

# **Forest Fields Community Centre Consultation Summary**

**23/06/21**

## **Introduction**

Nottingham City Council have directly managed Forest Fields Community Centre for a number of years. Forest Fields Primary School would like to take over the management of the Community Centre to create more learning space for their pupils.

This would mean that Forest Fields Primary School would directly manage the Community Centre and would use the centre exclusively during term-time school hours. Outside of these times, (evenings, weekends and school holidays) the school would make the centre available for community groups and private bookings. No jobs would be lost.

## **Consultation**

Consultation took place in a variety of ways from Mon 24<sup>th</sup> May to Fri 18<sup>th</sup> June 2021:

- A questionnaire (appendix 1) was delivered to all houses adjacent to the centre – Sturton Street, Gladstone Street, Berridge Road and Stanley Street.
- A notice was put on the Community Centre gate
- All groups (past and present) who have used the centre were contacted by email
- All partners within the wards of Berridge, Sherwood and Basford were contacted by email
- The questionnaire was posted on the MyBerridge Facebook page
- The school used their messaging system to send the questionnaire out to all parents of children attending the school and also spoke to them in the playground

## **Results**

There were 131 responses:

- 123 from parents
- 4 from local residents
- 4 from local groups

All 123 parents were in support of Forest Fields Primary School taking over the management of the centre.

1 local resident was also in support, 3 local residents made objections

1 local group was in support, 2 objected and the remaining group who is a current user of the centre asked for some concerns to be responded to before they made a decision. This discussion is still ongoing.

In total, 125 people or groups are in support, 6 objected and 1 abstained on making a decision.

## **The Objections**

Local Residents comments were:

1. 'Surely it is a community centre and not a resource to be used exclusively in term time hours. It is a slippery slope as it could just end up being used by the school in the end. We

need to look at other community centres for inspiration and ideas as to how best make use of the building.'

2. 'Sturton Street is horrendous weekday with cars consuming the street, unable to park our own cars and deliveries and visitors having to park on other streets. Does this mean weekends will be the same? We have a fantastic car park on the Forest Ground 5 minutes away, why don't staff park there? It's a 5-minute walk to school and free up and get rid of congestion on our street. It really isn't fair to people who live on Sturton.'
3. 'Grave concerns regarding increased parking on double yellow lines and restrictive yellow lines which happens now and although illegal both Police and Parents disregard, putting safety of your children at risk. Grave concerns about the two fire doors being opened for ventilation allowing noise pollution which has happened in the past and causes disruption to residents which we all have to live with.'

Group objections were:

4. 'I am against any individual group taking over the community hall at Forest Fields. There is already a shortage of affordable halls in the City.'
5. To provide community learning and social activities for our community, we need this type of centre to meet our community's needs. We are planning to run many different social events and training sessions in this centre on weekdays as well as weekends. If this centre is occupied by the school then the local community will suffer to run their activities.

Objection 1 can be dismissed as there will be a service level agreement protecting community use within the centre. In addition, the children at the school are also part of the local community.

Objections 2 and 3 relate to parking and not the management of the centre. Objection 2 relates to staff parking for the school and this can be addressed by the school directly. The centre (with the exception of during the pandemic) has historically been used as a community centre and parking needs are not expected to change. Community Enforcement Officers will deal with any illegal parking. To help mitigate parking issues the booking form could contain a statement saying that there is no parking on site and encourage the use of public transport. The concern about the fire doors can be addressed by making it a condition of bookings that these doors are not propped open.

Objection 4 will be addressed in the Service Level Agreement. Rent will be in keeping with other centres within the area and future rent increases will be capped to an agreed percentage increase to ensure that the rental stays affordable.

Objection 5 – The group do not currently have a booking within school hours and decisions on the future of the centre cannot be based on a desire to have availability at the centre which isn't reinforced by an existing booking.

In conclusion – none of these objections can be upheld as they will either be incorporated into a Service Level Agreement or are not directly related to who is managing the Community Centre.

## **Shiefton**

Shiefton are an existing user of the centre. They have a long term existing booking and storage facilities within the centre. They have not made an objection to, or supported the proposal as they would like clarity over whether they can keep their existing storage and the level of rent that they will be paying. Discussions are ongoing and will need resolving before a decision is made on the centre.

## **Summary**

Whilst the majority of those that have supported the proposal have children who will benefit from Forest Fields Primary School taking over the community centre, none of the reasons given for the school not taking over the management of the centre are on reasonable grounds.

The concerns that Shiefton have as an existing long-term group with a regular booking are valid. These must be dealt with in a satisfactory way before a decision is made – either by reaching an agreement on rent and storage, or by supporting a relocation to another community building.

The service level agreement must include protection for community use, affordable hire rates in keeping with other centres in the locality, and a cap on future rent increases.

**Appendix 1**

**Forest Fields Community Centre Consultation**

Please state whether you are:

A parent of a child at Forest Fields Primary  Local resident   
Community Group  Other (please state) .....

Do you support the proposal for Forest Fields Primary School to take over the management of Forest Fields Community Centre?

(Please tick)

Yes  No

If no, please state your concerns/reasons

.....  
.....  
.....

Do you have an alternative proposal?

.....  
.....  
.....

Would you like to be considered as a volunteer who can be involved with the running of the centre?

If yes, please give us your name and contact details:

Name:

Email address:

Phone number:



**Nottingham**  
**City Council**