STATEMENT

School Fence

Chairman, Tattenhall and District Parish Council

At the Annual Parish Meeting, following representation from residents present at that meeting, I was asked to arrange engagement with the school management concerning their intention to install a fence round the school property.

This engagement took place with help from the Community Liaison Office of CWAC; the aim being to secure consultation with residents which the Parish Council felt should have been undertaken before a decision to install the fence had been taken.

While fully understanding that, under permitted developments rights, a fence up 2m in height may be installed, the PC feels that the School has failed to understand the importance the field has to the whole community which is well documented on the Tattenhall History Website.

The Parish Council is sensitive to the opposing views concerning the need for fencing but accepts the Risk Assessment by the School, identifying that fencing is needed. That Risk Assessment, however, did not identify the area to be fenced as critical for child protection.

During the engagement process, the reason for choosing the area was given as the need to be compliant with S77 guidelines which controls the disposal or change of use of school land. The school currently has 18,945 sqm of open area. The newly installed fence line will create 17,514sqm of secured playing area, leaving 8% to be disposed of i.e. not adhering to S77 guidelines.

There are also non-statutory recommendations concerning maximum and minimum sizes for school playing areas. For new schools, the current recommended minimum school playing area for a 1.5 form-entry school is 14,343sqm and the maximum is 17,703sqm. The proposed fence line will create an area which is only 0.01% less than the maximum recommended for a 1.5 form-entry school even though there is currently one form-entry which will be unlikely to increase to 1.5 in the foreseeable future.

It is for these reasons, that the PC believes both the school and CWAC to have been disingenuous concerning the choice of fence-line which is less about child safety and more about taking as much of the Park as possible.

There were legitimate questions concerning a reduced area which could have been asked at the consultation yesterday and which would not have affected child safety or restricted sporting activities.

All questions proposed by the PC were refused without explanation by the school or by CWAC.

A request was also made to include the above figures in the introduction of the consultation but this too was refused.

Clearly, there has never been any intention to consult with the community concerning the area to be fenced. For a school which has been heralded as a community school, and which still professes to be an integral part of our community, this is indeed regrettable.

Iain Keeping, Chair of the Parish Council, 24 July 2017.