

Appendix 5

Consultation responses

| Ref No 1 | Do you have any comments about the closure proposal? | Do you have any comments about the proposed catchment are... | What is your interest/status? | To help us assess whether we have provided clear informat... | Do you have any suggestions for future improvements of th... |
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| 1 | This should not be happening, Hovingham has closed, where are all children supposed to go without a long commute | | Parent – St Hilda’s Ampleforth CE VC Primary School | Yes, it was easy to understand | No |
| 2 | This is a short sighted knee jerk reaction. This would never be even up for discussion when we were in the Ryedale Council. Someone in an overt tower who has probably never even heard of Ampleforth has struck a red line through a much loved Church of England School. These children are our future and should be nurtured and educated in a safe and settled school not moved around like financial pawns in some cost cutting exercise by North Yorkshire County Council | No | Member of Local Community | No, it was not easy to understand | Don’t close schools |
| 3 | Blank Response | Blank Response | Blank Response | Blank Response | Blank Response |
| 4 | We think the closure of St Hilda's School would be a huge pity for the following reasons: 1. The school has had a good reputation over a number of years. 2. The school at Hovingham has already closed, depriving the locality of a school with a long tradition. 3. The closure of St Hilda's would take the heart out of the community. 4. The closure would greatly increase transport costs. | The splitting of the Ampleforth catchment area would separate current pupils for their future education and take them out of their community. | Member of Local Community | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 5 | The decision to close a Good Ofsted school, with excellent education values and happy children due to a drop in one year's intake, is extraordinary. The other primary school in the village is a Catholic school with a strong religious ethos and unsuitable for many families. It also has connections with the college which has come under fire for serious safe guarding issues. How do you encourage new families into the village when the only primary school on offer is a faith-based school? Ampleforth is a large village with continuing housing development. The need for a village C of E primary school is paramount. St Hilda's has been the main village education provider since 1890. It is deeply woven in the fabric of the village and it will be a massive rent if this school closes. Businesses like the local daycare rely on the school remaining open. The Friends of St Hilda's group have shown that there are children registered to attend in 2025 and interest expressed for children to attend in 2026. The presumption against the closure of rural schools states that proposers should look in the medium and long term when considering. In the medium term, the school intake rises. To shut this school in a matter of months is discriminatory and devastating to the children there who love it, love their fellow pupils and wish to stay. The school is an example of how good primary education can be. Constantly rated Good by Ofsted, it has a genuine family feel. Children thrive in the small class sizes and look after each other. Each year that leaves to secondary school, is confident, caring and ready to move on to the next stage of their education. To uproot the children there, separate them and shut an excellent primary school because of a short term blip in numbers is utterly ridiculous. This is a short-sighted knee jerk reaction and the bigger picture must be considered. The most important, fundamental institution is primary education and for the sake of a few pounds of tax payers' money, NYCC wants to shut one of the best schools in the county. St Hilda's is inclusive of religion, background and ability. It teaches their children to be the same. Children with EHCPs have their needs met exceptionally well. This is a priceless accommodation. Not all schools can do it. Get the start right in a child's life and think of the money that will be saved later on as that child grows up to be a functioning and capable member of society. Because that is what it all comes down to. A bit of money. A school that has been teaching for over a hundred years, is part of the fabric of the village, is part of the community, is loved by the children, is welcoming, inclusive and has a high quality of teaching is under threat of closure because of a bit of money. Councils waste money all the time. Here's a chance to do some good. To save this school by giving it the support it truly deserves. For one year until the numbers pick up. A small thing to ask for a place that works so hard. Lockdown has had reaching effects. Many schools are reporting a drop in numbers for the September 2024 intake. St. Hilda's is not alone in this regard and we need to keep our primary schools going. Especially those that excel in what they do. Failing schools with serious issues in teaching and safe guarding take longer to shut. They are also offered help and support. St Hilda's, so far has been given none. When a new headteacher was needed after lockdown, why didn't the governors appoint one? The school could have been saved from this position with decisive leadership. Proposers | St. Benedict's is a faith based religious school. This is not an option for many. To remove the inclusive C of E village primary school from the catchment area is a big mistake. Hustwaite school is Ofsted requires improvement and St. Hilda's is Good. Hustwaite and Helmsley are both a distance away from Ampleforth and will require transport provision. When the council is cutting down on home to transport provision, closing a local primary school goes against this. Parents may be forced to move or change jobs in order to get their child to another school. Wraparound care is also in place and not available at an alternative primary school. | Parent – St Hilda’s Ampleforth CE VC Primary School | Yes, it was easy to understand | Do a bit more before it gets to this stage. The governors did nothing. Councillors are doing nothing. |

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| | <p>must regard the document Opening and Closing maintained schools. Apart from a drop in funding there is no reason to close this school. It is valid, it is needed, it will be detrimental to the village and have far reaching consequences. The way this has been presented to the parents it's as though the local fish and chip was closing - sorry, you have to go to Helmsley for your chips now. This is not just a shop shutting, it's a school where people's lives are wrapped in. NYCC must not underestimate or take lightly the stress, anxiety, upset and concern that this is causing the children and parents. The governors even put in the letter that was emailed that they would give the children a happy and fun-filled final two terms. There is no happiness here. This will be heart-breaking for everyone involved. I find it incomprehensible that a fight is needed to keep an excellent primary school open. We should not have to fight for this. Education councillors and the Department of Education should be bending over backwards with help and support. The swiftness of this proposal is troubling. The first we hear of an issue is January and the closure date is August. Baffling. Let's all just fall at the first hurdle. Give up. Great message to send the children. Another great message is, we know you love your school, you are happy and safe here. You are thriving. You love your teachers and your friends but you and your education are not worth our consideration or bother. You can go to another school, it doesn't matter the difficulties this may cause. We don't have the money.</p> | | | | |
| 6 | <p>Yes it should close. The school is too small, not economically viable and offers a limited range of educational resources. Constrained budgets should be targeted at larger schools. Furthermore it is anachronistic that in a majority secular society religion should play a part in the administration of our children's education - all primary schools should be community ones.</p> | <p>Ampleforth should be included in the Helmsley catchment.</p> | <p>Other- Parent of 4 children who have all been educated in Ryedale</p> | <p>Yes, it was easy to understand</p> | |
| 7 | <p>Blank Response</p> | <p>Blank Response</p> | <p>Blank Response</p> | <p>Blank Response</p> | <p>Blank Response</p> |
| 8 | <p>St Hildas is a vital part of the community and to lose it would be a great shame for future generations. There should always be a place for children who would not thrive in a large school. In recent years quite a few families moved their children to St Benedict's RC school. This was mainly due to the bad leadership of the previous head. Most of the families that stayed did so because they knew that a large school would not be suitable for their children and families should still be able to have that choice. With children having more and more complex needs, St Hildas is a perfect school for these children.</p> | <p>With some of the children at St Hildas having some degree of special needs, it would not be suitable or safe to put them on buses or taxis to transport to the other schools in the proposed catchment area. Also Ampleforth is in the catchment for Ryedale School which is where most Ampleforth children move onto. Hustwaite school is in a different catchment feeding into Easingwold school. Therefore if children went to Hustwaite they would then separate from many of their friends when it comes to secondary school.</p> | <p>Member of Local Community</p> | <p>Yes, it was easy to understand</p> | <p>No</p> |
| 9 | <p>This school has been allowed to struggle, it should never have been in a competition with St Bens for students. The ideal solution would be to have one non faith school servicing Ampleforth. A new school without a religious influence could easily service the area, both schools could be restructured and merged under new trust arrangements. There could then be an Ampleforth school which could serve the whole community. I suspect that the Council would not want to take in the might and influence of the RC church to make this possible. The council should never have let this small community have two faith schools. Historically this could have been prevented, there is still an opportunity to manage this situation for the benefit of all children of primary school age in Ampleforth.</p> | <p>Yes, there needs to be a range of options which would meet children's needs and parental choice</p> | <p>Member of Local Community</p> | <p>Yes, it was easy to understand</p> | <p>You do not have sufficient categories to cover interest. Eg Extended family, grandparents who are part of the school community</p> |
| 10 | <p>This seems a short sighted proposal as the numbers of children are likely to increase over the next couple of years. If the school closes I imagine the land will likely be sold for housing, ironically bringing more families into the village.</p> | <p>No. As long as it meets children's needs and parental choice and keeps travel to a minimum.</p> | <p>Member of Local Community</p> | <p>Yes, it was easy to understand</p> | <p>Consultation needs to involve the whole community and those affected by it.</p> |
| 11 | <p>I think it will be wrong to close this school as it has good teachers with a very good ethos for children at a very important time in their lives. I have seen the work done by and with the children and teachers and cannot recommend them highly enough. The low numbers appear to be likely to recover and I support giving the school the time to recover from the pandemic after effects. It is not a good idea to transport the children to schools unnecessarily adding to their long day and looking at the safety aspect with busy roads. There are younger children who would come to this school in the future. I also noticed the Ofsted reported the school as good which is a big consideration when choosing a school.</p> | | <p>Grandparent- St Hilda's Ampleforth CE VC Primary School</p> | <p>Yes, it was easy to understand</p> | |
| 12 | <p>The school is in a position to provide a quality educational experience for pupils on a very individual basis. It provides the foundations for strengthening the local community and pupils benefit from getting to know children and families locally. If the school were to close I believe children and their families are at risk of becoming socially isolated which will impact the children's future outcomes.</p> | <p>No</p> | <p>Other- Former Teach at St Hilda's Ampleforth CE VC Primary School</p> | | |
| 13 | <p>Yes</p> | <p>No</p> | <p>Other- Past Staff</p> | <p>Yes, it was easy to understand</p> | <p>No</p> |

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| 14 | I think it would be short-sighted to close St Hilda's school based on the current pupil level. The school has a full intake ready for September 2025 and many of those children have younger siblings who will also attend St Hilda's. The current low pupil level is a blip - as the figures show there have been much higher numbers in previous years. There are plenty of families in the village with pre-school age children who will be left having to get in the car twice a day to drive their children to nearby schools. Which school these children will attend is a concern as Helmsley primary school is currently over subscribed, Slingsby school is almost at capacity and St Benedicts in Ampleforth is also close to capacity. The latter also has an admissions policy that would mean many village children would not be prioritised for a place if the school does hit capacity. That leaves Husthwaite Primary School which was classed as "in need of improvement" in its most recent Ofsted inspection. To close a school ranked as Good and send the children to a worse school would be an appalling decision. On top of that it is a 15-20 minute drive away on rural roads that can become very difficult to drive on in bad weather. There would undoubtedly be several days every winter when the children simply wouldn't be able to get to Husthwaite to attend school. The closure consultation of St Hilda's has awoken much of the village - and families in surrounding areas - to the importance of keeping our school open. After losing Hovingham school just 12 months ago to lose another rural school would be a serious blow to the local area. We don't want to have to get in the car every day to take our children to school. One of the reasons we moved to Ampleforth two years ago was the attraction of having a good local school a short walk away. We would consider moving away from the village if St Hilda's was to close and I think it would have an affect on the village's ability to attract other young families to move here. There is already a problem with an aging population in villages in the area. Closing schools in Hovingham and Ampleforth will only add to that problem. Why struggle to pay the high house prices for family homes if you are only going to have to drive miles to get your children to school? For this reason closing St Hilda's School would have a detrimental affect on the whole village and could cause other local services to struggle and close. Yes there is another primary school in the village but St Benedict's is a Catholic school with a strongly Catholic syllabus. It also has a strict admissions policy that would prevent some children in the village from attending. Also, if you follow a different religion you may not want to send your child to a Catholic school. 26 rural primary schools have closed across the country in the past five years, according to figures from The Department of Education. If you close Ampleforth that will mean almost 10% of primary school closures across the country have happened in two neighbouring villages in North Yorkshire. I've asked the DofE for more information on how many of those rural schools have closed in North Yorkshire for fear we are seeing a pattern of closure within our local authority. | I think the proposed new catchment areas are absurd. Husthwaite Primary School is a 15-20 minute drive away along rural roads that can easily become difficult to pass in wintery conditions. This would mean, undoubtedly, that there would be several days each winter where children from Ampleforth and Wass would not be able to get to school. Also, in its latest Ofset report from 2022 Husthwaite School was deemed to be 'in need of improvement'. The quality of the education, the leadership and management and the early years provision were all found to be below par. It is also not an isolated issue - the school was found to be 'in need of improvement' at its 2019 Ofsted inspection too and things had not improved by 2022. This is not a school that I want to send my children to. Expanding the catchment areas of Helmsley Primary School is a bizarre decision given that the school is currently over capacity. This change in the catchment area could leave parents in Stonegrave and Oswaldkirk struggling to get their children a primary school place. In the long-term I believe the 49 potential primary school places offered by St Hilda's school will be invaluable as building works in Hovingham and Ampleforth expand the local community and bring more families with young children to the area. You only have to look at the bustling playgroups in the area to see that there are plenty of pre-school children who will be in need of primary school places in the 2025/6 school year and beyond. | Parent- St Hilda's Ampleforth CE VC Primary School | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 15 | I think the school should remain open because there are children wanting to attend in future years . If these children are unable to go to st hildas they will be to transport to an other school at a cost to the council and environment. St hildas has been a large part of the community for as long as i can remember and is part of the character of the village. | | Member of Local Community | Yes, it was easy to understand | No |
| 16 | It's a lovely school but just not viable anymore. There are more schools that can give a better education than what st hildas are giving. | Helmsley school is an amazing school and your children would be lucky to attend there. | Parent of Former St Hilda's Ampleforth CE VC Pupil | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 17 | Very hasty decision to close. There are future generations coming up to school age starting 2025. Also children starting nursery as soon as Easter 2024. School needed as unacceptable to expect children to travel further afield to a school (Husthwaite proposed) which is in need of improvement. Should not take away a school of over 100 years history within Ampleforth. Making children travel tover 6 miles to school will affect the children. Will put more of a carbon footprint on our area. And will be a big financial increase for the council. For the sake of a years funding until the school numbers increase again. | Unacceptable! Poorer school at Husthwaite. Helmsley, crayke over subscribed. Bigger classrooms. | Parent- St Hilda's Ampleforth CE VC Primary School | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 18 | St. Hilda's is a vital part of Ampleforth. While facing challenges with current student numbers, it has the potential to grow. More young families are likely to move to the area as housing developments like Hovingham's become available. However, there are even stronger reasons to keep the school open. The school plays a huge role in our community. Shutting it down would be devastating to the village, especially the students and families who rely on it. Even the Department for Education says rural schools are important, and closure should be an absolute last resort. Things have gotten a lot better under the new leadership. St. Hilda's is now offering "high quality education" and getting great results. With some extra support and by working together with the community, I know we can get more students enrolled at St. Hilda's. We should be promoting the school's strengths and exploring options like becoming an academy before even thinking about closing it. We can also step up our efforts to attract new students by really getting the word out about all the great things happening at St. Hilda's. Even looking into converting to an academy with Ryedale Learning Trust could be an option. St. Hilda's is too important to our community. It deserves a chance to succeed, and I'm going to fight to keep it open. | There are significant challenges to consider regarding sending children from Ampleforth to Husthwaite School. Firstly, the narrow country lanes between the villages become impassable during severe snow, potentially leading to missed school days. Secondly, Husthwaite's limited size might cause significant parking difficulties, particularly during pick-up and drop-off times. | Parent- St Hilda's Ampleforth CE VC Primary School | Yes, it was easy to understand | |

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| 19 | The closure of the school should not happen. It is an excellent school that many families rely on | If st hildas closes i would have to leave my job. I will not have my children be forced to go to a Catholic school (st benedicts). The other options are Husthwaite and helmsley. Neither have appropriate wraparound care and holiday clubs so as a single parent i would have to leave my job, as i have no alternative childcare as my children attend daisy daycare in ampleforth before and after school. St benedicts is not an option for us due to religious reasons. Husthwaite is not an option as they cannot get there from there before school club and get back to their after school club from that school. The same applies for helmsley school. I know i am not the only parent in this situation. Are we just expected to stop going to work? I work 10kg days for the NHS and cutting down my hours is not an option at the moment, and as a single parent i cannot afford to work less hours. There are no other suitable schools in the area my children could attend that would allow me to continue to go to work. Not to mention the fact that the decision will be made right before the summer holidays leaving us only a few weeks to find alternative arrangements , which is completely unacceptable. Also seems extremely unfair to close a school that OFSTED rated as good, to expect parents to then send their children to Husthwaite, rated 'NEEDS IMPROVEMENT ' | Parent- St Hilda's Ampleforth CE VC Primary School | Yes, it was easy to understand | Think about families instead of prioritising money. If money is short then cut the obscene cllr wages instead of taking resources away from children. |
| 20 | Comments made, and questions asked at the Consultation meeting in Ampleforth on 18.3.24 suggest that local knowledge indicates more prospective pupils than are shown in the consultation document. The prospect of transporting very young children to a school currently rated as requiring improvement, with projected falling numbers over the next few years, does not seem reasonable. I believe St Hilda's should be supported and guaranteed to remain open for five years in order to allow the pupil numbers to grow. Assurances that it will remain open would give future parents the confidence to commit to this very good, caring and successful school. The threat of closure is a self-fulfilling prophecy in the eyes of prospective parents looking for an uninterrupted education for their children. | No | Member of Local Community | Yes, it was easy to understand | No |
| 21 | I am very concerned about the closure of St Hilda's School. We moved to the village two years ago as we were attracted by the amenities available including the primary school. We wanted to be able to walk our children too and from school each day as it is better for the environment and means we have a longer working day as we wouldn't have to factor in driving time to when we could start and finish work (I am self-employed). If the school closes we will have to drive for around an hour a day to get our children to and from another school. While there is another primary school in the village our children are not welcome there. St Benedict's is a Catholic school and its admissions policy prioritises children who believe in Jesus Christ - as a Jewish family we would be bottom of the priority list. We would not want our children to attend a school that has stipulated in its admissions policy that it thinks our children are lesser than others. For decades Ampleforth has successfully supported two primary schools. The recent fall in numbers at St Hilda's is due to a number of temporary factors including the departure of a divisive headteacher, the uncertainty around the school and the covid-related birth rate drop. We have two children aged 2 and one who would both attend St Hilda's in the coming years. If the school was to close we would then have to consider moving away from Ampleforth to be nearer to another good primary school that we wouldn't have to face a lengthy drive to reach. Another issue that was raised at the meeting was how the quality of education and socialisation falls if pupil numbers drop below 10. But the figure you are using for this does not include the children in nursery who bolster numbers into the mid-teens. The teaching at St Hilda's is excellent and I have every faith that the teachers are more than capable of maintaining education standards for the one year when numbers would drop. There is already a full reception class who plan to list St Hilda's as their first preference for starting in September 2025 - my son would be one of that number. | The new catchment areas cause me great concern. We would fall into the catchment for Husthwaite School. While St Hilda's has an Ofsted rating of Good, Husthwaite is "In Need of Improvement". It also has declining pupil numbers so I would be concerned the pattern of school closures that started in Hovingham, may continue in Ampleforth could then move onto Husthwaite. I am also concerned about transporting our children to and from Husthwaite. It wasn't made clear in the meeting whether they would get free school transport as, although Husthwaite is more than two miles away, would the existence of St Benedict's school in the village mean we wouldn't qualify for free school transport as it is our nearest school? Our children our bottom of the list for admissions at St Ben's as its policy states anyone of the Christian faith gets priority - we are Jewish. So would be we forced to transport our children ourselves to and from Husthwaite as we couldn't attend the nearest school? | Parent- St Hilda's Ampleforth CE VC Primary School | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 22 | It would be a huge shame if St Hilda's school was to close. My daughter and son-in-law moved to the village from Cardiff three years ago. They were house-hunting around the birth of their son. When their house came on the market their son was in NICU so they couldn't view it. I viewed the property and told them all about the lovely primary school at the end of the road. I thought St Hilda's would be the ideal | To close a school that has a Good ofsted rating then force my grandchildren and the other children in Ampleforth to attend a primary school that is "in need of improvement" should be criminal. That does not | Grandparent- St Hilda's Ampleforth CE | Yes, it was easy to understand | |

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| | school for my now two grandchildren. A short walk from home with wide green spaces and a Good ofsted rating it has a lot to offer. To close it due to a temporary blip in pupil numbers seems incredibly short-sighted. Especially when you consider that my daughter moved to the new build development in the village. More homes are due to be built in Slingsby, Helmsley and Hovingham in the coming years and land in Ampleforth is also marked for development. These houses will, hopefully, attract more families who will need school places. St Benedict's is not a viable alternative for my daughter and her family as it is a Catholic school and they are Jewish. You would be forcing them to drive in all weathers throughout the year on narrow rural lanes to Husthwaite, a school that is "In need of improvement" according to Ofsted. | suggest you have the children's education at the forefront of your minds when you made the decision to close. Also, the narrow country lanes between Ampleforth and Husthwaite are treacherous in wintery conditions. It simply isn't safe to expect people to transport small children 12 miles on those roads every day year round. | VC Primary School | | |
| 23 | I feel very strongly that this school and nursery should be saved. I am one of the owners of a Nursery (Daisy Day Care) and we are already experiencing an increase in demand for more places for babies and 2 year olds due to the new government funding. This will soon have a knock on effect to the amount of 3 and 4 year olds we can take, the school Nursery needs to be saved so that these children will be able to benefit from a Nursery education locally. | The proposed closure of St Hildas would in effect force parents of Church of England faith to send their children to a Catholic school. This is not acceptable. You are saying about home to school transport that will be available but I personally would not of put my children on a bus or taxi at primary school age to travel to school. These roads are dangerous especially in winter. The other proposed schools do not offer a wrap around service, which is what we provide have provided for St Hildas since 2009. We currently deliver and collect 8 of st Hildas children to school daily. The children all walk to school and this is better for them and the environment. Walking buses are being promoted by all schools, yet you are wanting more cars on the already busy rural roads. | Member of Local Community | Yes, it was easy to understand | St Hildas has suffered in recent years due to the bad leadership of a previous headmaster. He did nothing to keep convince parents to stay at the school when they lost confidence in his leadership. The school is suffering because of that and is now a great school again, it just needs a chance to build up confidence in the community again and once the rumours about closure stop numbers will build up again. Please just give it a chance. Don't give up on us . |
| 24 | The church school would be an enormous loss to the village. It would affect the private nursery we have here if pupils had to be transported. | If the pupils had to go out of the village to say Husthwaite which is not rated it would be terrible. Mothers would not be happy children travelling at such a young age. | Member of Local Community | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 25 | It seems rather drastic to be closing a school that has been open since 1890 ie for 134 years on the basis of a few years low pupil numbers. More research needs to be done to ascertain prospective future pupil numbers. | Will incur additional transport costs. | Member of Local Community | Yes, it was easy to understand | No |
| 26 | The Parish Council of Gilling East, with Cawton, Coulton and Grimston we object to the closure | We think distance to travel is to great | Parish Council | Yes, it was easy to understand | Population is changing in the local villages and we need to keep schools local as part of the local community. We have already had the closure of Hovingham school, it encourages social cohesion which we need to help keep the children safe and healthy. |
| 27 | The projected numbers for future pupil numbers seems deeply flawed. Hovingham and St Hilda's shared a head who struggled for whatever reason and unhappy children removed their children not because of the location of the school. Forecasts by the council seem to work off demographic data and do not include the effect of having new management. Furthermore there is no allowance in those projections for changes in government policy. As the polls stand the Labour Party are forecast to have a large majority and have restated their commitment to charging VAT on school fees. This will close some private schools and many families will withdraw children from other schools too in all catchment areas. So there is an expected rise in the number of council schools throughout the catchment area leading to a probable lack of places in the area - so just when some spare capacity is required the council has closed Hovingham and proposes to close St Hilda's. Furthermore I feel that the central government presumption that a rural school should remain open is not being followed by the Education department in Ryedale - rather the whole approach has been to deliberately run down Hovingham and St Hildas to a point where it isn't viable so there is an excuse to close them. Surely the job of the council education department is to work to educate our children and keep our village a thriving community not tear it apart. | See my comments above. I am concerned that if the closure goes ahead - parents would be entitled to transport to the nearest school - which would be St Benedict's Roman Catholic School in the village - thus their only option may be the one they sought to avoid in the first place and that choosing to go to one of the other CoE schools in the catchment will be unaffordable. | Member of Local Community | No, it was not easy to understand | I was disconcerted to learn only from my own councillor that the chair of the meeting was in fact the Councillor in charge of the Education Committee who gave the distinct impression she was for closing the school before we even started. |

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| 28 | <p>Following on from the consultation meeting on the 18th March, I would like to make note that the chair of the meeting seemed to have no interest in listening to feedback and demonstrated an attitude that indicated a bias towards the closure of St Hildas, this is in direct conflict with the Department for Education's bias to presume against the closure of rural schools. This bias against closure should, in my opinion, extend beyond funding and student numbers. I would also like to add the following comments: * My partner and I moved to the village within the last few years. The presence of St. Hildas was a key factor in our decision to move here * The move to close the school is pre-emptive based on unconfirmed predictions and does not give the school enough time to show an ability to increase pupil numbers * The school has historically shown that, with good leadership, it can draw in higher pupil numbers. A strong leader will encourage parents to send their children to the school * The proposal is looking purely at student numbers/funding and not considering any transport costs, village impact, parental impact or planning. It seems to be focused on the short term demands rather than the medium/long term * Closure would not benefit educational provisions in the area * The lack of the school as an option will strongly influence our decision to stay in the village & could cost the village multiple young families * The village currently has housing plans. In order to draw younger, family orientated people to the village, the school is a key part of this * We're currently impacted by COVID birth rates so projections based on current data are not representative of the future * The school is not currently in a deficit which is restricting its access to funding. The criteria for funding should be amended so schools, like St Hildas, who are have a projected deficit are eligible. Alternatively, the school should be allowed to continue till it's in a deficit and would then be eligible for funding * The alternative schools suggested do not offer wrap around of nursery care * The breaking apart of catchments can cause severe mental distress to children who have to leave their friends and teachers * All the suggested schools do not meet government guidelines for free school transport. There are no guarantees that the transport change will be approved and could result in a significant cost & time impact to parents and effect ability to work * St Benedict's has entry requirements and our future children will be bottom of the eligibility list. It's also a Catholic school so its offerings are not comparable to St Hildas and would not be an option for us * Hustwaite CE VC Primary School is 6.4 miles (14 minutes) away. Class sizes lack the level of attention that St Hildas offers * Helmsley Community Primary school is 4.9 miles (10 minutes) away. Large classes that lack the individual attention that St Hildas offers * Terrington CE VC Primary School is 9.8 miles (20 minutes) away. Bad Ofsted grading * The school has a strong sense of community and is a key part of the village. The loss of St Hildas would cause irreparable damage I would also like to reiterate that I believe the downward trend of St Hildas has largely been caused by historical poor leadership which should be addressed instead of closing the school. As has been shown in the past this would drive an increase in trust from parents and correspond with an increase in head count</p> | <p>As mentioned above I believe the split into the existing catchments is potentially damaging to the kids mental health as they will likely be split up from their friends. I also believe that their educations will be damaged if any students end up being forced from an Ofsted good to a lower rated school or schools with a significantly higher headcount</p> | <p>Member of Local Community-Parent</p> | <p>No, it was not easy to understand</p> | <p>I believe the consultation would have been significantly easier if there was actual communication or responses given to the comments. It very much felt like they were telling us their decision and not taking on board anything that was said. Despite in the introduction presentation saying that they will bias towards remaining open. The session was cut short and did not give everyone, or even the majority, to present their points. No data was presented to show what improvements or advantages there would be for the village, students or anyone by closing the school.</p> |
| 29 | Blank Response | Blank Response | Blank Response | Blank Response | Blank Response |
| 30 | <p>It seems to me that the existence and continued support of numerous faith schools, mainly CoE and RC across North Yorkshire only exacerbates the problem and challenges of school numbers. If there were a single, non faith school in Ampleforth there would be sufficient children to justify a single small village school for all the children in the area. Instead, parents who don't want a RC school, or any faith school are forced to send their children, by car or bus to schools some miles away from their home. I would like to suggest that NYC take a more strategic view of population numbers and school places and work with faith groups to agree how schools can first and foremost be focused on serving the places in which they exist rather than the faith of people who have every opportunity to practice their faith in many other ways.</p> | | <p>Other</p> | <p>Yes, it was easy to understand</p> | <p>Ask the wider population what their priority is for schools, especially regarding locality versus faith.</p> |
| 31 | <p>With a 4.99% increase in council tax this financial year, it is simply untenable to continue funding small schools like this as "educational peculiars." Sad though it is that a much-loved village school might disappear, emotional considerations must not be permitted to override economic concerns, especially where good quality alternative arrangements are available for children locally.</p> | | <p>Member of Local Community</p> | <p>Yes, it was easy to understand</p> | |
| 32 | <p>Not a good idea for the local community</p> | <p>Too wide for a rural area</p> | <p>Member of Local Community</p> | <p>Yes, it was easy to understand</p> | |
| 33 | <p>Consultation to keep the school open. It is a good rated, rural family school which does not have a deficit and the children love coming to the school shown by their high percentage of attendance. There is currently 17 children on roll. Ryedale Trust wanted to bring St Hilda's into their umbrella to give the school access to more resources and educational experiences. We would ask for your support to write to the Dept of Education who blocked this alliance. Your support to push this alliance forward is welcome. The special needs children at the school thrive and make excellent progress. The teachers are all very experienced and the teaching assistants are also qualified teachers with a wide range of experience and expertise. The school does not have a deficit like other schools in NYCC. The teachers have been blocked from spending any money to improve the facilities and education provision for the children.</p> | <p>Currently the children attend a good school which they do not have to travel to. There is a private nursery in walking distance of the school which provides much valued wrap around care so that parents can work and live in Ampleforth. There is close liaison with the staff of the nursery and the school staff. The children move on to Ryedale school with which it has strong links and liaisons with activities. The children have strong links to Ryedale</p> | <p>Teacher- St Hilda's Ampleforth CE VC Primary School</p> | <p>Yes, it was easy to understand</p> | <p>It needs to be a consultation on how to keep a school open and what support and funding you have access to so you can support us in doing this. The meeting and the way it is conducted comes</p> |

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| | Parents and teachers are extremely proud of the school and would willing volunteer to improve the school playground provision and paint the buildings but have been blocked from doing this. St Hilda's has the potential to be an outstanding primary school serving working families in the heart of the Ampleforth community and beyond. Will you help us to do this and keep teachers in the profession. Is there a shortage of teachers? Is there a shortage of SEN places for KS1 children? Thanks for reading, will you help us and the wonderful village Ampleforth? | school and existing friendships from their siblings and classmates from the previous year. This makes for a positive and easy transition to the school for year 6 who leave St Hilda's knowing some of the teachers at Ryedale as well as having a friendship group. To change this would negatively effect the social and emotional progress of the children still dealing with and reeling from the aftermath of two years of covid. | | | across as a formality prior to closure. |
| 34 | I recently attended the consultation in Ampleforth, along with my daughter who has a five year old at St Hilda's, the thing that seemed evident to me was the negativity of both the Board of Governor's, the same Board of Governor's I understand were responsible for the nearby Hovingham CofE school, and also the representative of the local diocese, they both seem resigned to the closure of St Hilda's as the only option based entirely on forward financial projection's that do not take into account future pupil number's. This negative attitude will only serve to put potential parent's off sending their children to St Hilda's making the financial situation worse. What is needed is for the council to get behind the school and support it financially through the next two years after which number's will pick up again. The school has obviously been well run in the past, running with a financial surplus up until the current year, there is clearly something wrong with recruitment as your own figure's show 91 children within the catchment area, my grand daughter comes from outside the catchment area, as previously stated the negativity of the governor's makes this worse because that impact's on the staff and makes it more difficult for them to recruit more pupil's. The consensus in the meeting from parent's both past, present and future was of an excellent school with excellent staff and happy pupil's. From a personal point of view regarding my own granddaughter, who attended Helmsley Primary for a year, it became quite clear that Helmsley was failing her, she was not learning as she was capable of because of the large class size which meant she didn't receive the time needed to teach her essential skills, this led to her becoming frustrated at not been taught how to progress so her learning became slow and disruptive influence's in the large class led her to become disruptive herself, finally her mum had had enough so looked for another school which was St Hilda's, within three day's of starting at St Hilda's she became a different child, she was back to her old self, her reading and numeracy have improved at a massive pace compared to Helmsley, this is down to the staff at St Hilda's. If St Hilda's closes at the end of summer this will have a massive negative impact on her, she will have had three school's in three year's. There is no way she will go back to Helmsley, which by your own forecast's will be full to capacity by 2026, so this will mean travelling even further to school, by the way St Hilda's is closer to our home than Helmsley. Large schools are not appropriate for some children as my granddaughter's experience proves. I therefore urge the council to support St Hilda's financially over the next two year's to help them through this short term decrease in pupil numbers. Ampleforth is a growing village and need's this school to remain open to attract new people, especially young families, into the area it will only do this with a thriving St Hilda's school. | | Grandparent- St Hilda's Ampleforth CE VC Primary School | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 35 | The closure of the school will have a devastating effect on the village. Young families will no longer move to the village if there isn't a school for their children to attend. | | Member of Local Community | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 36 | At the heart of village life since its foundation in 1890, St Hilda's CE Primary School ("St Hilda's") has consistently been rated "Good" by Ofsted, with pupils, parents & teachers stating that "it feels like a family." Due to a temporary, short term drop in pupil numbers - partially due to Covid-19 & partly due to lack of parental confidence in the previous head & in the future of the school (reinforced by this very consultation!) it is clear from what we heard at the 'Consultation' meeting that NYC want to close St Hilda's in order to 'save money.' This flies in the face of all the statutory guidance on the closure of rural schools (St Hilda's is not being amalgamated with or replaced by another school; it is not inadequate - far from it! - & there is evidence of demand for places in the medium to long term - 9 more pupils in September 2025; the only institution I can see that deems St Hilda's "unviable" is NYC, on the basis of one year's projected lack of intake - at a time when St Hilda's budget is in surplus anyway!). The proposal to close mitigates directly against the DfE's "presumption against the closure of rural schools," which states that the "case must be strong and clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area," (which closing St Hilda's clearly IS NOT) and that the closure proposers MUST have regard to "the likely effect of discontinuance ... on the local community" (which NYC has not considered AT ALL - especially regarding the effect on Daisy Day Care & the wraparound care provision with St Hilda's); "the likely cost ... of transport to other schools," (this would be significant to all alternative schools except for St Benedict's RC Ampleforth - 'St Ben's'); "any increase in the use of motor vehicles.." (which even in the case of St Ben's would have serious effects - the road outside St Ben's - 'Back Lane' - is 'unadopted' and in disrepair; at pick up and drop off times it is highly congested and causes severe disruption for residents on Back Lane - not to mention for the GP Surgery that is also situated there. Transport to Husthwaite, Helmsley or | All schools in the proposed new catchment areas - Helmsley, Husthwaite and Terrington - are too far away from Ampleforth, and will be too dangerous to get to in the winter. St Hilda's Ampleforth must be kept open! | Parent- St Hilda's Ampleforth CE VC Primary School | No, it was not easy to understand | The NYC place-holding time-servers should consider the positive educational benefits of schools they're looking to close, as well as pounds, shillings and pence. |

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| | <p>Terrington schools - as proposed by NYC - may look appropriate on a map to NYC planners, but it would either cost NYC a lot in transport costs or cost parents a great deal in fuel, risk - in winter - and employment opportunities). Finally, closure proposers "must have regard to any alternatives to discontinuance of the school," which obviously NYC has not. Further, the proposers for closure of a school offering early years provision (as St Hilda's does) should set out plans to develop alternative early years provision clearly demonstrating that it will be at least equal in quantity to the provision provided by the nursery school with no loss of expertise and specialism; & how replacement provision is more accessible and more convenient for local parents. Such plans have not been provided by NYC. From the above arguments, it can be seen that the ONLY argument for closing St Hilda's is a spurious, short-termist, thatcherite argument that having no projected new pupil intake in September 2024 means that St Hilda's has to close, permanently. I was astounded to hear one of the NYC time-servers on the 'committee' at the 'community consultation' arguing that schools are "competing with each other for pupils." The notion that schools are competing with each other for pupils is preposterous; you might as well say that GP Surgeries are competing with each other for patients! Education - like healthcare - is a service and a right; it CANNOT be treated as though it is a factory producing bricks. There appears to be another fallacy rife among NYC time-servers, and that is that large class sizes are good. This again is taking a thatcherite view of efficiency - that the more pupils a teacher can teach is 'better' because 'good' is defined as reducing the number of teachers in a school to 'reduce costs per pupil.' Small class sizes - as at St Hilda's - produce a wonderful education for children; one which is tailored to their individual needs. This benefits all the children who experience it, but is particularly valuable - and indispensable - for children with Special Educational Needs & Disabilities (SEND), as has been demonstrated - and is still being demonstrated - by staff at St Hilda's. To consider the 'possibility' of St Ben's (the closest 'alternative' primary school) for a moment - and taking a jesuitical approach (and why not?) to analysis of the published proclamations of St Ben's itself and it's Academy Trust (the Nicholas Postgate Catholic Academy Trust, or 'NPCAT'), the NPCAT's Mission Statement states (in part) "we envisage learning taking place in communities inspired by the Spirit of Christ, ... All our schools are inclusive, and are respectful of, & engage with, people of all beliefs." (The words 'or none' could so easily have been inserted here after the word 'beliefs' - but they weren't. So - as written - the implication here is that only believers are worthy of respect). Similarly, St Ben's Admissions page states "Where we have young people of other faiths or no faith, we * include and welcome them in all our activities." (* the word 'respect' could so easily have been inserted here - the implication is that St Ben's doesn't respect children of other faiths or no faith). Not every family desires a Roman Catholic education for their children - and I have heard hearsay evidence that even one or more parent(s) who took their children out of St Hilda's recently to join St Ben's have said that they didn't want their children to have to do a Catholic curriculum - which just goes to show how unsettled parents were thanks to the previous headmaster and the uncertainty over whether St Hilda's would remain open. Not everyone wants a Catholic education for their children - even some of those who already felt coerced into making the change, for whatever reason. There really is no excuse for closing St Hilda's VC CE Primary School (and pre-school early years education provider), except for a rigid adherence to an outdated, simplistic, thatcherite 'free market' ideology that has been shown to apply to only the most basic industrial processes, and which has been shown to be of benefit to only the most well-off in society. To close St Hilda's because of a one-year projected shortage of pupil numbers is utterly short-sighted, totally unacceptable and plain wrong. Please read and inwardly digest all the points made in the "FOSH St Hilda's, Ampleforth Supporting Statement" which I hope and trust has been submitted - and will be afforded due consideration - as part of this consultation. Thank you</p> | | | | |
| 37 | <p>I think that the uncertainty surrounding the school's future has impacted the current numbers. I believe that the school is an excellent and safe place to study and grow for all children and should remain open.</p> | | Grandparent- St Hilda's Ampleforth CE VC Primary School | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 38 | <p>The parish council believe that the consultation is taking a short term view and ignoring future years. No safe route to the alternative school in the village. Ampleforth is a service village and schools are a key element of this. Ampleforth is designated to expand, for which there will be no primary school provision. The school is a long standing part of the community. There is a very strong feeling within the village to keep the school open as it is an essential part of the thriving community.</p> | No | Ampleforth Parish Council | Yes, it was easy to understand | No |
| 39 | <p>Response to Consultation To Close St Hilda's C of E Primary School Ampleforth. We are parents of two children at St Hilda's school. Our children have both attended St Hilda's since starting pre-school at three years old. The school has provided nothing but the most excellent education and care since then. St Hilda's is an OFSTED rated 'Good' school. It seems ludicrous to close a good school, with excellent results and even more ludicrous for one of the suggested alternative schools to 'Require Improvement' – why should we be forced to send our children to a sub-par alternative with a falling roll when they already</p> | | Parent- St Hilda's Ampleforth CE VC Primary School | Yes, it was easy to understand | |

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| | <p>attend a perfectly 'Good' school? Our eldest child has significant SEND and has required a specialist and individualised programme of learning. The school has worked tirelessly to seek advice and support for him, including his gaining his EHCP. This has resulted in him progressing and thriving at Key Stage Two. We are in no doubt that if St Hilda's was to close, that our son's social, emotional and academic needs would be dramatically affected. We are hugely concerned that in a larger school he would become lost and struggle to cope, almost certainly resulting in a move to specialist provision. Indeed, we strongly believe that he is only able to remain in mainstream school due to the excellent provision, small classes and nurturing ethos at St Hilda's. We are working parents – both working full time, long days involving a commute from the village. We rely heavily on the excellent service provided by Daisy Daycare for our wrap around care. We are deeply concerned that if St Hilda's were to close, none of the suggested alternative schools have anything close to full wrap around care. Helmsley has a breakfast club but no after school, Husthwaite has some, on some days but neither opens early enough or closes late enough for us to work our full day. No one has so far been able to reassure us that our children will be provided with transport to an alternative school. This could potentially be fifteen children – does NYCC provide a chaperone for our very youngest children, ensuring safe and appropriate behaviour on their journey? Is it appropriate for five year olds to be on a bus without their parents? Who will ensure they make it into school safely? Our fear is that one of us will be forced to dramatically reduce our working hours to take our children to school. This would obviously result in a significant loss of earnings, perhaps endangering our jobs and therefore ability to pay our mortgage etc. If this is repeated across the wider school community, it could have a huge impact – resulting in families leaving the area or hard-earned job positions and valuable careers. One of the best features of St Hilda's school, is its nurturing, family-like feel. Our children have grown up together, in and out of school, socialising and learning across year groups and class boundaries. In a larger school, Year Six children may never come into contact with the younger children, never mind play with and care for them so directly. We are devastated to think that this fabulous community could be ripped apart and 'redistributed' amongst three or four other schools. Our children will be robbed of their opportunity to attend their village school, in their community within walking distance of their home. Some of their peers have become like family, providing a close-knit support network for those of us without family nearby. Attending a school in a different town or village would not allow for this kind of friendship, their new peers could conceivably live at opposite ends of Helmsley's ever increasing catchment area, meaning even more car transport to maintain new friendships, adding further vehicle emissions to Ryedale's environment. Ironically, as the pupil numbers have decreased, the school community has pulled closer together. We have a passionate, willing and able PTA (FOSH) who have created many successful events for the wider village community. If the school were to close, what will happen to the site? If it is sold for housing, where will the children of those families go to school? If there is no village school – how will we (as an official service villages) attract families to the village? We do not want Ampleforth to become another ghost village of retirement houses and Air B and Bs. Families keep villages thriving – we use the pubs, shops, doctors and local trades people – these services will also die off as families stop choosing Ampleforth. Therefore, the school closing will have a long-lasting and enormous knock on effect on the wider village community.</p> | | | | |
| 40 | <p>When I was at St Hilda's as an employee in 1990s we had 80+ children from a certain point in the early 2000s they had two very Bad Head's You could see from the figures published the number went down from 76--- to 36ish. This is when the rot set in. Why these staff roll around like this is beyond me.</p> <p>Moving on, I recommend that if the school closed then the buildings should be use as two reception classes for St Benedicts and this will keep all children within the village without having to bus them about. Please note at this point St Bens had a very poor OFSTED Report only a couple of years ago. By doing the above you could retain two of their excellent teachers at this schools which has a GOOD OFSTED Rating (Do not loose sigh of this).</p> <p>I don't wish to see any further extension of St Benedicts school as its very congested at the East end of (Back Road) and a waste of Capital. Two classes at St Hilda's would allow our (excellent Vicar) to keep in touch with his flock.</p> <p>Financially this would allow the surplus held at this school to be available to all Reception children without prejudice re:- catholic or C of E.</p> | <p>Having 100+ children in this village it would be wise to retain that (See my comments) IN the first section.</p> <p>One flake of snow here in Ampleforth and nobody goes anywhere. The options of Helmsley/Husthwaite etc are to far to go for working parents. Our child care in this village run by DAISY CARE are excellent and parents like the current set up.</p> | Former Member of Staff | Yes | |
| 41 | <p>We are now in a time of Radical Change and rethinking. We seem to be approaching these changes with Panic! At a time when we can adapt, rethink and embrace what we have, nothing seems affordable at this current time, as a family we have lived in Ampleforth over 40 years. Our daughter was Educated at St Hildas from 4-11 years from those roots of education and childhood she has flourished into a Professional status. Allow her childhood, in a safe environment with staff committed to their roll of teaching, a service</p> | <p>As a past parent we were involved in the Private minibus that would take the children out of the village to a secondary school of their choice. It was successful! However I recall County providing transport to take a child waiting in a 'bye lane' sadley</p> | Former Member of Staff and Parents | | |

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| | village. St Hildas also provided Local Employment. Caretaking, Cook, Supervisors, Special Needs, Administrators and with a Church of England Pastoral Approach. If the issues above could be embraced perhaps current problems could be rethought, managed effectively and slowly reversed. | it didn't turn up leaving that child stranded- In this area one only need's heavy snowfall and coaches cannot travel in or out of the village due to elevation on every Aspect! | | | |
| 42 | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. There has been less than 20 children in a year previously and the school grew again. It's likely, if the myth that has been around for this school closing goes, it may result in increased numbers. 2. Parents will have to travel to the nearest school if this closes and the roads get waterlogged and icy depending on the season. 3. Allow a choice of a non-catholic school to be in a child's community important to bring children together and develop relationships. 4. As a small village school it supports children that are sensitive to large groups, npose or cannot access large schools. North Yorkshire council have an identified need for small mainstream school that can adapt and support children with special education needs/disabilities who can access national curriculum but with the adjustments many larger schools can't offer. St Hilda's School is ideal to offer. Especially as the travel distance for primary school children is up to 45 minutes and therefore children from Northallerton, Thirsk and other larger places can attend to meet need of their Education Health Care Plan (EHCP) or SEN support potentially. 5. Closing St Hilda's is likely to cost the council more as some of these children will most likely need special school, not all but enough to make St Hilda's financially viable to remain and support North Yorkshire. | Yes children need to grow up and be able to grow, play and develop in their community to promote relationships and give a sense of ownership (responsibility for their locality) | Member of Local Community | Yes | |
| 43 | <p>I am fully involved in the life of the village and my interests stretch as far as Zimbabwe, where I took the opportunity to support an HIV/AIDS Centre and an Orphanage in Harare, by working there as a "dog's body" for part of each year, from 2000 -2014. The people of this village and the area have supported my efforts and continue so to do. I continue to be interested in the Education of young people. Hence the willingness to attend the Consultation Meeting. As a former School Governor, I have experience of how schools are organised.</p> <p>The notion of 2 primary schools, in Ampleforth was a surprise, when we visited and eventually moved here, in 1984.</p> <p>As was mentioned, towards the end of the meeting, that was 'a historical development.' My current interest, is more to do with the FUTURE of the Education of Primary school children, in Ampleforth village. I attended the meeting to listen to the views of families who have children of Nursery and Primary age.Both schools are Church foundations. Parents are provided with a choice. What are the underpinning reasons for decisions they make? I heard voices Saying "St Ben's is a good School but I do not want Catholic Education for my children' .It would be interesting to assess whether 'Underpinning Ethos or Particular Expression of Christian practice is the root of that opinion. Reference was made to the Admissions policy for Parents who do not claim to be Catholics. It appears that tolerance of sympathy towards the tenets of Christian teaching is expected. However one parent was able to suggest 'that she felt her family would not be welcome because they were Jewish. ' I was shocked to hear this comment. I have been prompted to seek further information, from a throughly reliable source, who has reassured me this would not be the case. This information can be shared with others.</p> <p>My considered view point in March 2024.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. .We have 2 geographical sites and buildings designed for age range 4-11 yers. Both offer opportunities for Education of this age group for children on 1:1 and group basis within the village and further afield. North Yorkshire has Authority and areas of Responsibility in Both schools. 2. Both schools have an association to a particular Christian Expression of a shared Faith. Both the Anglican Diocese of York and the Catholic Diocese of Middlesbrough have Authority and Responsibility in Both schools. It should be possible to initiate discussions, at the every level, to find a positive way forward. 3. Both groups contribute to the positive Social Cohesion of a village Community. | | Member of Local Community | Yes | |

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| | <p>Proposal.</p> <p>Both Schools should given TIME to allow discussion of the ideas offered to resolve the present dilemma . Surely those in positions of Responsibility and Authority, as well as the present staff in both schools, will have the best Educational interests of their students at heart.</p> <p>We are in a TIME of change Politically, Economically and Socially. It would be sad if Creative opportunities were missed, which could benef it all children and their families in the FUTURE because of temporary Financial constraints or a desire to resolve the dilemma 'at speed'</p> | | | | |
| 44 | <p>To close the school would be short sighted to say the least. CofE Children are also being descriminated against! (Surely llegal). Why transport small children across the county to other (improving in the case of Husthwaite) When there is a wonderful school here in Ampleforth.</p> <p>How do you know that in 5 years time we don't have loads more families here. Effect a five year plan for goodness sake. If there still not enough pupils then so be it. Get a grip and get some stability. The strength of feeling against closure and the harm it will do to our community is immeasurable.</p> | <p>Yes they are too far for small children. Stick to Ampleforth so parents can use Nursery too which they can't with your hairbrained scheme.</p> | <p>Member of Local Community.</p> | | |
| 45 | <p>The arguments made by the community in respect of the closure of the school at Hovingham are equally applicable here but all the more so after the closure of that school. The support from the Community demonstrated at the consultation meeting demonstrated that (a) there is appetite for the school to remain and indeed current parents have identified several potential pupils; (b) that several families have moved into the catchment area for the school because of its existence and excellent reputation; (c) the school has been continuously improving under the stewardship of the Ryedale learning Trust; parens need to have the confidence that the school will remain open as evidenced by a number of potential applicants who have gone round the school but who, quite fairly, can not be expected to commit their child's welfare and educational future to a school that is unable to commit to a long term existence - however caring and effective the current staff and provision may be. Finally, the school provides an option for those children who will not thrive at a larger alternative and it is capable of addressing the needs of certain SEND students for whom alternative provision is understood to be less suitable for the relevant children and their families in addition to being more expensive for the education authority to provide. The school has suffered from the uncertainty created by the closure of the school at Hovingham from which it will not recover unless a lomng term commitment is made. It is analogous to those businesses who struggled through Covid incurring a greater burden of debt which proved to be impossible to quite rectify once the pandemic was over. Given a clear commitment to its future by the Authority; retention of the current staff and RLT support - which we understand is forthcoming should a long term commitment be made- the school will have the opportunity to prove its feasibility; attractiveness and ability to deliver high quality results. This will create virtuous circle as opposed to the inherited vicious circle - not of its own making - that it currently occupies.</p> | <p>No</p> | <p>Governor of St Hilda's CE VC Primary School</p> | <p>Yes, it was easy to understand</p> | |
| 46 | <p>Funding: Figures were provided at the consultation meeting held at Ampleforth Village Hall on 18th April 2024 (but not available on the NYC web site) showing the projected operational and cumulative deficits in future years. However, no attempt was made to project beyond the first year when a cumulative deficit is predicted. This therefore ignores the projected new pupil intake for the following year. It is contended that the funding deficit is temporary, and that the school should be given the opportunity to continue for at least one more year so that the projected figures can be formalised. Alternative schools: Whilst another primary school is present in the village it is apparent that this is not open to all pupils. As stated at the consultation meeting, whilst parents of non-Christian faiths are happy to send their children to St Hilda's school (with a Christian ethos) this is not the case with St. Benedict's (with a Catholic doctrine). St Benedict's school's policy on Collective Worship does not acknowledge the legal right of parents to withdraw their children from collective worship unlike that of St. Hilda's. The wording of St Benedict's admissions policy implicitly emphasises the preference for those of a Catholic faith. St. Ben's is not a suitable alternative as there is no safe route because of a lack of footpaths or stepping off points. The road is unadopted and the surface in poor condition and because of parking and congestion sightlines are poor. Parents attending the school can attest to the dangers of using the only access route available. Current wrap around care: St Hilda's school in conjunction with Daisy Day Care in Ampleforth village provide wrap-around care for primary age children from before school to the early evening. This provision enables working parents to ensure their children are suitably cared for during the whole of the working day. Without this provision parents would either have to change or give up employment entirely. Husthwaite and Helmsley schools do not have this provision over the time periods that are currently available in Ampleforth. Future housing provision: Ryedale Local Plan Policy SP1, Ampleforth was identified as a Service Village, which by definition</p> | <p>None</p> | <p>Member of Local Community</p> | <p>Yes, it was easy to understand</p> | <p>Information presented at the consultation meeting (Powerpoint slides) should have been made available after the meeting via the web site.</p> |

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| | <p>included a primary school, and for which the approach/ambition was 'Protecting and enhancing local community facilities'. In the absence of a North Yorkshire Council Local Plan the Ryedale Plan is a material consideration and therefore closing the school would go against the current policy. Service Villages are identified as a tertiary focus for growth – but if new housing were built, for example on the site of St. Hilda's school, where would any children go to school? The absence of the school would also make it less attractive for parents to move to the village, undermining the sustainability of the community as a whole. Climate Change: NYC Council Executive declared a Climate Emergency at the Executive meeting 5th July 2022 NYC Climate Change Strategy 2023-2030, Appendix A, Section 10e North Yorkshire Council – Net Zero by 2030 Collaborative Area, with regard to Schools and educational establishments, states it will: • Improve school travel (to and from school), also linked to obesity and air quality strategies and 'bikeability' schemes It goes on to state that, 'As a Council we will:' • Embed climate change into every service and into policy and decision-making process so that taking climate responsible actions becomes 'business as usual'. Clearly, closing St. Hilda's school goes against this, as additional road transport resulting in greater emissions will be an inevitable consequence. Education and Inspections Act 2006: Has due regard been taken by the governing body pertaining to Section 15 (proposals for discontinuance of schools maintained by the local authority) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 been taken? Section 15 part 4 states: The matters to which the relevant body must have regard in formulating any proposals under this section in relation to a rural primary school include— (a) the likely effect of the discontinuance of the school on the local community, (b) the availability, and likely cost to the local authority, of transport to other schools, (c) any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the discontinuance of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase, and (d) any alternatives to the discontinuance of the school; If due regard has been taken, it was not stated in the initial letter from the governors to interested parties; has not been stated in the consultation documents available on the NYC web site; and was not mentioned at the consultation meeting. Having spoken to two governors they have confirmed that whilst there was some discussion of the potential impact the four issues were not discussed or documented formally. Despite questions being raised at the meeting regarding potential transport costs, the environmental impact and consideration of ways to avoid closure of the school, the councilors present appeared to suggest these were not relevant to the statutory consultation process. This is clearly not the case, and they should have been fully considered. If due regard has not been taken by the governing body and/or local authority, then I suggest the proposal for closure and the consultation is in contravention of the act and should cease immediately.</p> | | | | |
| 47 | <p>It would be an extremely poor decision to close this school, it is one of a kind with its up to date policy's that are child led with relational approaches</p> | | Member of Local Community | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 48 | <p>Compared to other school closures I've read about, the process for St Hilda's seems accelerated, particularly considering how long it took Hovingham primary school to close down, and they had even fewer students. It also seems that, while the school numbers are very low, that there is enough interest in new students starting in the 2025/26 academic year to suggest that this might just be a rare low point rather than a prediction for the future. More importantly to me though is that I feel that the school's financial position has been severely misrepresented in some way. At the meeting with the Council at the village hall there was a slide that showed the predicted figures for this and the next couple of years. It showed that this current year was fine and had a surplus. It then showed that for the upcoming academic year there would be a significant shortfall on the budget, HOWEVER that there would still be a (admittedly much reduced) surplus available to the school. So if it's the case that there will still be (some) money left in the coffers by the end of 2024/25 why is the school potentially being shut down at this point, rather than at the end of the 2024/25 academic year, when funds would be almost exhausted? As far as I can see, regardless of future school numbers, there would still be enough money to run the school until July 2025 anyway.</p> | | Parent- St Hilda's Ampleforth CE VC Primary School | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 49 | <p>I have been a governor of St. Hilda's school for around eight years, firstly while the school was in Federation with Hovingham primary school, then after that school's closure, a governor in the newly formed governing body for the single school. The summary as written in the Consultation Document of what led to the present crisis is correct. The cost of RLT support for the school has proved to be considerably less than that charged by the other Federation and RLT have committed to continuing their support for another year at a similar level should the school remain open. A senior teacher has been appointed as Head of School, working closely with the executive head. There has been no consideration of appointing a substantive headteacher. RLT has also been keen to expand opportunities for the children by involving them in activities and events at other Trust schools, which would also continue. I believe there is a case for retaining small schools – some children are better suited to developing in smaller classes. Good support for children with extra learning needs has also been a strong feature of St. Hilda's school where they can thrive in a less pressured environment. The 'family feel' of a smaller school where older</p> | <p>I don't think Terrington sits well in the proposed 'orange' catchment - it is too far away and federated with schools even further away. Could the 'pink' proposed catchment be expanded to include Crayke - as one of the alternative schools mentioned.</p> | Governor of St Hilda's CE VC Primary School | Yes, it was easy to understand | <p>I found it very difficult to review what I had written with only one line to view. Also, text appeared to run continuously - paragraph breaks which make for clearer reading were deleted.</p> |

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| | <p>children routinely look out for the younger ones is very evident at St. Hilda's. Ampleforth benefits from the presence of the Daisy Day Care Nursery. The majority of St. Hilda's parents use the nursery for pre- or after- school hours or both. If the school closes and children go to other schools at a distance from Ampleforth, parents will be greatly disadvantaged by losing the support of the nursery. The nursery has also been a feeder for children living in the community around St. Hilda's. The alternative schools identified are not attractive to parents. St. Benedict's – a Catholic school, not a choice for some. Helmsley – a school reaching capacity. Husthwaite – has capacity but is currently in RI . Crayke – nearing capacity and out of proposed catchment Slingsby – oversubscribed and out of proposed catchment Terrington – has capacity but a long drive without transport being provided. As yet, NYC's future transport policy for schoolchildren is not clear. I think it is premature to close St. Hilda's school. It has come through a bad period where the uncertainty of even a few parents has caused children to be moved elsewhere. The new leadership is breaking through the uncertainty with positivity and we can be reasonably certain numbers will return in the next couple of years. I ask NYC to find a way to support this very special small school and ensure its future for the community.</p> | | | | |
| 50 | <p>Why is there this movement to close small rural schools and make these larger schools in areas? Looking at North Yorkshire, small rural schools after school are being closed, it's in the top 10% of school closure. It seems NYCC and the Church of England are looking only at financial gains, not the future of our children.. Why aren't the local governments helping preserve schools instead of closing them. St Hildas has always had peaks and troughs with intake numbers. If St Hilda's closes there will be more pressure on other schools and it is already showing that some schools i.e Helmsley are getting to capacity for certain years. When is the realisation that schools getting bigger will have a detrimental effect on children's mental health and their education? I fear we will have a future generation with many issues. The consultation meeting which was hugely attended showed the need of St Hildas, there were families there who have children who are set to attend the school. There were also couples who moved to ampleforth to start a family. And importantly there were past pupils and families who spoke of the impact the school had and has on their families. Nycs seems to be trying to rush the consultation process through. Such a small space of time to close a school which has been there for over 100 years. A decision seems to have been made before all facts were provided, and the thoughts and opinions of parents of students, teaching staff , potential parents and wider community. The projection for future pupils shows that there is a need to keep St Hildas open. When NYCC stated the 3 year projection of financial losses, they had not taken into account the financial figures of the children starting in 2025 and onwards. It is short sighted to close a school due to lack of intake in 2024 when it is known covid had an effect on birth rates nationwide. Surely it's obvious we will have less intake, but this will increase in the future. St Hildas has had multiple parents enquiring about the school but are put off due to the rumours of closure that have shrouded the school in the last couple of years. The figures don't take into account the nursery children that will start in 2024. The fact that these children don't count towards the figures is appalling. Yet they are set to continue into the school once turning school age. Also the number of siblings of these children set to join the school in the future will increase attendance numbers. The school is only set to be in a deficit for a short amount of time. Yet the school is set to shut before it goes into a financial deficit. This also leaves the school unable to apply for a grant that would financially stabilise them until they have the intake. If the school was allowed to stay open until the 2025 intake, the future of the school would be more secure and attract more potential students. Has a comparison of keeping the school funded and paying travel costs to alternative schools been made? Also due to the increasing numbers at neighbouring schools will eventually mean costly building work and expansion of schools in the area. The changes in free nursery places set to come in allowing from 9 months old to have free hours placement will affect the local nursery Daisy's. This will see a large increase in uptake in nursery care needed. St Hildas is a perfect environment for the older nursery children. Taking this service away will be detrimental to the local community. The other issue of concern is wrap-around care. St Hildas has many parents who use Daisy daycares wrap-around services. They are essential for the parents who are working full time and work hours do not coincide with school drop off and pick up. If St Hildas was to close it is obvious from similar schools closing throughout North Yorkshire the land would be sold off for housing. If this is the case the impact on the potential of families coming to ampleforth would be affected. Ampleforth is a service village but yet slowly but surely it would become a retirement village. St Benedicts is based in Ampleforth but this isn't far from capacity, this would leave existing and any future families having to travel further afield for school. The closure of the school comes down to finances, yet NYCC doesn't seem to see the future impact of a number of areas. The increase of patients using the NHS in the local doctors surgery. The infrastructure being updated, it is known that when field view was built opposite there was opposition from Yorkshire water. The sewerage system in ampleforth isn't able to deal with other new builds. There are also issues with the water plane and flooding and waterlogging of land in this area. All gardens down the right hand side and top of field view have issues with this most of the year. How would this affect NYCC, cost wise and man power?! It is</p> | stated in above statement | Grandparent- St Hilda's Ampleforth CE VC Primary School | Yes, it was easy to understand | |

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| | <p>also a great concern that one of the schools being offered is in need of improvement and another is full in certain years and cannot take on any more children for these years, potentially splitting siblings into separate schools. The fact the closet school is 5 miles away is a great concern. This causes issues for parents who cannot drive as it is known another consultation is underway that could see the end of school travel funding. Another concern is the social aspect. The schools are 5 - 6 miles away from the children's homes and this will have a knock on effect of when and how they see the friends they socialise with. The caring and nurturing culture at school is amazing. The children help each other. You can see the children of all ages helping each other in the playground, older and younger playing together. If someone is hurt ie having fallen over in the playground you will often see the older children helping the younger students. The struggles the children faced after covid integrating back into school/starting school for the first time were life changing events in the children's lives. Now the children are set to be upheaved again and split up and sent to other schools. What's concerning is the impact on the children's mental health. What future implications will this have on their education and ability to settle again in a school environment. These children have an environment in which they can have their different personalities and express themselves. A fear is they will be put into a larger school where they are made to conform due to lack of exploration of their own personalities due to class sizes being too big. St Hildas has not had a chance to recover from the never ending changes it has been through. Covid affected the school, then issues with Hovingham primary closing. This saw all attention going to Hovingham when the parents of St Hildas were crying out for support and raising concerns about the Headmaster at the time. Many issues stemmed from the headmaster at this time, issues were not resolved and taken seriously. The headmaster did not deal well with this and this saw a mass exodus of students. Since then this has fuelled closure rumours and put off potential new students. St Hildas has been an integral part of village life for over a 100 years. It accommodates such a variety of students with varying needs, whose needs are then met. There are Children with special learning needs who receive an excellent education and the attention needed from teaching staff and fellow students. They will only get this in a small classroom. Children from all different religious backgrounds. There are families who are wanting to attend St Hildas who are of Jewish faith and do not see the other local school as a suitable alternative. I have a grandson that attends St Hildas and his progress with his education has been amazing. The work that the teaching staff have put into the children's education and emotional needs, especially through covid and dealing with the aftermath. I disagree with the opinions of NYCC stating that education will begin to suffer with the lack of children attending St Hildas. This is simply untrue. The teaching staff are excellent educators and they have always had varying class sizes. St Hildas has always been relatively small in comparison to neighbouring schools. Some of the schools which have been put forward as an alternative to St Hildas if closure goes ahead are unsuitable. They have large class sizes and some years are full. Helmsley primary school being one of these. St Hildas is a lovely small rural school. It has heart and soul and has taught generation after generation of the same families. My Daughter moved back to Ampleforth with her husband and son for the sole purpose of him attending St Hildas. She came from Scarborough so my grandson could attend the same school she did and his grandfather before her. The class sizes in Scarborough were large and she wanted a smaller surrounding for my Grandson to learn in. He has attended St Hildas since he was 3 years old, starting in Nursery. He is settled in the school and like the others I fear the moving of him to another school will affect his mental health and cause some anxieties. I fear he will not receive the small standard of education. There were also families who had to move their children from St Hilda's due to the cost of travelling to Ampleforth but they have come to the realisation that St Hildas is a much superior school and their children were happier and they wish to return their children to the school. But due to threats of closure they have not done so.</p> | | | | |
| 51 | <p>I am a co-opted Governor for St Hilda's CE (VC) Primary School joining in 2020 when the school was federated with Hovingham. It was with a heavy heart that the board of Governors reluctantly, following a full discussion about pupil numbers, financial prospects and future sources of leadership, had no alternative but to invite NYC to commence a consultation on closure of the school. However, the potential closing of St Hilda's school is going to be devastating for so many families and village life. Many parents have stated that St. Bens is not likely to be a viable alternative due to it being a Catholic school. Many are not happy with the alternative schools on offer within the current catchment area, due to location, size and reputation. The transport cost for NYC, which would be ongoing, have to be offset against the potential closure of St. Hilda's. St. Hilda's has been rated 'Good' by Ofsted in its last three inspections. Pupils thrive in the nurturing and loving environment that the school offers, despite the turbulence of leadership in the recent past, which drove down pupil numbers. Children with special educational needs are included and have their needs met by dedicated teachers and assisting staff. The school also offers provision for pre-school education for children aged 3 plus, currently there are no other local settings offering such early years provision. It is assumed, that following closure North Yorkshire Council would have to develop alternative early years provision, that would be of 'at least equal in quantity with no loss of expertise and</p> | | Governor | Yes, it was easy to understand | |

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| | specialism'? Currently there are no local settings that could provide more accessible or more convenient Early Years Provision for local parents. The Ryedale Learning Trust are actively supporting St. Hilda's and are still keen to federate the school should the Department for Education accept the proposal. RLT have given assurance to the board that should St. Hilda's remain open they will continue to support with leadership. They understand the needs of a small rural school and believe that St Hilda's is a thriving school and will continue to thrive with increasing pupil numbers going forward, maintaining an intricate part of the heart of the community. Daisy Day Care is another important stakeholder in the community who will be affected by the potential closure of St. Hilda's. They have provided wrap around care for many of the families attending St. Hilda's since April 2009. Losing the potential children attending St. Hilda's will seriously impact their business. Parents and members of the community have been active in supporting the school both individually and as part of the 'Friends of St Hilda's' (FoSH) PTA group, they have mobilised against the proposed school closure. The present issues with lower than usual pupil numbers are considered to be temporary and short term. There is a predicted pipeline to date of at least six to seven additional pupils entering the school in 2025. An interim grant/bridging loan from North Yorkshire Council would allow St. Hilda's to remain open and once the projected numbers are reached in 2025, St Hilda's would be in a position to join The Ryedale Learning Trust preventing the loss of a village institution that has served generations of children and seeing a restoration in the confidence of prospective parents in the future. | | | | |
| 52 | Yes | | Other | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 53 | Pessimism often seems like the wise "intellectual" choice. But building communities like Ampleforth require optimism and faith that the community we work for now will benefit our children and future generations. It seems premature and short sighted to close a thriving school like St Hilda's because of a short term projection of a relatively small deficit. The Department of Education's statutory guidance on opening and closure of maintained schools state that the proposers should presume against the closure of rural schools and that "the case for closure should be strong and clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area". I have serious concerns about the speed and fairness of the consultation process. If the claim is that the school is not financially viable because of a forecast spending deficit, but the school is not yet in deficit, meaning it does not have access to deficit funding; then one can only conclude that the school has been maneuvered into an inextricable position where closure is the only option. This suggests that the consultation is not in good faith and is in direct contradiction to the stated policy of North York Council and the Department of Education's presumption against the closure of rural schools. I also have concerns that the specific demographic impacts of COVID have not been taken into account during the consultation process. We are currently 4 years past the first incident of COVID in the UK and I do not think that it is a coincidence that the dip in year one pupil numbers for 2025-26 coincides with possible conception dates in the early months of COVID. The birth rate for England and Wales was 1.65, one of the lowest ever recorded. Anecdotally I know many young people who decided not to try to conceive when health services were severely stressed and the future was uncertain. Therefore it is possible and I would argue likely that the projected dip in pupil numbers is not a long term trend but a short term response to global events. This demographic event has not been adequately assessed during the consultation process, no mention of it was made during the consultation meeting and I cannot find anywhere the council has acknowledged the possible impact of this profound global event. The failure to acknowledge the demographic impact of COVID draws into question the accuracy of the projection of any long term trends as without acknowledging anomalous data one cannot conclude a robust trend. Further to this, COVID has had more wide ranging and difficult to define demographic impacts, such as the rise of remote work and the impact, and opportunities for rural communities this presents. This again does not seem to have been acknowledged by the council in their consultation process. Ampleforth is uniquely able to attract young remote workers because of the excellent infrastructure and provision of services it currently offers. St Hilda's is a vital part of what Ampleforth has to offer to young families, from diverse backgrounds who may choose to move to village with their children or start a family here. Ampleforth is a thriving village, with infrastructure that most rural communities dream of, we have a post office, doctors surgery with a dispensing pharmacy, bus route into York, two pubs a cafe and currently, two schools. There is huge potential for Ampleforth to grow and thrive. It seems incredibly short sighted to choose to close an important part of village infrastructure on shaky and pessimistic financial projections. In conclusion North York Council has not adequately demonstrated that the argument for closure is strong and in the best educational interests of the area. | I am personally someone without any ties to the village who chose to move here three years ago because of the excellent opportunities Ampleforth provides to a young family. The ability to send my children to a village school in walking distance fits both my circumstances, in my inability to drive, and environmental concerns about limiting my carbon footprint. Keeping St Hilda's open is a more environmentally sustainable option than transporting children to other schools, and it is likely a cheaper option for the council in the long run too. Because the transport consultation had not occurred yet at the time of the consultation meeting on St Hilda's no figures were available to demonstrate the projected cost of school transport. However, one can reasonably conclude that providing transport will be expensive, especially when SEND children and wrap around care provision is taken into account. Therefore the projected deficit does not provide an accurate view of the true cost of maintaining St Hilda's to the council. Because my husband is Jewish our children would be the lowest priority for acceptance to St Benedict's (classed as "other children" in their acceptance policies) and I have serious concerns about sending my children to a school with such a strong clash of cultures with our family. St Benedict's is not an option for many families such as those from different religions and those with same sex parents and by closing St Hilda's Ampleforth loses the ability to provide for and attract families from diverse backgrounds. Personally myself and my husband would have to re-evaluate our future in the village if there is not school provision. | Community | No, it was not easy to understand | Longer or multiple consultation meetings would give people more time to ask questions, 1 and a half hours was allotted for the meeting, during which time the NYC presented their PowerPoint and various other authorities gave their perspective. This left very little time for attendees to ask questions and receive detailed responses. |
| 54 | As a local business we at Daisy Day Care have provided wrap around care for St Hildas since 2009! The closure of this school would greatly impact our business. From our experiences and interaction with the previous head (Mr Pym) we feel that he was the main reason parents chose to take their children out of st Hildas which obviously resulted in the reduced numbers now. We feel that with the new headship in place | St Benedict school is not a suitable alternative for most parents at st Hildas due to a different faith. The roads around ampleforth to the other proposed schools are too dangerous. Especially in winter. | Community | Yes, it was easy to understand | N/A |

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| | <p>this school will soon thrive again. It just needs yourselves to have faith and support the school over the next year. We know from children at our Nursery that there are parents wishing to send their children to St Hildas in 2025 and beyond. This year is just a blip caused by mt Pam!!!</p> | | | | |
| 55 | <p>As a successful Federation of three small rural schools in the local area (currently formally collaborating with a fourth) we are deeply saddened to learn of the proposed closure of St Hilda's School. We believe, wherever possible, rural North Yorkshire needs local primary schools providing sustainable and good quality education so their communities can continue to thrive. Our federation, at very short notice, provided temporary leadership for Hovingham and St Hilda's Federation during the Autumn term 2022 at the request of their Governing Board, with a view to them joining our Federation once the future of Hovingham school was decided. This approach was supported by the Local Authority. The focus during that period was necessarily on securing the quality of education for the children at St Hilda's and ensuring its longer-term sustainability, with or without Hovingham School. Throughout that term there were 28 children on roll at St Hilda's. Neither the consultation document, nor the public meeting detailed any steps taken by the Governing Board / Leadership of the school to engage with existing parents, or the wider community, to retain their trust in the future of the school in order to maintain the number on roll; or to re-examine possible options for partnerships which could have placed the future of St Hilda's on a more sustainable footing, either when Hovingham closed (and a new Governing Body was constituted), or when numbers dropped to a point whereby the Regional Director was unlikely to consider St Hilda's viable for academy conversion. There were no Senior leaders from the MAT at the meeting. Although St Hilda's currently has 13 children, the LA pupil data shows that in-catchment children do exist in sufficient numbers to sustain St Hilda's in the future. In order to ensure that every alternative to closure has been explored, (as it must be for a small rural school); with the positive forecast budget position for 2024/25; and the offer to extend the current leadership arrangement, I would imagine that the Governing Board / Leadership of the school would appreciate a pause in the consultation process to allow them time, in partnership with the LA and Diocese, to reach out and properly explore if a formal partnership with a local school (or schools), could be an option to place education at St Hilda's on a more secure footing. Additionally, given that the NYC Home to School Travel Consultation period has been extended, a pause in the St Hilda's closure consultation would ensure that Councillors could consider any implications of the decisions made which may affect their judgements on either the consultation on closure, or the allocation of catchment areas if St Hilda's were to close.</p> | | Other | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 56 | <p>Shortsighted. One years shortfall on a commuter village (designated by the NYCC). Numbers at St H can vary but the village and wider community need this school. Our daughter started as the only child in the year one and left as a group of five.</p> | <p>Difficult to manage, dangerous in winter and for children in before school and after school care very confusing. Children living in the same village will be mixing with children that could be going to one of four secondary school, or being sent to primary in one area to be told that their secondary is another area. This children will get no consistency.</p> | Other | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 57 | <p>St Hilda's is an essential part of the local community providing a high quality education in an inclusive caring manner for students in Ampleforth and the surrounding villages. We chose the school for all four of our children and have always been very confident in the level of educational provision they have received there, particularly the additional provision given to our daughter with SEND needs. The school is very much a family and although it has suffered from falling numbers over the last couple of years, this has happened in the past and the school has recovered and thrived. There is very much a 'heard' mentality in Ampleforth where if one family decides to move their child to a different school, the 'sheep' will follow for no justifiable reason, this happened about 12 years ago but the school bounced back! This drop in numbers is very much temporary - research by the friends of group shows that the intake figures for the following academic year 25/26 are very healthy. It seems to me very short sighted to make a closure decision on a one year slump, particularly given that the school budget is still in credit and the school is not in a deficit situation, unlike many schools in the area who are now being helped out of their deficit by a cash injection by NYC - why can't some of these funds be diverted to St. Hilda's to see it through the slump year and shore up it's budget until the new intake makes it 'viable' again in the eyes of NYC? The DFE make it clear in their documentation that the presumption should be NOT to close rural schools, yet this seems to be being ignored by both NYC and the DFE, who have blocked the application by the Ryedale Learning Trust to take the school into the trust to allow it to remain open. The lack of any research (Which was questioned at the consultation meeting and no plausible reasoning could be given by NYC) into numbers beyond 2024/25 bears witness to this. It would seem that all decisions being made follow an economic agenda and no thought has been given to the much wider context of the school. St. Hilda's has served the community of Ampleforth and the surrounding areas for generations and offers a local, inclusive primary provision for local children. Unlike St. Benedicts it does not discriminate on the basis of faith. One of the reasons why all 4 of our children attended the school. It's smaller size allows it to</p> | <p>I fail to understand the logic of farming out the young people of Ampleforth to schools which are either at capacity, are in RI under OFSTED or are Catholic Schools where non-catholics are discriminated against in the selection process - where will the Jewish communities in our village go to if St Benedicts won't take them - will NYC pay for the transport? Will NYC cover transport costs to families who do not want their children in St Benedicts?</p> | Parent | Yes, it was easy to understand | Yes - stop persecuting small schools so such consultations are unnecessary - Education is about so much more than the finances! |

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| | cater much more effectively for the individual needs of students, many of whom would be anonymous and 'lost' in classes of 30 and above. The school has consistently maintained a 'Good' OFSTEAD rating and consequently produced good SATS results, equipping its students with the necessary skills to take their next steps in learning confidently and successfully. Aside from the results, one of the best things is the fact that St Hilda's is a family, the children are not only educated, but they are also nurtured and cared for, and that formed the basis of our decision making process when we chose to enrol all four of our children there. Unfortunately our youngest leaves for Ryedale School this summer and it saddens me to think that this wonderful school that provides so much for ALL of its students, not matter what their background our ability is being written off so easily and that the wonderful group of students are to be farmed out to schools they don't want to be in because NYC and the DFE have so little care and respect for them. Why should any young person of primary age be forced to take ridiculously long bus journeys when a wonderful school could remain on their doorstep? | | | | |
| 58 | I honestly don't think this survey will be taken into serious consideration or even read to be quite frank. I'm only completing it on the off chance that it will be saved and hidden away only for the attention of auditors, if ever required. Lost and forgotten from memory when all this sorry process comes to an inevitable end. If anyone in the future is reading this information out of interest, or by happy accident, you might be able to answer my questions that the current 'management' won't answer. To begin with, 'Where did the budget for the headteacher's wage for the coming academic year that they didn't deliver?' I know a person came in for one (1) term to cover the gap left by the previous headteacher but that wouldn't have constituted nearly, I imagine, £60 000 surely. Can we see where that money has gone? It doesn't seem to have been factored into the numbers and statistics that have been constantly presented to us as reason for closure. The figures have been made to appear concise so where is the information detailing breakdown of expenditure? Tax money. I'd like to see where the saving in leadership/headteacher provision was made. I think I already know the answer to that one. Could this be the reason why suitable, desperately needed, leadership was not permanently appointed after the previous headteacher's exit? That after one (1) term due to inept management and poor financial decisions the budget for leadership, which is the crux of this whole situation, had been wasted and lost? If a good headteacher had been appointed or supported into the role we wouldn't be talking about low numbers. Confidence would have continued throughout the parent base Post Covid. Instead, poor management from the governors upwards has left us in this sorry and utterly avoidable situation where the stress is now placed upon the community and parents. The children have been let down by poor decision makers and the subsequent opportunistic juggernaut of bureaucracy that was triggered from their incompetent actions. The church and the council DON'T want St Hilda's open. They never have. Since St Hilda's has arrived on their financial radar their plan has always been to shut the school to fit in with their organisation's agendas. So here we are in 2024, shutting an excellent local school, loved by the community, because of lazy, incompetent and unfit for purpose school governors. If leadership had been appointed permanently and the governors had been pro-active and effective then I truly believe St Hilda's wouldn't have been drawn into this post Covid mire of poor management and damage limitation. This has then triggered a cynical and condescending process of by the church and council to shut the school thereby re-directing our tax payer's money to waste on something far less crucial than our children's positive start in life. I'll just repeat that, TAX PAYER'S MONEY. Well done to those that have brought us to this point in time. Give yourselves a big, self-righteous pat on the back for a job well done. I'll remember all of your names and your role in this sorry saga. It's a lesson I'm waiting to teach my children. Children of the village you've so very kindly let down. I haven't even talked about the impact that the closure will have for the community on a whole. Families having to move away from the area (yes, really), jobs lost and the stress and complication that brings. Never mind the ongoing uncertainty and poor treatment towards them from the governors, the church and the council. Utterly appalling treatment from beginning to the inevitable end. You're successfully shutting a good school and leaving uncertainty and division within the community. Well, the part of the community you don't appear to care about anyway. | I think some people have arrogantly presumed that closing St Hilda's will just be an exercise in moving children from the Church of England St Hilda's, to the Catholic St Benedict's. I find this insulting to both parties. Why should a Catholic school accommodate Church of England children who don't or won't follow their doctrine? They shouldn't. A rather patronising and ignorant directive to begin with. Would a Muslim child be made to follow the Catholic faith? Of course not. So that leaves the child out of a chunk of the school day dedicated to the Catholic faith and scripture etc. Not very inclusive. So not a good 'choice' for those not of the Catholic faith. Husthwaite needs improvement. 'Good' to 'Needs improvement'? No. Too far for parents as well. Parents who use the 'original' village school St Hilda's. Not the Catholic school, St Benedicts, that was actually set up to provide education for the staff's children from Ampleforth College. Ampleforth College that has a history of appalling safeguarding. That's all I'll say. Helmsley. Nearly at capacity. Which begs the question 'What are the council going to do when they build more houses as directed by this government and families with children arrive needing places in schools can't accommodate them?'. Because in their wisdom they shut schools. North Yorkshire Council are good at shutting schools. Just look at the statistics. Their new catchment area ideas are not thought through properly. They lack empathy, understanding and forward thinking. No liaison with parents. 'Back of the cigarette packet planning'. Again, patronising and condescending towards families of the Ampleforth community and outlying areas. | Parent | No, it was not easy to understand | Present ALL the facts and statistics. Transparency. I'm left very despondent and without trust in the Church of England and North Yorkshire Council. As a community we all feel incredibly let down by the very people who are supposed to champion our children's future. Governors, church and council management have done nothing to save the school. Nothing. Therefore the outcome was already decided upon before commencement of this legal process. A process that suits the few. Not the wider community. We need change. |
| 59 | The two primary schools in Ampleforth have existed successfully for a number of years until parents lost confidence in the St Hildas due to the leadership of the school ultimately under the responsibility of North Yorkshire council which was also replicated at Hovingham school which is now closed It is not the responsibility of the of the Catholic church to provide school provision in the village and there is no guarantee it will continue long term It is unfair to expect families to send their children to a Catholic school and which would make children feel excluded when they are not included in the catholic teachings/practices The access to St Bens is dangerous at times due to the lack of footpaths and quantity of vehicles accessing the school & GP surgery Ampleforth was designated as a service village in the local plan and as such further development is expected and therefore an increase in the number of children is inevitable however St Bens is nearly full to capacity If parents are forced or choose to send their children | The change in catchment area will increase travel for children to access school provision and therefore have a negative impact on the environment | Community | Yes, it was easy to understand | Reduce the unnecessary excessive attendance of NY officers at the consultation who did not contribute to the discussion. Subsidize the venue costs for holding the consultation meeting |

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| | to alternative schools outside Ampleforth this will incur unnecessary travel which will have a direct impact on the environment and roads | | | |
| 60 | <p>Response to proposed closure of St. Hilda's School Ampleforth Why would anyone want to close a well-established, successful small rural school? We make the following comments on the basis that both our son and daughter enjoyed a well-rounded, caring education at St. Hilda's' Ampleforth which provided a sound foundation for their future. Two of our grandchildren are benefitting and thriving through the educational ministrations of this fine school. Currently, only financial reasons are offered for the proposed closure of St. Hilda's school in Ampleforth. Not a single argument has been proposed based on educational or social factors. According Roulston and Cook (2019) , pupils in rural schools in NI appeared to perform significantly better in the Progress in International Reading Literacy Study (PIRLS) 2016 than pupils in urban schools. They also identified a range of potential advantages of small rural schools, including improved pedagogical engagement due to smaller staff teams and better school-community relations. And that There are also implications of closing rural schools for finance, transportation and the community. Indeed, young people living in remote areas with no local school often miss out in education. For instance, they are unable to reach school when there is ice and snow in winter. They can also be more socially isolated. For example, they might not be able to access after-school activities, as there is no bus to leave them home (afterwards.) In 2021, O'Kane stated that (he is) Looking forward to engaging in discussion and debate around the plight of the rural school and what the future may hold for many rural schools with falling enrolment. Clear need for forward thinking, investment and some effective strategic planning by those who are decision makers. Rural schools are currently falling victim to an attitude which sees them simply as 'natural wastage'. The following quotes are from Hansard. Small and Village School Funding debated in the House of Commons on Wednesday 17 July 2019 . They are but a small sample of the comments in support of small, mainly rural, schools. Sarah Newton(Con) • (Cornwall" has many village schools.) They make sure that our villages survive, because by having the school there, a younger generation of people come into the village, renewing its life. Without those schools, there is a real risk that those villages could become dormitory towns for second homes or for people who have retired." Andrew Percy (Con) • "North Lincolnshire Council, made a policy decision not to close any small schools," Tim Farron (LD) • "If a school with a decent-sized population to serve has a bad Ofsted report or a difficult period of leadership, or if there is a dip in the birth rate, that does not kill it, but if a small village school that is absolutely vital experiences any one of those things, that could be the end of it, and the damage to the community is immense." • ... those small schools play a vital role in the community." Derek Thomas (Con) • I do not like to say it, but they Small rural schools) are victims of their own success. They do a great job—I visit them, and they are great fun to be at—but the funding to properly support each child to get the very best start in life is just not there. As Conservatives, we want our children to have all the opportunities available. I know that the Minister understands that, but we need to win the argument with the Treasury and the Chancellor, whoever that may be in a week or two. St. Hildas's school has recently suffered falling role numbers. The reasons for this are clear to Ampleforth families with young children of rising school age. Rumours that the school would close circulated quickly around the Ampleforth community. As a consequence, several families, who had expressed their intention to have their children educated at St. Hilda's, alarmed at the prospect of discontinuity, begrudgingly chose St. Benedict's Catholic School as the only viable alternative; a number of changes in questionable leadership compounded growing lack of confidence in St. Hilda's' The prospect of travelling to any of the nominated alternatives is simply not viable. Ryedale Learning Trust brought an effective, pro-active and well-respected school leader to the school. A visit to St. Hilda's' clearly demonstrates a revitalised school and thriving pupils. This is well recognised within the community, but understandably, parents of existing primary aged pupils, do not wish their children to suffer the disruption of school change at this vital stage of their education. This despite several parents expressing concern at young learners' immersion in the Catholic ethos. This fall in role numbers is temporary. Local discussions and research show that applicants will rise in 2025 as long as confidence in St. Hilda's is maintained. There is no doubt that the village will grow in the near future along with the potential pupil numbers. OFSTED judged the school as Good. The very thought of pupils being transferred to a school "requiring improvement "is insulting and offensive. Employment within the village of Ampleforth is very limited; The majority of working parents have to travel to their jobs. Public transport is just not available and therefore, not an option. Commuting is entirely by private vehicle, opportunities for car sharing are limited due to the scattered nature of employment opportunities. For most, the start and finish of the working day is inflexible which, again, rules out public transport. In many families, parents' work takes them in opposite directions and by diverse routes that may change regularly. Ampleforth is home to significant number of trade people, especially in the construction and agricultural sectors. The specific location of their working day frequently changes on a daily basis. In the current climate, families have no option other than for both parents to work. There are many parents in Ampleforth who are extremely concerned at the prospect of having to transport their</p> | It is completely inappropriate | Other | Yes, it was easy to understand |

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| | <p>children to and from school within the confines of their own commitments. Currently, Daisy Daycare Nursery, in the heart of the village provides the wrap around care that enables parents to go about their daily lives, secure in the knowledge that their children are well provided for and cared for. The closure of St. Hilda's school would almost inevitably lead to Daisy Day Care becoming unviable, thus denying the village an essential service and further reducing local employment opportunities. Ampleforth is designated a "Key Village" and will undoubtedly grow. For the sake of relatively short-term investment, it would be a tragedy to disband a school that has played a vital role in the evolution of the village. St. Hilda's school has recently done admirable work on behalf of pupils with a variety of complex learning needs. Those children have been encouraged to grow in confidence within a small supportive unit. They have successfully integrated into the community of their own peers thus perpetuating the community of the village. The children with the greatest need will suffer the worst effects of an upheaval to their lives at the stage when they are beginning to grow in confidence and respond to school and learning in a positive way. To the majority of the Ampleforth community it is a nonsense to have two primary schools in the village. A young cohort establishes friendship groups during their time at Daisey Day Care. Immediately they attain school age, the alliances are immediately broken as they are segregated on religious grounds. Socially, educationally, communally and with an eye to the future the very notion is ludicrous; the two schools need to amalgamate. There seems to be no stomach to even explore the clear educational sense of combining the two schools. There is no doubt that the task would present a stony road but in the interests of all primary school pupils, their education, social cohesion and integration it is a road that needs to be navigated. For forty-six years, we have heard the whole gamut of the "it will never happen" excuses for lethargy, lack of courage disinterest. This despite a widely held view that integration would be in the interests of all and that the issue urgently needs to be addressed. Complacency and the reluctance to tackle challenging issues are not acceptable when the well-being and education of a community are at stake. The decision about "which school?" is unnecessary and confusing for families relocating to Ampleforth. The village would undoubtedly offer a more attractive, interconnected and welcoming front if the decision was not necessary. All Christians have right of access to a school which meets the need of their faith. The current situation in Ampleforth denies that right to the majority of the community. We deplore and oppose the suggestion that St. Hilda's school, Ampleforth should close. There is no need for it to do so. Lesley and Roger Beck, Ampleforth.</p> | | | | |
| 61 | <p>I object to the closure of St Hildas village school. It would have a negative impact on the children of Ampleforth, their families and the wider village community. The school is rated as Good by Ofsted and i can see no reason why it should be closed . The alternative primary school in the village is a Catholic School and as such is neither willing to accept all pupils nor is it suitable for non-Catholic pupils. It is also nearing pupil capacity. There is no option for it to expand in future either (road infrastructure) to accommodate an increase in pupil numbers which is likely given that Ampleforth is a designated Service Village with an expanding population (for designated areas for future residential development see Local Plan) also considering the real possibility that after the forthcoming general election and the likely election of a Labour government (that plans to impose 20pc VAT on private schools and end business rates relief in England) there will be an even more immediate need for 'Good' local primary education. Alternative schools such as Helmsley, Husthwaite and Easingwold would greatly increase transport required for both primary and preschool children (from Daisy Daycare) and their families and would make trying to coordinate children of different ages logistically very difficult. Surely this is also a step in the wrong direction for efforts to reduce the impact of road transport in the 'Climate Emergency ' we find ourselves in and that North Yorkshire Council has promised to alleviate through carbon reduction. Take into this also that Husthwaite and Easingwold schools are not in Ryedale Secondary School's catchment area and the detriment to family life, seperation of friends from their community and excessive road traffic would definitely be a detriment to the village. I also understand that siblings would be seperated if this school closes as pressure on the alternative schools to accomodate growing families. These are just a few of the many reasons that i think the considration of closing St Hilda's would be a bad decision.</p> | See above | Community | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 62 | <p>The school is a fundamental part of our community. The children who attend the school are happy. I believe the school is only undersubscribed thid current school year. The village is highly populated with family homes and these homes are dependent on local schooling.</p> | <p>If children need to travel further afield for there primary education it would have an adverse effect on the after school facilities in the village. The drop of and pick facilities for working parents would be affected and would have a negative impact on the local businesses in the village.</p> | Community | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 63 | <p>I am extremely unhappy about the proposal to close St Hilda's school from August this year. The Friends of St Hilda's have done a huge amount of work (which should have been done by the governors and/or the Council) to identify families with children who want to send them to St Hilda's in September 2024 and September 2025, and these new entrants have not been factored into the Council's short term financial calculations that seem to be the only reason for closing what is a wonderful school. All the statutory</p> | <p>The proposed catchment areas are unsuitable for primary school pupils from St Hilda's Ampleforth.</p> | Parent | No, it was not easy to understand | Yes - don't waste people's time and energy on inappropriate proposals to close wonderful schools! |

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| | <p>guidance regarding the closure of rural schools has been ignored (by the governors and the Council) and the entire case for closing the school depends on the short term financial calculations which are based on false information. It is not just St Hilda's school that is affected by its potential closure - Daisy Day Care - a nursery provider in the village - will also be badly affected if St Hilda's closes. Another factor to consider in keeping St Hilda's open is the potential alternatives for primary school aged children in Ampleforth, which are St Benedict's (which some parents are unhappy to send their children to for religious reasons, and which is nearing capacity and located in a very inconvenient place to get to); Helmsley (which has class sizes that are far too big for some children - it is not true to say that a greater number of children per teacher is somehow "more efficient;" education is not a business, it's a service); Husthwaite (which OFSTED states "Requires Improvement" - and is difficult for parents to get to); and Terrington (which is miles away from Ampleforth). St Hilda's Ampleforth has wonderfully skilled teachers and a wonderful location with which to assist SEND children with their special needs, and has been an integral part of village life for 109 years. It would be the height of injustice, the epitome of dereliction of duty and a complete travesty for the school to be closed.</p> | | | | |
| 64 | <p>The loss of St Hilda's School would be a crime against education. This school provides a wonderful, safe, learning environment for pupils. It has not yet been operating in a financial deficit, this is only set to be the case in the 2024/25 school year but if it remains open there will be more pupils attending in the future and therefore it should be given a chance to build numbers again, you can see from the data that numbers have fluctuated previously and this is often the case at many schools. It has just had a difficult time with the loss of its co-federation school Hovingham and should be given the opportunity to regain pupil numbers. Data has been collected that shows that there will be 1 (possibly 2) children for reception this year, 6 for reception intake in 2025 and 2 for 2026, this is without people moving into the area. There is also the possible change to the transport provision that would also mean that more families in outlying villages would have transport access to the school and this could boost numbers. The school provides a high level of education and is rated Good. The Catholic school in the village is not inclusive as it is Catholic, Husthwaite school is not an equivalent option as it is rated Requires Improvement and is also in the secondary catchment for Easingwold School not Ryedale. Helmsley School is near capacity and is not a great school anyway. The loss of a CofE school is breaching human rights for the access of CofE families to be able to obtain an education close by, it is also inclusive of other faiths. The cost of transport to the council will increase whilst it will also increase emissions from vehicles due to travelling. These factors should be outweighed against the cost of keeping the school open, there would also be the cost of redundancies and an empty building to be considered. The school offers work experience placements to village residents who can walk to these placements and also it offers Ampleforth College students work experience for citizenship. If the school was lost this alone would have a detrimental impact on the village. It could be explored to utilise the school more for the community. The nursery is a wonderful community space that offers spaces in addition to Daisy Daycare in the village and with the introduction of funding for nursery places from 9 months this could mean that space becomes limited in the village. Ampleforth is a service village that has been earmarked in the Ryedale Local Plan as requiring more primary school places, so shutting a school goes against this. The school's closure would also have a wider impact on the village including the shop, cafe, Daisy Daycare and on house prices as the village will become less appealing to potential residents without the offering of an inclusive village school. The land will likely be sold for building so I suspect then it will impact widely on the village. The offering of the other schools is also not feasible due to the wraparound care required by many parents, which they currently get in their own village. Larger schools do not always offer the quality of learning or a suitable environment for many children to learn in, where they can get lost in numbers so it is vital that these smaller village schools remain open to serve the needs of the community. Has it been explored that the school could temporarily be reduced to one class size whilst it regains pupil numbers? As well as it being offered a bridging loan by the council. If this was any other business having a temporary downturn you would go to the bank for a loan whilst business picked up again, not just close at the first hurdle. The school provides a safe space for many SEN students as well who have EHCPs, could a special SEN class be incorporated into the school with another teacher so that the space of the school is utilised more efficiently by the council in providing more broader spectrum learning for the residents in North Yorkshire? Ampleforth is a reasonable sized village that needs to provide enough school places to residents. The school has experienced some mismanagement in recent times which has led to this situation but going forward the Arete Learning Trust (formerly Ryedale Learning Trust) is willing to still support the school which will help it drive itself further forward and get back on track. It needs to be given a chance and St Hilda's needs to stay open.</p> | <p>Husthwaite is not feasible as it requires improvement, is not an equal offering and is in the secondary catchment for Easingwold. Helmsley School is near capacity, is not a faith school and large classes do not suit all children. Terrington is way too far for us to get to.</p> | <p>Parent</p> | <p>Yes, it was easy to understand</p> | <p>Larger areas for typing the responses.</p> |
| 65 | <p>St Hilda's school offers a brilliant learning environment in a small scale which suits certain children much better than a large school. Closing all smaller schools just can't carry on as it takes away this special close-knit family feel environment. Although attendance numbers have a trend downwards these can be accounted for due to previous poor leadership. The current leaders need to be given a chance to overturn</p> | <p>Husthwaite school is rated as requires improvement and is in the Easingwold secondary catchment. Terrington is far away. Helmsley is a non-faith school and nearly to capacity, offering only large class sizes.</p> | <p>Parent</p> | <p>Yes, it was easy to understand</p> | |

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| | <p>this trend which by projected future numbers they are on course to do with 8 pupils already wanting to attend over the next 2 intake years. There seems to be no evidence from yourselves on future numbers? The financial implications of closing the school need to be looked at against keeping it open. There will be increased transport costs, redundancies, maintenance of a disused building and emissions to look at. The wellbeing of the children also needs to be taken into account. St Hilda's is a safe, family environment that has a Good Ofsted rating and provides a high level of education and care to the children. The SEN children are well catered for and due to the small numbers the children form good friendships and learn to mix with all ages. The closure of the school would have an impact on the wider village, including house prices. St Hilda's is the village school offering a welcoming environment to all faiths, its loss would have a detrimental effect on the appeal of the village. Daisy Daycare would also be impacted as it would not have the same amount of wraparound care to provide. The shop would probably see a drop in footfall as would the cafe and pub as parents will not be in the village as much. The loss of another CofE school so soon after the closure of Hovingham would be appalling and is an oppression on the CofE faith. There is the need for the primary school places in the village, other plots of land in the village have been earmarked for building which would see an increase in the village population and likely more families moving into the area as it is a functioning village. As Arete Learning Trust has offered to support the school for another year, surely NYC should be taking them up on the offer as this will give a more determined view on the future pupil numbers and give the school the chance to thrive again and attract more pupils going forward.</p> | | | | |
| 66 | <p>It would be a sad thing to lose another village school. It is part of the community & village life.</p> | | Community | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 67 | <p>Statutory guidance states a presumption against closure of rural schools. With regard to St Hilda's there is strong evidence that it does not meet the criteria for closure. The drop in pupil numbers is, as proven, a temporary one year situation, with numbers increasing for September 2025. Many schools under the local authority have been supported financially, which has ensured that the high quality of provision has been maintained and that the community it serves has benefited. A C of E school within the village allows for parental choice and keeps the village vibrant and supports the excellent Early years facilities in the village. It is not everyone's choice to send their children to a Catholic Faith school, or to send them 10 miles on a school bus. A key factor OFSTED consider when evaluating the performance of a school is quality of education, continuity of care and positive interactions of pupils with staff and peers. St Hilda's provides all of this.</p> | <p>The current catchment area is limited in places and although includes both faith and community schools, they do not all provide equal provision. Many are at or near capacity, which would limit sibling attendance at the same school. Some of the proposed catchment primary schools are not within the Ryedale Secondary School catchment area, thereby causing further disruption to childrens continuity in friendship groups.</p> | Other | Yes, it was easy to understand | <p>Why is this consultation being rushed through? Other school closures have had a far greater consultation period, lasting two years, not two terms.</p> |
| 68 | <p>St Hilda's is classified as a rural school, closing this school will take away any guarantee of a reliable primary school in the area. The school supports the local community in many ways: The offers places for nursery children, facilitating community functions such as jumble sales and xmas craft sales, and supports local businesses such as hearts and daisy's day care. Future student numbers are increasing at ST Hilda's with 2025 intake predicted to be a full year, this should be considered as the school is classified as a rural school. The proposed schools in the area are not viable with the closest catchment school approximately 10 miles away. We should be supporting the local community instead of sending children out of the village to learn. I have had people tell me that they have moved to Ampleforth because it has ST Hilda's and they wish their child to go to the school. There has been one parent recently asking if the school if the school closure has been finalised because they come to the village in the hope to use the school. Furthermore Ampleforth is classified in the local plan as a service village and in that it states that Ampleforth needs more primary school provisions closing the school goes against this very criteria. Although the council do not wish to consider what would happen to the land if the school were to close, it is very obvious that the government intension would be to build on the land. This would either bring the possibility of new families that would have no local authority primary provisions and so ST Hilda's would be missed or it would bring more holiday/ second homes that are slowly killing the village that is increasing relying on seasonal income. . I believe that the governors of the school has let the school and the local community down. The school has come through a troubling time with bad management and the closure of Hovingham primary has had an impact on the school and its student numbers. But, the school is back on the rise with numbers projected to go up and with a new head teacher I cant fault. The school is an asset to the loacal community and should not close.</p> | <p>As Helmsley primary school is full in some years, they could be moved to Ampleforth supporting its surrounding community. A community that supports Helmsley though the use of business and council ran facility's.</p> | Parent | Yes, it was easy to understand | <p>stop closing facility's in rural community's, we are hard working people that supports the national agenda with jobs that cannot be done in the urban environment.</p> |
| 69 | <p>We are the parents of children at St Hilda's Primary School in Ampleforth and have been actively involved in supporting the school for over five years. We are devastated at the prospect that an institution which lies at the heart of village life, and has done since the 19th century, could be lost forever due to a temporary and reversible reduction in pupil numbers and short-sighted financial projections. We moved to Ampleforth from York in 2018, and one of the main factors in choosing the village was St Hilda's. Initially, this was due to its 'Good' Ofsted rating, but this is just one measure of the school's success and its high standards. We have since been consistently amazed at the levels of care, dedication and personal investment that the present management and teaching staff provide. Both of our children have achieved beyond their age expectations and have thrived in the supportive, family environment that the school</p> | | Parent | Yes, it was easy to understand | |

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| | <p>provides. If St Hilda's was to closed, there would be no Church of England schools within the surrounding area rated above 'inadequate' by Ofsted, leaving us and other parents with a choice of sending our children to an 'inadequate' school at some distance from Ampleforth, or be forced to send them to St Benedict's School, a self-stated 'missionary Catholic school' at which the '...Catholic ethos is the most important aspect of our school life.'. St Benedict's was established to serve the families of staff members at the nearby Ampleforth College, and was never intended to be the village school, and its strong religious focus is not consistent with our secular beliefs, or the varying values of many other parents, who do not wish to have a single belief system forced upon their children at a young age. The current temporary reduction in pupil numbers at St Hilda's has been in large part caused by uncertainty over the school's future following the sudden departure of the former headteacher nearly two years ago, and the closure of Hovingham Primary School. This led some parents to believe St Hilda's would certainly close, and therefore to pre-emptively move their children, which, in itself, reduced confidence in parents of prospective pupils. However, the remaining parents have been strong and vocal in support of the school, re-invigorating the PTA, 'Friends of St Hilda's', with frequent community and charity events, and supporting school open days in which parents of prospective pupils have been overwhelmingly impressed by the school. Numerous parents have expressed their wish to send their children to nursery and reception during 2025/26, some of whom have moved to the village specifically with the intention of sending their children to St Hilda's. The lower numbers in pupils over the current year, which has caused the present situation, must therefore be seen very much as a temporary dip, and be looked at in the much wider context of the school's continuing academic success and its historic place at the heart of the village community. Financially, the school will be in surplus when the 2024/24 school year begins, and the temporary fall in student numbers can be overcome over the next 12 months, especially if confidence is restored in the school by the explicit removal of the threat of closure from the North Yorkshire Council. Only a limited amount of temporary additional financial support from NYC would be required to see St Hilda's come through its present issues, at a cost which would otherwise be spent by NYC on the need to pay for transport to surrounding schools for pupils should the school be closed. By allowing parents of future pupils to have the reassurance of stability for their children, in knowing that the school will not be closed, St Hilda's can move forwards to continue to be a financially viable school, positioned at the heart of the community, and providing an outstanding level of education to the children of Ampleforth.</p> | | | | |
| 70 | <p>I would like to make the following points regarding the proposed decision to close St Hilda's Primary School</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The reason for falling numbers is purely due to no strong Headteacher presence and the closure of Hovingham Primary School. 2. Although there is no uptake for 2024 there is uptake for 2025 and we believe if the school is allowed to stay open this will significantly increase the uptake 2025. 3. As the sustainable school for the community it provides good support for the village children particularly if they have special needs, it also brings families into the village. 4. We are aware finances can be made available to help deficit for 2023/2024 and 2024/2025 therefore if these were used deficit for 2025/2026 would not be £56.4k as detailed in the reports but only £6.4k worst case as this is based on low numbers but if the school is allowed to stay open then these numbers would be higher therefore lowering further the forecast debt. 5. Alternative school proposals not acceptable St Benedict's - issue of moving to Catholic education Helmsley - too large classrooms and distance an issue Hustwaite – OFSTED needs improvements Terrington – TO FAR! 6. NO DETAILS AVAILABLE OF HOW CHILDREN WILL BE TRANSPORTED. 7. the impact this closure will have on the village childcare Daisy Day Care. <p>and finally I believe the decision to close the school has been taken FAR TOO EARLY with only 1 year being low numbers. It needs to be taken after at least continued 2 – 3 years of continued low intake not just a one off year which could also be due to COVID.</p> | | | | <p>NB. Although I no longer live in the village my family live in the village and I had 11 very happy years there and valued the community this village has, which will be severely impacted if this closure takes place.</p> |
| 71 | <p>St Hilda's C of E School is a fantastic, rural school which provides an excellent offer. The children make great progress both academically and socially and are ready for their next stage. If St Hilda's C of E School was to remain open from September 2024 the Areté Learning Trust would be really happy to continue to provide leadership support.</p> | | The Areté Learning Trust | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 72 | <p>Response to the consultation for the closure of St Hildas Primary Ampleforth I am deeply saddened by the proposed closure of the school. As the son of a former teacher at the school, a former pupil my self and the father of two children currently at the school I know this school very well. I know that pupil numbers have dropped over the last 5 years and that has coincided with a similar period of time of poor management and leadership in the school. This poor leadership caused a lot of uncertainty among some</p> | <p>The proposed catchment areas are a massive concern. The two options that would be closest for us do not work. Hustwait school is a school that Requires Improvement with also a falling number of pupils and no certainty that it wouldn't be next for</p> | Parent | Yes, it was easy to understand | No |

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| | <p>parents causing them to loose faith in the schools abilities. This then caused rumours (as is often the case in a small community) long before any official action that the school was going to close. This caused some parents to worry. This combined with the fact that St Benedicts school offered a very "open door" policy of welcoming moving pupils it was very easy for people to move children with little or no impact on them. I wonder if there had been no other school in the village if it would have been the same case. I truly believe that St Hildas is now a different school from what it was a few years ago. The on site management combined with the overseeing from Mrs Lamb make it feel a very well run school. Both of my sons love the school. The youngest who is in year 1 is thriving and enjoying learning new things every day. The school has a fabulous family feel and the way that all ages of pupil will interact with each other is fantastic. My eldest is also thriving and progressing well at the school. He has some significant SEN requirements and the school have been fantastic in working with him and us to make progress and achievements that might never have been possible in a bigger school. The thought of loosing St Hildas and the repercussions of having to make do with any of the offered alternatives is frightening. We both work full time and use Daisy Daycare for our wraparound care and non of the suggested alternatives has anything comparable in place which could leave us having to change our jobs considerably to work around getting our children to school. The option of moving them to St Benedicts is not possible on religious grounds. We are very aware that the only real reason that has been given for the closure of St Hildas is financial. Currently the school is running at a surfeit of funds from last year. I am well aware that next years low intake will instantly use up that surfeit and put the school into deficit. How many others primary schools in the county are all ready in deficit and not being forced with closure? The following year numbers are predicted to almost double which can only improve funds. If the only concern and reason for closure is finances then the school is clearly been run more as a business than an education setting. I don't know of many business that have been on the go since 1890 who would decide to just close down on the basis of a small deficit with predicted increase in business (pupils). I'm pretty sure most would borrow money to tide over the lean year or so and carry on. St Hildas is not just a business! St Hildas is a fantastic school. It is a school where children thrive, where children learn fantastic life skills to set them on their way into the world. St Hildas is a massive part of the village community with many many former pupils from the last nearly 100 years still living in the village community.</p> | <p>closure. Husthwait school does not offer any wrap around care that we could get our children to around our own working hours. This would leave us having to drastically change our working hours or quite possibly change our jobs as neither of our jobs allow part time or flexible working hours. Helmsley school does not offer wrap around care and there is no provider within the town that does to the extent of our current provider Daisy Daycare in Ampleforth. There is no way we can get our children there for school time due to the aforementioned work constraints. We have not been able to factor in any other transport options into our thoughts as no one is willing to discuss transport with us.</p> | | | |
| 73 | <p>My partner and I moved to the village around 18 months ago, with the intention of starting a family here. Shortly after we moved, we heard from a number of people that St Hilda's primary was closing down – yet it seems we were being told this a year before this consultation! Is it therefore any surprise that parents haven't been registering their children at St. Hilda's, if this is the message that has been given to the community? We moved to the village hoping that our children would have the opportunity to walk to and from school every day, getting fresh air and exercise. If this school closes, we will have to get in the car and drive a number of miles to school twice a day instead, increasing levels of traffic on the roads and increasing our carbon footprint. This surely goes against the core values of North Yorkshire Council? I would also say that I find it incomprehensible that you are considering closing a school with a 'Good' rating from Ofsted – closure should be in the best interests of education provision in the area, I cannot see how closing the school is justified on this basis. We should be actively supporting our good schools and trying to address the core issues with pupil numbers, rather than closing the school based on forecast figures (the school isn't even in financial deficit yet!). The core issues appear to be based on failings by previous management, which is easily remedied by new, strong leadership. A new leadership team who can inspire confidence in the school's future is exactly what this school and this village needs. This village is expanding and thriving, the education provision available should reflect this. School Safety Families should be able to walk to school safely. This is a great way to instil healthy habits and ensure our children are getting enough exercise, which is critical against a backdrop of increasing childhood obesity. St. Hilda's is well serviced by footpaths and is accessible from all over the village. The next nearest school to St. Hilda's is St. Benedict's, which has extremely hazardous access and is not safe for families to walk. The road is narrow, there is no footpath, no school safety road markings, no drainage, and an increasing number of cars dropping off and picking up children. The irony is that parents drive their children to this school as it is so dangerous to walk (even families who live less than half a mile away drive their children in!), but in doing so increase the levels of traffic and therefore make it even less safe. This is an untenable situation, yet will only be exacerbated if children are displaced from St Hilda's to St Benedict's. Either way, if the school is closed it will inevitably lead to a large increase in the use of motor vehicles in the local area, regardless of which school the children attend. Population and Sustainability There is an overall plan for increased housing in North Yorkshire, and inevitably there will be future housing allocations in Ampleforth and the surrounding areas. Increased housing will result in new families and an increased demand for school places, so surely we should be looking to enhance our education provision rather than remove it? The population of Ryedale is increasing year on year, so the fact that there are surplus places will surely be a good thing in the long run, as it means there are primary school places available for the</p> | | Community | Yes, it was easy to understand | |

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| | growing population. My understanding is that there should be a presumption against closure when considering rural schools. Nothing I have read in the consultation demonstrates that this school should close, the key reasons for the decline in pupil numbers appears to have been driven by poor leadership and spurious rumours. This is so easily reversible, and surely the school should have the benefit of a few years of good management before concluding it should be closed? | | | | |
| 74 | I do not support the closure of St Hilda's. I believe that the school is an important asset to the village and the surrounding communities. | No | Community | No, it was not easy to understand | No |
| 75 | Ampleforth needs it's local school. The community supports the school. The school fits into the village and gives the local pre-school places for children and jobs for staff. | Not the best allocation in my opinion. | Community | No, it was not easy to understand | Make it simpler |
| 76 | I object to the proposed closure of St. Hilda's School. It provides a good quality of education to all who attend. Children with special educational needs and those with social and emotional needs are especially well-catered for in the small, family-like environment that St. Hilda's provides. The church school ethos is inclusive and welcoming to all and provides a sound background to all that the school does to enable pupils, families, staff and governors to flourish. Families use the local facility 'Daisy Day Care' for before and after school care. If pupils are having to go out of the village to different schools, parents may struggle to arrange alternative care and support that will enable them to work and also the business at 'Daisy Day Care' could suffer. If finances are a key cause for closing the school, consideration should be taken into the long term costs that will be incurred with transporting pupils to schools several miles away and this extra transport also bears an environmental cost which could be prevented. The time pupils will take in travelling to other villages should also be considered, along with the emotional impact of putting very young children on a bus to travel to another school. The school is a key part of the wider church community in the village and losing that link will be hard. It seems a shame that the situation has got to this point because of the uncertainty of the future. I am sure that more families would be supporting the school if they could guarantee that closure is not on the horizon. The staff continue to work so incredibly hard and do all that they can to ensure the best for the pupils. When visiting the school there is a really positive atmosphere and pupils and staff all are happy to be there. This school provides real value in families' lives and the community and should continue to do so in the coming years. | One of the big concerns about Husthwaite School is that it is in Easingwold Secondary School (Outwood Academy) catchment area so pupils from Ampleforth who attended Husthwaite would not have the contact and connections to Ryedale School, and the other feeder schools to Ryedale, that they currently have throughout their schooling years through sports fixtures and other events. Young people need to be confident about their transition to secondary school and this would be a huge stumbling block. One of the good qualities about St. Hilda's School is its size! For children to move into any school where they will be in classes of nearly 30 will be detrimental to their education at this point - Helmsley School is growing more and more and cannot offer that personal touch that some of the current pupils of St. Hilda's need. If families do not want the Roman Catholic education of St. Benedict's RC School (and they might not get accepted through their admissions policy anyway) they are going to have to travel to a different community. Interaction with your local community in primary school is a key developmental point. | Governor | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 77 | The proposal to close the school does not fulfil the Government guidance for the closure of rural schools as it does not look at the medium to long term financial predictions for the school - there is 1 child confirmed for Sept 2024 intake, 6 already confirmed (full year group) for Sept 2025, and so far at least 2 confirmed for Sept 2026. Accordingly, the predictions for 2025/26 are incorrect by over 10%. St Hilda's is a consistently 'good' rated school that is suffering a loss of confidence of parents through no fault of its own - the headteacher associated with both Hovingham and St Hildas had poor leadership and the closure of Hovingham left many parents concerned and worried about the future of the school. The school numbers will increase with long-term security and stability of the school (as is beginning to be demonstrated from 2025 onwards). St Hildas is a small school - this does not make it a failing school, and should not make it an 'easy target' for NYC to save money - it is a vital service as part of a thriving and growing service village. In fact the Ryedale Local Plan states that as a service village, Ampleforth 'requires additional primary school provision' (plan in place until 2027). The surrounding schools are not appropriate - St Bens is not suitable for parents not of non-Catholic faith, and especially those of non-Christian faith (they are getting close to capacity and have a selective admissions policy). Husthwaite has consistently been in 'requires improvement' for over three years - our son is in nursery and so this does not fulfil the rural schools document that states that preschool provision should be of equal or better quality of provision. It is also in the Easingwold catchment for secondary school (Ampleforth is in Ryedale), so it is not appropriate for friend groups to be split up. Helmsley primary school is going to be full from 2027, which means that it will not be suitable for any children with siblings. Further to this, with the school to transport consultation still ongoing, it is impossible for parents to plan during this consultation procedure. Our son started nursery there in October 2023 for 2.5 days a week, and he is absolutely thriving there - his development has excelled significantly. The thought of him not attending there in the future is thoroughly upsetting. Similarly to Bilsdale, St Hildas should be allowed to federate in order to minimise the costs of a small school. This is common practice and Arete and FST have expressed an interest in St Hildas several times - they are keen to take us - as they are a business they would not take on another so-called failing business, that would be poor business sense for them. On this basis, Arete must believe that St Hildas is viable (as has been proven by the updated pupil numbers). | The catchment area is not suitable for Ampleforth - no child will be attending Husthwaite - a failing school over 20 mins bus ride away (not at all suitable for young children). | Parent | Yes, it was easy to understand | The council should not only present the reasons for closure- they are obliged under the guidance to show the results of the full consultation procedure - which includes some of the positives! |
| 78 | We are a young couple who has been living in Ampleforth since 2021. One of the main reasons we moved here is because Ampleforth is one of the only villages with lots amenities, pubs, cafe, a post office, and | None of the alternative schools are suitable to replace St Hilda's. The nearest school, St Benedict's, | Community | Yes, it was easy to understand | |

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| | <p>most importantly Daisy Care and St Hilda's School. Closing St Hilda would be a huge blow to the community, with lots of young people being forced to move away. We would seriously consider selling our house and going to a different area, especially since Hovingham School has also recently closed. We know many other young couples and families feel like this and we don't want Ampleforth to be devalued or losing the wonderful community it has created. St Hilda's isn't great just because pupils love to attend, but it's a big part of the community. It attracts young families who put their money into the village. It attracts diversity. It provides employment. Transport provisions for schools in other villages haven't been provided yet, and would likely be costly, therefore it wouldn't make sense to close St Hilda's. Children who are too young to travel without parental support would need to be driven individually, putting great strain on our roads, creating traffic, difficulty for young families needing to commute, and cost. It also isn't accessible to families who cannot drive.</p> | <p>is a Catholic school not suitable for children of other faiths or atheists, who get classified as "other". It's also a non catchment school and it has selective admissions, which limits or even prevents Non Catholic children from being admitted. It is not a suitable alternative to St Hilda's. Helmsley is therefore the nearest school, which is still over 4 miles away so not accessible to families who don't drive. Transport provisions are still unknown, and the school is almost at full capacity and cannot accommodate all St Hilda's present pupils, let alone future pupils. Hustwaite is over 6 miles away which makes it an unsuitable distance from Ampleforth, especially for younger children who cannot travel alone. Traffic would like increase, and accessibility would be low for families who do not drive for many reasons including health reasons. Crayke and Slingsby schools are at capacity. Terrington Primary School is too far away. Therefore there is no suitable alternatives, St Hilda's is quite essential to the community and the education of our future children.</p> | | | |
| 79 | <p>I suggest but you try to keep StHilda's School, Ampleforth open to maintain an excellent small school where children are well taught a nurtured in small groups. I know that this is expensive but if people moving into into the area (particularly as Ampleforth College grows its numbers) the number of children may increase. St Benedict's is also a good school but not everyone wants a Roman Catholic education. Could you not possibly join together and work ecumenically as has happened well in other areas, with a gentle ethos of the C of E? Might it be possible to run at a loss for a couple of years until numbers improve?</p> | <p>Children will have further to travel which is expensive in time and petrol adding to parents already busy lives. Wrap around care from the nursery in Ampleforth is also valuable.</p> | Ex parent & governor | Yes, it was easy to understand | |
| 80 | <p>See response from Friends of St Hilda's School which is reproduced in full as part of this appendix.</p> | | | | |