. A 'requires improvement' Ofsted in 2020 added to the exodus of children as, understandably, parents sort the best primary education for their offspring. This included children within Skelton itself and sadly no questions appeared to have been asked as to why this happened. The poor leadership has been compounded by the recent 'requires improvement' Ofsted outcome at Sharow School.</p> <p>Ironically there are 463 new houses within two miles of Skelton and in an ideal world these potential new families could have been attracted to Skelton Newby School. This has not happened. Poor marketing has meant that these families have not been made aware of the school, and also possibly if they were, were not encouraged by the Ofsted report, or even by the school leadership itself. I can say this as I experienced a rebuff when offering Skelton Newby the opportunity to have a visit regarding the local library Summer Reading Challenge. The school was approached three times last summer but did not take up the offer and was the only school in the area to adopt this stance. Obviously encouraging children to read books was not a priority!</p> <p>The 463 houses are in Langthorpe and Kirby Hill alone, and do not include those in built in Boroughbridge in recent times. I frequently hear local comments on the huge number of houses being built in the area but the lack of facilities being developed. Schools are bursting with numbers and I can bet that there is not one school in the area with space across all years so hard luck if there are siblings. I fail to understand, therefore, how North Yorkshire CC have got this so wrong and are seriously contemplating closing a primary school, albeit one with such fantastic facilities!</p> <p>Intrigued by the sad events and on looking at the school set up, I realised that there were no names on the role of governors that I recognised. From this I deduced that there was no representation from Skelton on Ure community itself. The decision to close the school was therefore coldly taken at a governors meeting at Sharow with no accountability to Skelton community. Added to which, this meeting has no public minutes issued. The Chair of governors, xxxxx, who attended the consultation meeting in Skelton Reading Room on the 17th January feigned deafness when taking questions from the floor! He would not, using his inability to hear a perfectly audible attendee, address the question as to why numbers at Skelton Newby had fallen so drastically in recent years.</p> <p>The unspoken consequences of Skelton's catchment being moved to Kirby Hill are complex. Kirby Hill is in a different secondary school catchment area and I believe that many in the area would wish the catchment for Ripon Grammar School to stay as it has stood for many years.</p> <p>We stand to lose a vital resource and hub in our community. I do not have children at the school but having had contact with a small village school when my children were young, I fully appreciate their value. As parents in Skelton were pressured into moving children under threat that 'there might not be space' in September the school is now empty. It was all very wrong and upsetting for all concerned. Too many small schools are being lost and I wonder if this is a policy being followed by NYCC. A small school usually offers a good and happy educational space and so it is tragic that with Skelton, this aspect went so wrong.</p> <p>Please consider the longer term benefit of keeping a great resource, 1.5 acres of space with established buildings. The schools around Boroughbridge are so full that, inevitably, extensions etc. will be required somewhere to take the ever increasing population. With a little drive and imagination the school could be re-established as a stand-alone, self-led independent entity or set up as a nursery or forest school location. I believe that, given the right leadership, many children would totally thrive in the type of environment that Skelton Newby School offers.</p>
5	<p>Skelton-cum-Newby Parish Council has requested from Skelton Newby Hall School the minutes of the governors' meeting at which the decision was made to request consultation on closure of the school. There was no mention of this in the minutes of the regular governors meeting of 3rd October; as we became aware of the request on 22nd November presumably an extraordinary governors meeting was held.</p>

	<p>I have made a FOI request to the school for the sight of any such minutes, which has been refused on what the parish council considers entirely spurious grounds - please see the correspondence copied below my signature. My latest email of 3rd April was sent to the school and copied to the head teacher and the chair of governors; as yet I have not had an reply or even acknowledgement from any of them.</p> <p>As I understand governors' minutes, other than confidential items such as staffing matters, to be straightforwardly public domain, I would be grateful if you could send me a copy of the minutes from any meeting of the Federation of Skelton Newby Hall and Sharow CE Primary Schools governing body at which the potential closure was discussed, and also the letter from the Chair of Governors to the NYCC Executive Member for Schools requesting the consultation. Please consider this to be a freedom of information request.</p>
6	<p>I am writing in response to the closure of Skelton cum Newby Primary School.</p> <p>I think it is a real shame the School is closing. I have a 1 year old, who I am concerned about with regard to school places as I am aware there is an increasing shortage of places within the Boroughbridge catchment. It is a shame that a small village school, which if run well, has the ability to nurture our children as well as support them academically in a small community environment- a rare thing these days- should close.</p> <p>The School has incredible facilities, which are far better than the local schools in the area, which is yet another draw to the school, if a suitable Head can be found to bring the school up to where it was but a few years ago.</p> <p>The closure of the School jepodises our place within the catchment of Ripon Grammar School which will not only affect us as a family, but will also have a knock on effect on house prices in what is already a very worrisome time for people due to mortgage increases.</p> <p>I fully object to the closure of the School.</p>
7	<p><b>Sustainable Future Plan for Skelton Newby Hall School Primary School</b></p> <p>I am a resident of Skelton on Ure and my son is an ex-pupil of Skelton school. I am writing to you to urge the Council to reconsider their plans to close this unique village school.</p> <p>Setting</p> <p>The school is located in a unique rural setting which allows for exceptional outdoor learning and sporting opportunities. It can provide added value to the education provision offered by the Council.</p> <p>New Housing – New Pupils</p> <p>Government guidelines published in January 2023 state that <b>a rural school should not be closed unless it is in the best interest of the education provision in the area.</b></p> <p>With new housing being completed in Langthorpe and Kirkby Hill, there are 463 new houses, the majority of which are occupied. This does not take into account the new housing developments in Boroughbridge, which are already feeding into the Boroughbridge and Kirby Hill schools. There is already a shortage of places across all age groups in these two schools, with more houses yet to be completed.</p> <p>In total there will be 800+ new houses in the wider Boroughbridge area. It is imperative to keep Skelton Newby Hall school open so that it can provide much needed school places to the families who will be occupying the new housing. If it closes how do the Council propose to provide for these children? This is an existing facility ready to accept pupils. The other schools would need to be extended if they are to take more pupils, with all the associated building costs. It cannot be in the best interests of the education provision in the area to close Skelton Newby Hall school at this time.</p> <p>Skelton village is working hard to save the Black Lion pub as a community pub and to keep the village assets up and running. The school is very much a part of the community and is highly valued by the residents</p>
8	<p>I have followed this story with great interest as before retirement I worked locally in a primary school and before that I worked for Newby Hall Estate. I must say I am utterly astounded that NYC are considering closing this delightful school. Surely it will be an asset to have in your children's education portfolio.</p>

	<p>My feeling is recently it has been on a slippery slope purely down to poor management and leadership. I understand that the tone from the council is that the decision to close was 'quietly' decided some time ago and it is fait accompli. I do hope this is not the case and a full investigation around the failure to advertise the governor's minutes.</p> <p>I know you have tight budgets to work to come up but I cannot understand how closing this still would save money as in the long run you will have to provide extra pasty that other neighbouring primary schools or perhaps a brand new school at the rate Boroughbridge is expanding. The school is set in beautiful surroundings, a perfect environment for children to learn. Why not give the community of Skelton a thriving school, with the right people in place I am sure it will be as good as it was a few years ago if not better for slob and help it with catchment areas I thought this rigid. It needs to be open to a wider locality. Many people don't realise where Skelton is. With proper marketing I'm sure they would.</p> <p>I hope you take my comments on board and think take all comments in to consideration.</p>
9	<p>Please resist Sharow CE Primary Schools request is close this school. As a resident of Skelton on Ure we have watched this school decline over the last few years, since the school was federated things had gone downhill. yes, numbers have been low but have the council asked why that may be? An example: an acquaintance phoned up to request a visit to the school when his family moved into the village. The response from the school was very lukewarm with little enthusiasm or interest even though there may be three potential new starters. Hence, they didn't choose Skelton as their school of choice! Then the recent fiasco where parents were advised to remove their children and find another school as they may not find any spaces in September. And surprise surprise very quickly there were no children left in the school.</p> <p>I understand the consultation meeting on the 17th January wasn't particularly well run and complaints were made to NYC as the chair of governors comment xxxxx pleaded deafness when he was asked any questions by members of the public. How come that be democratic? Also, the school has declined a Freedom of Information request to observe the governors may meeting minutes. It all seems quite suspicious.</p> <p>It seems to becoming a trend with NYC as I understand Hovingham primary school has recently closed too. I feel this is a huge mistake which will be regretted in the future. I am sure you are aware of the rate Boroughbridge is expanding and I understand there are more houses to come. The local skills are already full (although NYC claimed that they aren't) the schools report completely different story.</p> <p>There has been a school on this on the site for 150 years, Skelton is a strong community that fights for it believes in and I strongly believe with passionate leadership and improved catchment area, professional marketing this school will grow and prosper. Future generation deserve a choice of school not all children thrive in large town schools.</p> <p>I hope all the correspondence received has been read and you take the comments on board.</p>
10	<p>I wish to express my concern and sadness at the prospect of the closure of our village school. The school that I and my sister attended and that my daughter and nephews attended and the school I had hoped my grandchildren would be able to attend should I have any in the future.</p> <p>There are more primary school aged children in the village than there has been in latter years and more arriving almost every month. With no school, our village will not appeal to so many young families. Young families are the future of our village!</p> <p>If our school closes I understand that we will be moved to the Kirby Hill catchment. This will likely be the first step to us being moved out of the Ripon Grammar School catchment, which will impact on future options for the children.</p> <p>Aside from the children, the loss of the school and losing the RGS catchment will impact on house values for house owners.</p> <p>This area needs our school to meet the pupil demand for the next 5/10 years at least.</p> <p>I understand that the Chair of Governors at Boroughbridge Primary has submitted their comment that they are at capacity and yet more houses are being built. Where will these children go. Why should they have to travel longer distances to school, we should be encouraging walking to school but you can't if it's miles away.</p> <p>When our school is well run and has ambition, it is an amazing asset for the education provision in this area - we don't just need mega primary schools in towns, some children really benefit from the rural setting and smaller school size - but we can also grow too.</p>

	<p>As a community we need to stand up for our school and the future of the village.</p> <p>I hope these opinions are taken on board and that the future of our school can be secured and that we can inspire local children to attend and enjoy the school and it's surroundings for the fantastic setting that it is.</p>
11	<p><b>Skelton Newby Hall School – Closure Consultation.</b></p> <p>Skelton School has shown historically that it can be a good and well supported school. It is true that there are currently only a small number of primary school aged children in catchment, but the cycle of life goes on, whilst the catchment covers only the village there is nothing to stop those from the surrounding area choosing to support the school.</p> <p>Following the retirement of xxxx (former Headteacher) in 2012 the school entered a Federation arrangement with Sharow School, both having been told by NYCC that they would not be able to recruit teaching heads in future years. It was therefore beholden upon the Executive Head to try and grow their own sphere of influence in order to retain their job and salary progression.</p> <p>The facilities at Skelton were amended and improved to provide three teaching spaces, Kitchen space, WC Changing and extensive outdoor play, some of which is suitable for Forest School type use, the campus is therefore highly enriched. Implementation of regulation has however thrown up barriers, meals cannot be prepared on site in the current kitchen and the third classroom is difficult to use because it does not have WC facilities directly connected.</p> <p>Food has been supplied by the kitchen at Sharow, constructed at considerable expense, where economy of scale can apply, the only issue being transport. The third classroom is an adaptation of a previous toilet block and store, it therefore has a foul connection already, but NYCC have indicated that without upgrading the whole building to improve insulation standards that WCs can-not be added. This makes the project impossible to support or achieve within budget and with the effect of Approved Contractors price structures.</p> <p>In approximately 2016 there were a small number of children who joined the school from outside the catchment. The parents believed that their children would receive better support in a smaller school and others also applied to join. Attendance and behaviour standards fell as a result, a rumour grew on Social Media that the school had been given 'Special' status, progressively the parents of existing pupils removed their children, the rumour gained strength.</p> <p>This cohort have gone on to secondary school, but Covid 19 has not allowed either Skelton or Sharow Schools to fully recover and to attract new children into their settings.</p> <p>The announcement of the consultation by NYCC has not been well handled and has been interpreted by the parents and villagers as confirmation that a decision has been made. Other schools have indicated to parents that if places are not taken then they are unable to guarantee future availability, it is for this reason that there are currently no children on role at the school, not because parents did not wish to use the school.</p> <p>We understand that the consultation has given rise to 2 questions:-</p> <p><b>1) Close or Keep the School?</b></p> <p>The consultation documents list 5 alternative schools within 5 miles of Skelton on Ure. Within these schools there are 225 pupil places between each of the 6 year groups, an average of 37.5, but not taking account of Nursery or any other wrap around provision.</p> <p>The current planning consents in the area are as follows and will create additional housing:</p>

Number of Houses.

- Hockley Croft, Langthorpe 21/03364/AMENDS 176
- Milby, 22/02525/DVCMAJ 145
- Langthorpe, (Skelton Road) 21/05085/AMENDS 63
- Langthorpe (North Road) 22/01714/FUL 9
- Langthopre (Poultry Farm) 19/00449/DVCMAJ 22
- Skelton Road ZC23/01324/OUT 4
- Aldborough Gate 22/00106/DISCON 184
- Stump Cross 20/00927/REMMAJ 260
- Stump Cross 20/00928/REMMAJ 214

Total Current Permissions excluding Windfall Sites 1077

Standard methodology indicates that these houses will produce children as follows:-

- Pre School 20 – 30 / 100 = 215 to 322
- Primary School 25 – 35 / 100 = 268 to 376
- Secondary School 18 – 25 / 100 = 193 to 258.

It may therefore be seen that the effect of the houses now being built around Skelton on Ure, Langthorpe, Roecliffe and Kirby Hill will produce, without the effect of any other smaller sites, an additional 676 to 956 pupils.

Focussing on the Primary School Sector the standard methodology demonstrates how at the lower end of the figure that current capacity is exceeded, whilst at the upper end the demand would significantly exceed capacity. More pupil places will therefore be needed with school recreation space in addition.

The figures also demonstrate that there will be an increase in secondary school demand, with only Boroughbridge High School able to support this locally. Outwood, who are a significant academy operator in the area, do not have a sixth form and transport all their pupils from the area to Easingwold currently.

## 2 Change of Catchment Area.

The character of a community may not be properly understood by those who do not live within it and it is important to take account of the ethos which owes a great deal to topography. The A1 forms a dividing line and the feeling of Skelton on Ure is very much that it is a part of the Ripon Area, not Boroughbridge. The River Ure has crossing points West and East of the village, precluding travel in a southerly direction.

The current catchment area for the school serves the village only, but the pupils are eligible for acceptance into Outwood Academy and Ripon Grammar School. Pupils from the village are also able to attend the Harrogate secondary schools with existing bus services.

As demonstrated above the demand for secondary school places in Boroughbridge will be increased by development and therefore it is counterintuitive to change current arrangements.

	<p>The Governing Body of the Sharow and Skelton Federation is currently led by xxxxx who has been dropped into the role in order to 'Sort out OFSTED' which he confirmed at the consultation meeting. xxxxx appeared to struggle to hear or access the majority of the meeting and was wholly disinterested in the communities that they serve. It would seem inappropriate that he has been involved in the recent leadership of the Governing Body and is responsible for the current position. We have recently witnessed the effect of OFSTED in the news media.</p> <p>My daughter attended Skelton School and won a place at Ripon Grammar School. She achieved 12 Grade 9 GCSEs, only 12 other children managed this nationally. I contend that Skelton Newby Hall School set the grounding for this and can be a good school, there is nothing negative about the size of the school provided that the staff are able and supported to embrace the challenge of mixed year groups and modify their teaching practice accordingly.</p> <p>I hereby object to the proposal to close Skelton Newby Hall School which will have a negative effect on the local provision and therefore is not in the best interests of education. With sensible investment the site can support 50 children, significantly easing the problem outlined above which is likely to begin arriving within 24 months.</p> <p>Skelton School has maintained a positive budget position, it is not used because the community is frightened.</p>
12	<p>I write as a long term resident of the village and can well recall the past and recent past history of the school.</p> <p>In the past the school was well organised and run by capable and committed people and attracted pupils not only from the village but also from well beyond the immediate environs. So much so that it approached capacity.</p> <p>In the recent past however it is well documented that there has been dreadful neglect by indifferent leadership with a determination to not attract new intake and indeed drive away existing numbers . Parents will know why they either didn't take their children there or took them out after placement and I hope their views are well noted .</p> <p>I believe in 2017 /18 there was 38 or so pupils but in 2022 none !!</p> <p>Proof , if proof were needed of the dreadful neglect the school has suffered at the hands of people with little interest in the school and the pupils within.</p> <p>I would sincerely hope that full consideration is given to the future educational needs of the community rather than the past engineered failing of the school.</p> <p>Here is a wonderful rural setting perfect for nurturing great education for the influx of children from new housing in such close proximity .</p> <p>Surely it is sensible to have a new drive to promote the facility in terms of catchment and management to realise the potential that lies there.</p> <p>I am hopeful that wisdom, determination and common sense will prevail and the School will thrive again.</p>
13	<p>I would like to know the reasoning behind the threatened closure of the primary school in Skelton on Ure.</p> <p>I understand you are the corporate Director of young peoples' services for the North Yorkshire Council, a group you do not seem to be representing.</p> <p>I understand there is a shortage of spaces at the Boroughbridge primary school. Houses being built and already occupied where complete in the area must attract a huge number of new pupils and is being completely ignored.</p> <p>You and your committee seem unable to look to the future even though there is a ready made school at Skelton and part of your job is to keep up with demand for places for young children.</p> <p>Maybe being based in Northallerton is responsible for this state of affairs and failure of the federation with Sharow. Maybe you do not understand our local issue and as can be the case with authorities miles from the place in question, don't care. If that hurts, good, do something.</p> <p>All in all you are failing Skelton and the future of young pupils in the area, so an explanation is needed. Lack of finance doesn't wash when you are dealing with the future of young children so do not even think of moving Skelton out of the catchment area for the Ripon Grammar school which after all is only 2.5 miles away, probably something you are not even aware of? What happened to marketing so that our locals in new housing know that they can send their children to a primary school in Skelton?</p>

14	<p>I am writing to inform of my dismay that Skelton-on-ure primary school may close.</p> <p>As we are all aware a number of new houses are being built or have been built in the very local area. These houses are aimed at families with children who would benefit from our school!</p> <p>We also moved to the village 2 years ago in preparation to try get our 3 children into Ripon Grammar School. This was one of our primary reasons for moving to the village.</p> <p>We hope that you will firstly keep our village school open and with the right staff will thrive. Secondly keep Skelton-on-ure in the catchment area for aRipon Grammar School as it has been for many years.</p>
15	<p>I am writing to ask NYC not close our Primary School. It has become apparent that there are many factors as to why the school has had such low numbers. Our school used to do well, and I believe it is down to poor leadership that we are now in this unfortunate position. If the village had known about this sooner, we would have tried to do something. It feels unjust that we haven't had a chance. In fact, it was Newby Hall Estate who told the Parish Council who in turn informed the village, there was no direct communications from the school to the village at all. Thus meaning our parish council were one of the last to know about the proposals. The school are refusing a FOI request to look at the minutes of the governor's meetings prior to them requesting closure. It all seems rather 'off hand'. And now Sharow's Ofsted report has been released into the public demain - not a particular good read.</p> <p>Skelton Newby Hall school is in such an idyllic setting, it has so much to offer if given the chance and if led and managed properly I'm sure it would thrive. The residents of Skelton on Ure do not wish to lose an asset that the that was commissioned by Lady Mary Vyner of Newby Hall and has been on that site since 1869. The current catchment areas for Skelton school are spurious, we need to be included in the wider catchment area. As an aside please note it is also important to the village that we stay in Rippon Grrammar Schools catchment area.</p> <p>Boroughbridge is growing rapidly with large housing estates continuing to be built and I understand there is not come. This will put existing Primary Schools under immense pressure. Some figures NY C gave, said there was enough capacity in local schools but on investigations this is an untruth. They are struggling. I hope we don't return to the 1980's and place a portacabin classroom in the car park as the school is oversubscribed or the current buildings are no longer fit for purpose due to being underfunded. Skelton Newby Hall School can solve the problem these problems - please don't close it!</p> <p>Skelton Newby hall still may be small, our community may be small but we are passionate about our school and fight for what we believe in.</p> <p>We want to work with NYC not against you. To gain the best possible result for our community and surrounding area and most importantly its children.</p>
16	<p>I'm writing to express my dismay at suggested closure of Skelton on Ure Primary School.</p> <p>This school has had an excellent reputation in the past and is a much valued part of our village. Unfortunately the decision to make the school part of a federation has caused its demise. Instead of being maintained as a school in its own right it seems to me it became an annex of a larger school at Sharrow. As such I believe it was not given the care and attention it warranted.</p> <p>Ofsted had always rated the school as good until its most recent inspection, when it was downgraded. Despite having a healthy budget at the time, it seems that the surplus was not used to make the necessary improvements.</p> <p>The School has been the victim of poor management in my opinion.</p> <p>Please give the school another chance. There is a lot of new housing in our area and extra classrooms will be needed. It would be folly to close the school just at the time when so many new families are moving into the area. It would make sense to wait at least another year, in view of the potential rise in the pupil numbers, before making a final decision. I am not aware that this would incur any costs for the council.</p> <p>I think Skelton has been poorly served and you have an opportunity to right a wrong, please consider this.</p>
17	<p>The government guidelines published in January 2023 says a rural school should not be closed unless it is in the best interests of education provision in the area. How can it be in anyone's interest, who live in this area to close a school when in Langthorpe and Kirby Hill alone, there are 463 new houses. Virtually all are occupied. This is not accounting for the Boroughbridge developments which are within 2 miles of Skelton Newby School and already feeding into Boroughbridge and Kirby Hill. Our village school has not been marketed to the 800+ new houses within five miles of the school. This gives a picture of the current existing pressure on local primary</p>



	<p>schools in which NY wish to close Skelton Newby! A temporary classroom would probably cost tens of thousands of pounds to build, taking away even more valuable outside space for children. Skelton offers a great location, which has been, in the last decade, inadequately managed, hence the situation we find today. Although we were shown many facts and figures at the meeting in Skelton-on-Ure on 17th January 2023, they did not relate to reality. Different schools were shown to have x number of places, however when it came to people trying to get a place, there were no spaces in their child's age group.</p> <p>It was very disconcerting, appalling and somewhat unbelievable to hear the information that was given at the meeting. The way the meeting was opened made it obvious that everyone was very sad about the school closing. This decision had obviously been made months before and it seems that the powers that be had done everything they could to ensure the school would become unviable.</p> <p>Has an inquiry taken place to find out how a school, that was small but thriving, went from 9 pupils down to 1 before the middle of February? Why did all these children suddenly move to other schools? We know a lot of the parents and children who were at the school, where the parents were told that if they did not move their children now, they may not get a place in September. This scared parents into moving their children who were happy and thriving at the school. One family had three children and there was only space for two of them at the proposed new school.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Why did the school not continue?</li> <li>• Why did the head and the chair of governors not actively and enthusiastically try to recruit more pupils to this school?</li> <li>• Why was the village not informed about what was happening earlier?</li> <li>• Why is the boundary for the intake of the school restricted?</li> </ul> <p>These are all questions that need to be answered. You cannot make such a monumental and catastrophic decision such as this without further investigation as to how on earth this came to be. Where are the priorities for the dual head? Are they equally divided between Sharow and Skelton cum Newby? Is there a conflict of interest? The village residents have not seen any activity encouraging parents to send their children there or children from surrounding areas. From what we were told, quite some time ago there was one leaflet drop to the new houses in Boroughbridge. This is not active marketing; this is not trying to keep a wonderful school alive. You have an amazing facility here that could be utilised by many children who struggle in larger schools and those with additional needs.</p> <p>There has been a massive rise in population in the Boroughbridge and Kirby Hill areas over the past few years. Ripon and surrounding villages have also seen large numbers of housing developments.</p> <p>Our population is growing and more school places will be needed. You have a wonderful facility at a reasonable cost, thanks to the xxxxx family at Newby Hall. Why not use it? Schools such as Kirby Hill and Roecliffe will need more facilities, infrastructure and buildings to cope with this growing demand, which will involve enormous cost and logistical problems. Where is there land to extend Roecliffe School, apart from the village green?</p> <p>Finally, as a Play Therapist, (<a href="#">webpage</a>) I am being approached by an increasing number of parents and carers whose children are struggling with school. In particular, large schools with lots of children in each class. Sadly, we have an ever increasing number of children who have emotional and mental health needs that cannot be met by many schools.</p>
18	<p>I'm writing in disappointment that the Skelton Newby Hall Primary School is being closed, as a resident of Skelton-on-Ure this does not feel like the correct decision. Some of my thoughts below:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>•It appears that little investigation was done as to why numbers had dropped within the school, and therefore no action plan formulated to improve the situation.</li> <li>•Very little marketing was carried out to make parents aware the school existed.</li> <li>•When the school was well run, it was an amazing asset for education provision in this area, the most recent Head Teacher appeared to run it into the ground and subsequently their current school in Sharrow has been given a poor Ofsted report. The current Chair of the Board of Governors appeared behind the curve at a consultation in Skelton Reading Room and was unable to adequately answer relevant questions.</li> </ul>

	<p>•Our investigations have shown there is a lack of capacity in the area with feedback from other local councils, other local primary schools, and parent experience when trying to find new schools for children from our village. There is already a shortage of capacity in the area with more demand to be met from the new housing which is still being built, as well as further developments with planning. These developments are predominantly marketed by the developers to young families, and therefore likely to increase the usual formula of one child per four houses.</p> <p>I hope that the school can be saved and an action plan created to move the school forward to success.</p>
19	<p>Good morning,</p> <p>I am writing to express my concern regarding the potential closure of the above primary school. This school is a valuable asset to the village and the surrounding villages of Langthorpe, Bridge Hewick, Marton Le Moor.</p> <p>The school has amazing outdoor space that a lot of other schools lack this is a great learning area for children who may not get opportunities outside school to run around and climb obstacles or learn about nature and wildlife. I myself attended this school and also my two children who had a fantastic education there. I think it would an absolute failure of the council to close this school. There have been approximately 800 new homes built in the Boroughbridge/Langthorpe area in the last two years- these homes will have families who will need a primary school! Please please reconsider the closure of this school.</p>
20	<p>I have been asked by xxxxxx, owner of Newby Hall Estate and landlord of Skelton Newby Hall School to respond to the current ongoing consultation regarding Skelton Newby Hall School.</p> <p>I attach a copy of our original consultation response, all of which we reiterate and reinforced, especially in the light of the support for the school's retention that has been forthcoming from other notable quarters, including Boroughbridge Primary school and Julian Smith MP.</p> <p>We do not believe that the initial information, facts and figures provided by NYCC as part of the initial consultation to provide the full picture.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. There is a real need for more people spaces in the local area, given the huge increase in housing numbers.</li> <li>2. The current state of this still does not reflect its true potential, given its location and the facilities that can be offered.</li> <li>3. Governments are very protective of such small rural schools such as these, setting a high bar for closure.</li> <li>4. The closure of the school would almost certainly remove Skelton on your from the written grammar school catchment, which would have a large detrimental impact on community.</li> </ol> <p>We therefore continue to support the Parish Council and others with their campaign to keep the school. See Appendix C2</p>
21	<p>Skelton Newby Hall is needed to maintain the quality of education provision in this area. There are over 800 houses being built within five miles of the school, which are being marketed to young families. There are already capacity constraints emerging with Boroughbridge Primary School reaching pupil capacity and Roecliffe Primary School holding a waiting list for early years provision. As more houses are built and the government widens the early years funding support, this demand will grow. As was acknowledged to me by xxxxxx, Early Years Manager at NYC, it remains to be seen whether the government revisit the funding formula as the economics for private nursery provision will be challenged when the state funding is extended.</p> <p>The government guidelines state, regarding the closure of a rural school, that it must be in the best interests of the quality of education provision in the area. The Council may note that the lack of pupils at the school today demonstrates the lack of need. However, I would note that this situation has been arrived at through a combination of the failed federation, no marketing, and proactive re-settlement of pupils. The reality is that this school is an excellent site, financially viable, which can offer far more to the quality of education in the area than a temporary classroom being added to another school, which would reduce the amenity space at that school, and the long-term economics in comparison to retaining Skelton Newby Hall.</p> <p>It was not lost on the community when two coaches turned up on Thursday 20th April with pupils from three local primary schools (including Sharow) to hold an explorer day, as this was the site most suited to accommodate the number of pupils and appropriate setting.</p>

	<p>The community want to work with North Yorkshire Council, a council putting local at its heart, to restore our school and contribute to the capacity constraints in the area, and to be a resource for all local schools to utilise. We can also grow our capacity - the community can support it.</p> <p>Our school does not need to, and should not, close. It should remain in our existing catchment, therefore remaining in the Ripon Grammar School catchment which will not reduce the options available to families living in the village. As you have previously stated, the catchment does not restrict access to anyone living in a different catchment, until such time as Skelton Newby Hall reaches capacity.</p> <p>I appreciate that the growing proportion of smaller school in the maintained portfolio provides a growing challenge for your team. Our school should not be seen as a challenge but an opportunity to solve an emerging problem at the other local schools as they become overwhelmed during the course of the next few years. We can demonstrate, working together, that keeping Skelton Newby Hall open is the right decision both for our village and also for the wider area.</p>
22	<p>I am in support of the Primary School in Skelton On Ure remaining open. I think it is a great asset to our village. Without it I feel the village wouldn't attract the families that make the village alive and vibrant. There is still a huge demand for rural locations with village schools, not everyone wants to go to large town schools and if the school could offer wrap around care I believe it would be even more attractive to village children (and other local children). Villages need to be made up of all sorts of people of all sorts of ages and without the attraction, to families, of a Primary School the village will be in danger of becoming a commuter village.</p>
23	<p>I hope that it is possible to be more accurate in my comments about the closure of the above school in that the information about our own school was not as accurate as it can now be presented. That said the fundamental concern as to the pressure on places, remains.</p> <p>I would still like to add my concerns to the thought that the Skelton Primary School is facing closure.</p> <p>Whilst I understand the challenges faced by the school there is a key issue which does not appear to have been adequately addressed. The pressure on places elsewhere cannot be overstated. Whilst it may only be a few children I would ask that the planning presumptions be thoroughly checked. At our school it is suggested that we have capacity for 256 children. We are now at 232 with a further 30 planned to join us in September. 256 is based on space as shown on a line drawing; it does not take account of what would be deemed suitable as a classroom. I am confident that we now have a solution to accommodate the intake for September but as housing developments continue in Boroughbridge whatever we do this year will not solve the longer term problems going forward.</p> <p>My conclusion is that it is important to increase capacity at Boroughbridge Primary School in the short and medium term to ensure that there are sufficient places for the children's in the town. Response from Chair of Governors - Boroughbridge Primary School</p>
24	<p>I sincerely hope North Yorkshire Council will reconsider the future of Skelton Newby Primary School.</p> <p>At a time when our area is experiencing a huge population increase due to multiple large housing developments , and the local primary schools are at or approaching capacity, it would seem foolhardy to abandon this existing school which could accommodate at least 50 children.</p> <p>With a little investment and proactive support from the Council, Skelton could provide an ideal, smaller school environment, in a superb setting. 'Forest Schools' and village schools have and always will be attractive to parents, if they are run well and given adequate support.</p> <p>It would seem financially responsible to rescue Skelton school, rather than face expensive expansion at other schools in the next year or so. But overwhelmingly the most important reason to maintain Skelton school, is that it could so easily be run well to provide a fantastic education facility for our young children.</p> <p>Please save Skelton Newby School.</p>
25	<p>In response to your consultation documents I would like you to consider the following:-</p>

1. Primary school children. Over the last 3 years young families with children have moved into the village, if there is a school these families will likely to use the school and reputation will grow as a result. These families will not yet show on census data.
2. Catchments. Skelton on Ure it's currently its own catchment for the primary school, but pupils are able to access Ripon and Harrogate secondary schools. If this is changed it will increase pressure on Boroughbridge, Thirsk, Easingwold and Knaresborough facilities.
3. Boroughbridge Primary School. the Chair of Governors has indicated that he school is at capacity, this is contrary to the figures contained within the consultation and therefore draws questions over the accuracy of the data.
4. Hosing Growth. Boroughbridge, Langthorpe, Kirrby Hill and Milby are experiencing huge housing growth. Standard calculations show that the number of children generated will exceed current capacity.

I have been a part of the Staff at Skelton School and understand the potential but it has. The buildings require improvements to the layout, which is quite achievable within the grounds. The ability to use the grounds and extensive play areas for teaching is immensely valuable, allied to the support given by local farmers and landowners with use of their facilities.

The loss of Skelton School would be a shame for the community but also lead to damage in the education provision locally. I objected the proposal to close the school.