**Information Evening on the New School**

7th June 2017 MyPlace

**Note**

of the meeting for those who could not attend

Please find attached the slides that were used on the night.

**Arun Kapil** from Green Saffron spoke briefly on his life journey, being a blend of Indian and Yorkshire and finding his place in life, here in Midleton, a sense of belonging. The importance both community and education have played in his life. He shared a saying of his fathers that should have ‘a heart full of love and a head full of education”, this coupled with a firm belief that if something needs to be done, just get on and do it has helped him get to where he is today. He reflected on the growth of his own business and how every achievement had been a team effort. That for us now, as a parent body, we were the team that would make METNS great.

**Rhodri then spoke passionately about the school and our community**. About the journey from a start-up group of committed parents, to setting up in the Rugby Club in 2008 with the changing rooms as classrooms. The move in 2011 to Market Green and what a great transition it had been, allowing for the growth of the school to meet the rising demand. This was meant to have been for five years but nine years later we are still here. Finally, 2017 we are to have our new building. *“This momentous achievement has arrived in a large part due to the determination of you as parents. The opportunities that the new building will provide will be endless. Opportunities for your children”.*

Rhodri then took the audience through the amenities of **the new building** – 24 mainstream classrooms, 10 SEN rooms, proper ASD facilities, two playgrounds, one with 3 basketball courts, an outdoor classroom, library, indoor gym/Hall and a sensory garden; and walked the audience through the floor plans. With Junior Infants, Senior Infants, First Class and one 2nd class room on the ground floor with the ASD facilities, with the other classes upstairs.

Rhodri then talked us through **the site plans** (see diagrams in the presentation) showing the layout of the site including playgrounds, parking, drive-through system etc. explaining that the school had NO input to the design of the site or the building, it was all decreed by the Department of Education with no engagement with the school. The School was very aware of issues that will arise re cars in the morning and was talking with engineers and the Gardai about how to manage it. This was an issue for all schools and we would have to aim to have children living on the nearby Broomfield Estate to walk to school, there would also be plenty of bike racks and we would need to have patience as we work out a system that works best and we may need to try a few different things.

Rhodri then explained how **schools in Ireland are funded**, with the government only providing approximately 80% of the operating costs, with the balance being raised through the parental contributions and fundraising events organised by the Parents Association throughout the year. That this 20% covers things like heating and the lights, not lots of extras.

With the big move to the new school there would be lots of additional things needed. The school was able to get grants for somethings or partial grants. But we know there are 8 storage cupboards but no shelves! That we will have a library but will need to fill it with books. That there will be many resources required to furnish and fill the classrooms, gym equipment, mats etc. All of which will contribute to enhancing the learning environment of the school for all our children. The list of what was anticipated that we would need to purchase was circulated to the group.

The **fundraising target is €60,000** spread over three years. As this is in addition to what is raised every year by the PA, a working group has been brought together to ensure this target as met. This group organised this information evening and the sponsored walk next week (14th). The funding is to be raised through the sponsored walk which will be an annual school event and the ‘Helping Hands’ Campaign. If every child in school raised €25 in sponsorship we would raise €10,000 and have met 50% of our target. The ‘Helping Hands’ Campaign will launch in September with the new school year.

The list of what is likely needed was circulated and parents were asked to take a look, perhaps they or the company they worked for could donate an item or offer a discount. Perhaps people could offer in-kind contributions and for those working for big companies would those companies make a donation or match an employee donation.

Before introducing Mel Thornton, Principal of Carrigaline ET, **Rhodri thanked all the parents** for coming tonight. That “as a parent in our school you are part of something special. Everyone does a little, everyone is called on to engage and contribute to making our school great.” He in particular praised and thanked the PA and the fundraising group for their Trojan efforts on behalf of all the school community.

**Mel Thornton, Principal of Carrigaline ET** then spoke. The two schools started at the same time, METNS in a Rugby Club and CETNS in a Football Club. Mel spoke out the move to their new building, practically what was involved, how it felt for the children, how they prepared the children with special needs in advance so they were prepared properly. She commented that they had thought the children would go wild in the new space but in fact it brought great calm.

Emma Lane-Spollen from the **Fundraising Committee** thanked Mel and Arun for coming. Thanked Rhodri for his champion work in leading the school and thanked him in advance on behalf of the school community for the work in the weeks ahead in opening the new school and closing the old. Emma acknowledged the immense commitment of many and gave a big thank you to Niamh (chair of the BOM), the Board of Management, the PA, the staff, Katrina in the office and a special thanks to Simon Murphy who did all the graphic design and presentation for this evening for all their work in building our school community and realising the new building.

Emma recapped on the fundraising target of €60,000 and asked that people leave their names and numbers if they could offer help, donate or get their company to support or perhaps match their contribution. That all offers and suggestions were most welcome.

**Q&A Session**

1. **The basketball courts – would there be a coach?**

Ans: the courts will be utilised as part of PE and afterschool. And yes, they could probably be rented by the community.

1. **Parking, drop-off and collection – how will this work?**

Ans:

* We will have to experiment. It probably will be difficult in the first few days and weeks. We are consulting with a traffic engineer and the gardai.
* While the footpath is on the wrong side of the road, traffic lights and a pedestrian crossing are being installed. We will be encouraging all students who live nearby to walk to school.
* We will have to promote safety in advance and make it work.
* Monday and Tuesday at the start of the new school year, we will provide an opportunity for parents to visit the school.
* We have not worked out how drop off and pick up for the junior classes will work. This is being worked on now in the planning phase. Some of this info will be last minute.

1. **Can I drop into the school during the day as I sometimes do now?**

Ans: We need to strive to bring all the good things of Market Green and we will have to see how we can best foster that sense of school community and informal conversations amongst parents. The new building’s situation will bring us challenges, but it will also bring opportunities.

1. **Will the corridors be colour coded to guide the children?**

Ans: While the school is large, the junior-1st classes are all along one corridor downstairs so it should be easy for them. Once we are in the building for a short while we can review if we need to do something more.

1. **Question for Mel – were you able to get the local business and community involved?**

Ans: We focused on people connected to the school and ran “The Big Ask” Campaign similar to your ‘Hands Together” Campaign. We sought to take advantage of the Revenue giving back the tax to the school on donations over €250. [note: this is where if an individual makes a donation of €250 or more, the school gets he tax back at 43% on a donation of €250 thats an extra €107 from the government] – so that was huge.

1. **What about school buses?**

Ans: There has to be 10 pupils to get a bus service. Unfortunately its out of the schools hands.

1. **Can you share with parents what buses currently serve the school?**

Ans: Yes

1. **What equipment and resources will the school need?**

Ans: See list

1. **In the ASU will there be a sensory room for each classroom?**

Ans: Each classroom will have a quiet room within them. A gross motor area and a para-education room.

**10: Is the timing of the day going to stay the same?**

Ans: Yes

**11: What about Market Green?**

Ans: We need to leave it as we found it.

**12: How will the move happen?**

Ans: We will not need parents to do the physical move as we can get in a removal company for that, but we will need help in other aspects.

**13: Should we not just double the parental contribution? Other schools ask for much more**, over €300 per child, why not make it €20/month or something similar?

Ans: That would be a Board of Management decision. To date the big driver has been to get every family paying as a point of principle, hence keeping it low. That value is just a guide and parents can contribute more.