

Downshire Hill Residents' Association

School UPDATE 27th January 2018

General Update

1. **Police Station redevelopment.** The EFA (Education Funding Agency) have advised early the Council in early 2017 that they now intend to pursue a 210 place school on the Police Station Site. At time of writing a new application has not been made by the EFA and from talking to our councillors no pre application meeting has yet been held by the council. However the school website states that they still intend to move to Downshire Hill in the future.

In February 2017, the School wrote to the DHRA that minister level support for a 210 place school had been obtained and a new proposal would be submitted for a 210-pupil school. In the DHRA committee's opinion, all the issues which have led neighbours to oppose the first application for a 420 pupil school remained in the case of a 210 school, only somewhat diluted (playground noise, traffic, catchment area, disruption, pollution, damage to a listed building and lack of need etc).

The committee also believed that it would be impossible over time to hold the School to remain at 210 pupils should one be applied for as the DHRA had been assured by the Education Funding Agency that they were adamant originally that the school needed to have 420 pupils to be economic. It was mysterious that 210 was now deemed viable on the site. The DHRA committee unanimously opposed the proposal and this has been supported by a Vote at the 2017 AGM.

Funds had been generously contributed to the first appeal and surplus funds, as previously agreed, have now been returned on a pro rata basis to those donors who gave more than £1000.

If a second campaign were necessary, contributions will be requested again. There would also be a new political dimension to the campaign in view of public criticism of the allegedly costly Schools initiative.

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