

## **Statement from Head Teacher at Primrose Hill Primary School**

Dear Matthias

I thought it useful to address some of the comments related to the Primrose Hill Primary School Floating Classroom proposal. It is helpful to have the opportunity to respond to questions arising from the planning application and give more detail where this is required. Therefore, for clarity:

The primary purpose of the project is to enhance the education and provision for the children at Primrose Hill Primary School.

### **Usage of the barge**

Our primary aim is to use the barge for educational purposes, not as a scheme to make money for the school but to possibly contribute towards its self-sufficiency. Some suggestions we have had for the barge's future wider use, though not as a priority for us initially, could be as follows:

- Other schools using the facility, mirroring what we would offer to our own children. This has been supported by the schools in our cluster - Rhyl, Carlton, Fleet and Gospel Oak.
- Small school or community groups e.g. parent workshops, meetings, short trips etc.
- Making links with Pirate Castle, City Farm etc.

It is **not** our intention to hire it out for adult parties or social events or activities which would cause disturbance, noise or are not in keeping with our ethos - to confirm, the vessel will not have capacity for large groups. This seems to be a common misconception evident in some responses.

Where we have mentioned children's parties, this would only be for small numbers; given the age of children, this may be after school but unlikely past 6pm.

To confirm, this would be a rarity. For example, during my four years at Primrose Hill, we have only had one child's party. Commercial use would generate some income for the project to be self-funding, but we would hope to be creative with this in a way which does not compromise our original and primary educational vision. We have a thriving cooking club during lunch times which could easily use the barge as a unique cooking base.

Our operational hours would be within school hours typically 8:45 to 4pm but most likely timetabled at points during the school day and through the school year.

To reiterate, anything beyond the day to day purposes of the barge as an educational facility is not our priority. However, we cannot say that we would **not** consider using the barge outside of hours at some point in the future, but as stated above, this is very unlikely.

### **Location of the Barge**

The mooring space allocated to Primrose Hill School is sufficient for our use. We will source a barge up to 57ft in size - our preference is for a smaller vessel, given the size of the space available.

As a response to some local residents I can confirm that we will submit a request to the *Canal & River Trust* for them to install towpath signage stating 'Reserved for Primrose

Hill Primary School' or similar, in keeping with other towpath signage upon their advice. We would also ask them to demarcate our mooring space entitlement (with white markers or similar) at either end so this is clear. We will also ask the CRT to issue a new mooring plan with the location clearly marked.

It is important to note that our vehicle location would be bound by whatever sized vessel is moored behind us. Where absolutely possible, we would keep within the agreed space, which is between our boundary and up to the tree near Waterside Place, approximately 3.5 metres but this cannot be consistently guaranteed by events beyond our control.

As stated in our application, the barge will mostly be stationary. On the very rare occasions the barge moves, we would place marker bollards in the space. Hopefully, the clear towpath signage would also be sufficient to make this clear.

There are no plans to moor at the back of local residences as there are no mooring spaces available.

The barge will have some kind of security/alarm system, either linked to the school system if possible or independent. This cannot be confirmed in any more detail at this point without seeking further advice once we have the barge. We would adopt the same security procedures as we would if it was one of our actual buildings.

#### **Noise and Disruption**

Any noise created by the project would be minimal given the size of the vessel and the small numbers permitted aboard. This is essentially an extension of the school which already houses 453 children in a variety of premises. The everyday noise created by children in the school is part of daily life. Again, the school is bound by the mooring location agreed by the CRT.

#### **Community Use**

This is something we plan to develop once our primary aims are up and running. We work with four other local primary schools and it is hoped the schools will also be able to use the facilities as part of individual and shared educational ventures. We would also hopefully be working with local groups as word of mouth develops. However, we do want to make sure the classrooms' use for Primrose Hill School is established first as an enriching educational not a commercial venture.

#### **Consultation**

With regard to this, the school has made stringent efforts to communicate plans, developments and updates as they arise with some local residents, following a meeting at the school some time back and in responding to the many correspondents from some of the neighbours. This also included several meetings, sending an information leaflet, letters and weekly newsletters. The school has been responsive to issues raised regarding recent building developments and has been proactive in minimising disruption.

Whatever attempts have been made do not seem to have been deemed sufficient despite the time taken to engage and positively respond. There have been objections to every school improvement - some of which have been generated by the School, others by the Council -

which has been attempted in recent years and our only intent is to improve the educational provision and opportunities for our school community.

I hope this answers the relevant queries to date.

Best wishes



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**Head Teacher**

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