

Dilwyn Church of England Primary School

A joint statement on behalf of:

Herefordshire Local Authority
The Bishop of Hereford, The Board of Education, Hereford Diocese
The Archdiocese of Cardiff Commission for Schools and Colleges
St Mary's Roman Catholic High School

We have been working together for a number of months to support Dilwyn Church of England Primary School and also to look at possible ways of providing sustainable, vibrant and viable educational provision for the long term. This work has involved extensive research, consideration and exploration into possible educational models including federation with a number of schools or with other individual schools.

The Governors of St Mary's Roman Catholic High School, with the support of the Archdiocese of Cardiff, explored the feasibility of a joint faith collaboration with Dilwyn C of E Primary School. There has been a close working relationship between the Catholic Archdiocese of Cardiff and the Anglican Diocese of Hereford over a number of years. This relationship has been supported by the Local Authority and provided the foundation for such a radical collaboration to move forward. The Governors of St Mary's have supported their head teacher in the development of immediate support to Dilwyn C of E Primary School, whilst also considering longer term plans to provide a sustainable and viable educational provision and this support and planning has been welcomed by the Archdiocese of Cardiff, the Diocese of Hereford Board of Education, and the Local Authority. The initial plans were considered by the Local Authority, the Diocese of Hereford Board of Education, and the Archdiocese of Cardiff but all agreed that they were not sufficient to ensure sustainable quality provision.

During the statutory consultation on the closure of Dilwyn C of E Primary School a revised proposal was submitted by the Governors of Dilwyn C of E Primary School. This submission contained an updated proposal from the head teacher of St Mary's RC High School. The submission was supported by the Governors of St Mary's RC High School, so long as it received unanimous support from both the Diocese of Hereford and The Archdiocese of Cardiff, and that the viability and sustainability of provision was ensured so that St Mary's RC High School was not placed in a position whereby financial assistance would have to be given.

The revised submission was a carefully developed proposal which dealt with many complex issues. The Diocesan Board of Education of Hereford met to critically examine the new submission. There was much of merit, which resulted in a slim majority of the Diocesan Board of Education of Hereford voting to support a proposal that the two schools work in a partnership. However, whilst they recognised the huge efforts and largesse of St Mary's in making this proposal, they felt that there were still many unanswered questions, unresolved issues and opportunities which needed further development.

As a consequence, there followed extensive detailed further consideration between the Local Authority, Diocese of Hereford, Archdiocese of Cardiff and the Governors

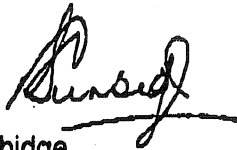
of St Mary's RC High School. There continued to be serious concerns expressed by the two Dioceses, the Local Authority and the Governors of St Mary's regarding financial viability and long term sustainability. These concerns remained unreconcilable. All parties have therefore collectively agreed that the Dilwyn proposal is not viable. The Local Authority, Diocese of Hereford, Archdiocese of Cardiff and Governors of St Mary's RC High School recognise that it is regrettable that in this instance we have not been able to find a viable solution, which would answer the concerns and result in long term sustainability. We are very aware of the strength of feeling present in the local community. All parties have tried their best to develop a solution that would stand the test of time in the long term, unfortunately, that has not been possible.

The Local Authority, the Diocese of Hereford and the Archdiocese of Cardiff wish to re-assure the parents of the children of Dilwyn C of E Primary School, the staff, Governors and whole community that, despite the inability to find a way forward, we all remain deeply committed to ensuring the best possible education of the children now and in the future. Furthermore, we wish to say how grateful we are for the amount of time and energy that have been given by many people, working together, over the past few months, even though it has not been possible to achieve the outcome for which many had hoped.

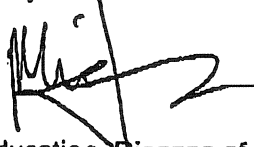
The Local Authority, Diocese of Hereford, Archdiocese of Cardiff and Governors of St Mary's RC High School will continue to work together in the best interests of the children and young people in Herefordshire and look forward to developing ecumenical approaches that deliver high quality, sustainable education.



Anne Robertson
Director of Schools & Colleges, Archdiocese of Cardiff



Pat Burbidge
Chair of St Mary's Roman Catholic High School



Philip Sell
Director of Education, Diocese of Hereford



David Sanders
Interim Director of Children's Services, Herefordshire Council