

## **Notes of a meeting held on Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November 2006 to discuss a complaint about the roof at Occold Primary School**

Present: Mr Barry Woods, local resident who had first made the complaint to Suffolk County Council  
Mr Bill Smith, Design and Maintenance Manager, Suffolk County Council  
Mr Kevin Chittock, Chairman of the Parish Council  
Mr Andy Andrews, Parish Councillor  
Mrs Sue Hubner, Clerk to the Parish Council

It was agreed that Mrs Hubner should take the Minutes of the meeting. Although the initial complaint had been made by Mr Woods as a private individual, the Parish Council had subsequently written to SCC expressing its concern as well. This meeting was to be treated as a joint meeting of the three parties involved

Mr Woods gave an overview of his original complaint, essentially that new tiles on the ridge had destroyed the roofline of the school. During re-roofing work carried out during the summer the old decorative Victorian ridge tiles had been removed and subsequently replaced with plain new ones

Mr Smith explained that he was responsible for all maintenance and new building for the County Council. Part of his remit is the care of 350 schools for which limited funds are available. To illustrate this point Mr Smith explained that he currently had a list of £30m worth of identified works to be carried out, £4.5m had been spent towards this in this financial year. As well as financial constraints, when working on schools there is also a time constraint to ensure that work is completed during holiday time

When the old tiles were removed they were found to be in a very poor state and could not be re-used, although this had been the intention and was stated in the contract for the work. Contractors carried out the work but the decision to use plain new replacement ridge tiles was taken by the SCC Area Manager, Mr Trevor Ludkin. The reason for using plain tiles was stated to be that there was not time to source reclaimed or new replica tiles to match the originals. Mr Woods and Mr Andrews, who both believed that similar tiles could have been found at short notice from local suppliers, disputed this.

The change that has been made to the appearance of the roofline now needs retrospective planning permission and SCC has filed an application in this respect. Mr Smith had been advised by the planners at SCC that there was a reasonable chance that the application would be approved. If this is the case there would be no legal requirement to replace the new ridge tiles with Victorian style ones

However, Mr Smith acknowledged that the aesthetic appearance of the school had been compromised and that if the community was in favour of doing so, he could replace the existing tiles with something like the original. He estimated the cost of this to be between £4000 and £5000, money which would of course then be lost from the budget for doing work to other schools

There was some debate about the fact that there should have been time to sort out replacement decorative tiles during the time the work was being carried out, and who was responsible for the mistake made in using plain modern ones. However, what was done at that time cannot be changed, and it was important to reach a decision about how to proceed now.

The school is due to have work done on the other part of the roof next year, at the same time as having some solar panels installed. This will involve the removal of more of the old decorative ridge tiles. Mr Smith agreed that if the Parish Council wished to proceed with having decorative ridge tiles reinstated on the main roof, this would be done at the same time as the new works, which would very slightly defray the total cost of re-instating the ridge tiles. The school has a grant for the solar panels that runs until next April, so the work should be started by then, although it will have to be paid for from the 2007/8 budget

The Parish Council will be meeting to discuss its response to the planning application in the next week and will also make a decision at that meeting as to whether to request that the new tiles be replaced with decorative ones. Mr Woods wished to reserve his position with regard to taking his complaint further if he was not satisfied with the Parish Council's decision

Notes as agreed by all parties 29/11/06