

DAVENIES

Headmaster C Watson MA

6th November 2009

Dear Parents

The Future of Davenies: 23rd November, 3:00 – 8:00pm

Titling a letter “The Future of Davenies” may seem ominous or portentous but I will explain. I wrote prior to half term about our unsuccessful endeavours to get planning permission for a new building on the site of the headmaster’s house and the pavilion. I want you to appreciate not only why this development is needed in the short term, but also how it is fundamental to the continued success of Davenies. I want you to understand the frustration I have about why permission has not been granted and I suspect you, too, will share this feeling.

The facilities are excellent. Why do we need another building?

When walking around Davenies many parents are impressed with the improvement in the facilities over the last few years. However, at the last inspection in 2004, **the library** was pointed out as being too small. Not only do we have to respond to this observation, we want to improve the library so that we can seat a whole class at one time and we would like to increase the stock of books, as well as include computers.

The quality of the food at Davenies and the number of meals has increased significantly over the last few years. We have replaced the furniture, we have painted **the dining room** but we cannot simply push the walls back to accommodate the number of boys we have. A bigger facility will mean that we can have more boys in to eat at one time, it will help to make lunch less hurried, it will enable the staff to sit and chat with the boys whilst monitoring their manners and food intake. Most of all, it will give sufficient space for the kitchen staff to meet the demands of a very busy school. In addition, the new building will provide a reasonably sized Design and Technology facility which will not only meet Health and Safety regulations, but it will enable us to keep up with the exciting developments in this area, such as Computer Aided Design. This new building would also give us two extra classrooms, as well as a flat so that we can have a security presence on site.

This building would be of obvious benefit to the children currently in school and those who have yet to come through our doors. It would improve our facilities and help to remain competitive as a school. However, this project is more important than these facts alone. The other reason this building is fundamental to the future of Davenies is that it allows us eventually to improve the **Pre-Prep**. The white building near the Dell is the least attractive building on site and a development in this area would help us to improve the spaces available for smaller boys. The way little boys are taught has changed a great deal over the last ten years: they need more space, there is more play involved and we have to have areas for break out groups. Without the proposed building Pre-Prep will also eventually suffer. If we cannot re-house the catering we cannot in turn make sufficient space available to improve the Pre-Prep as we would wish. This may not affect your son, but it will affect other sons and ultimately I feel it will determine Davenies’ future.

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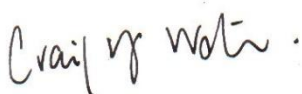
Why has planning permission not been granted?

An enormous amount of work has gone into the designs for the new project. We have taken advice, we have modified plan after plan and we will be replacing two relatively unattractive buildings. And so, what is the problem? Why has planning permission been turned down? The problem is a simple technical issue. With the Headmaster's house erected, the pavilion in place and a car park for all to see in 1999 the planning authority drew a line through these buildings and the car park as a boundary for a 'Green Space' building protection zone. But surely the officers knew the buildings were there? You may ask. Do these buildings not contaminate the space anyway? You may suggest. Fundamentally, and very frustratingly, this is the issue. We can modify designs, we have tried to trade areas of grass on the fields, which for some reason were not designated Green Space, but we have not been able to put our point across.

Why do we need the parents' help?

That is why the school now needs you. Our exhibition on **23rd November** will show the designs we have, the problems encountered and the lengths we have gone to. I ask you please to pop in to the PAC between **3pm and 8pm** for a few minutes and see what the exciting future for this school could be and what difficulties we have had. Then I ask you, even implore you, to fill in a **simple form** which we can use as evidence to support our ideas. Please take this very seriously and please attend because anything less than a 90% response will actually work against Davenies rather than supporting evidence for the plans. When you see the plans I feel completely confident that you will want to add your name, I feel sure also that you will be taken aback that we have had so little success and, I suspect, you may even want to tell other people. Please do bring interested friends, a neighbour or past parents, because this is the level of engagement required. If not, then a thin green line will have a significant effect on your son's school. This is more important than a Headmaster simply wanting to make his mark on a school, it is more important than merely having exciting new ideas, it is fundamental to the school's future. I hope that you will come if only out of curiosity, but I suspect you may leave as impassioned as I am.

Yours faithfully,



C Watson
Headmaster