

**Minutes of the Special Tillside Parish Council Meeting
On Tuesday 23rd October 2007 in Chatton Parish Hall Chatton
Commencing at 19.30**

Present: Neil Douglas (Chairman), Jim Railton, Duncan Ord, Bob Scott, Eddie Brown Joan Renner, Margaret Waldie, Daphne Pardoe Shiela Dodds & Mandy Nesbit
County Councillor Mr C Hallam-Baker
Bob Perris- Chatton News

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE:

Parish Councillor Alison Cutter

DECLARATION OF INTEREST:

None

Min 196- Closure of Chatton 1st School- Parish Councillor Mr B Scott asked the meeting if Bob Perris could take part, this was agreed. He circulated briefing notes and advised the meeting that comments are in italics, a copy is attached to the Minutes. The meeting was advised that there were 22 pupils in 1992 and that the current finances are possible for up to 2009/10. Bob Perris informed the meeting that year on year it was becoming more expensive but the past surplus would keep it going, he did also state that the current numbers were dropping as children are leaving due to age. Parish Councillors J Railton & B Scott along with B Perris met the school governors to suggest their proposals and it was now agreed that there should be an urgent meeting with the Director of Diocese & Director of Education. Concerns were raised that the Parish Council have no representative, the majority of Governors are Foundation Governors, there was never certainty of Head recruitment and the 1st the Parish Council knew of the situation was 30th April when it was fait accompli. Bob Perris advised the meeting that the figures do not include new developments. The Chairman stated the school was needed for the future as Northumberland Estates are proposing developments and there could be starter homes, the new head would save on the budget and there has to be a good case to close the school as £54k - £56k has been spent on the kitchen. Also the South Hazelrigg development will create 26 jobs. Bob Scott stated that there is published evidence that children in rural areas do better in education. Mandy Nesbit felt that the governors should not be undermined and if numbers are increased from other schools the other schools will be affected. Jim Railton informed the meeting that the playschool did help the school. Bob Scott stated that if the school is lost the P.O. could be next; the school could not close yet as it is within the 6 week consultation period, and that the finances need to be looked at. Bob Perris stated that a best school will attract pupils and press statements should be countered. Duncan Ord stated that we need to buy time. Mandy Nesbit asked if there was a minimum number and if we are going to fight what is the approach. Bob Perris replied that schools can survive with about 20 pupils but pre schools to impact on the numbers. Jim Railton stated there needs to be a press release, call a public meeting, & meet the governors to hear their side. The Chairman wondered what support is available for a C of E School.

Meeting Closed 9.00 p.m.

