

# Statutory proposals for closure of Clapham CE VC Primary School

As set out in the Establishment and Discontinuance Regulations the information below **must** be included in a proposal to close a school:

## Contact details

Proposal, published by North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8AE, to discontinue:

Clapham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School, The Green, Lancaster, LA2 8EJ, from 31 August 2020.

Clapham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School is a 3-11 Church of England Voluntary Controlled primary school in North Yorkshire.

## Implementation

It is proposed to close the school from 31 August 2020.

## Reason for closure

There are four key concerns: 1) Low pupil numbers; 2) Breadth of curriculum, 3) The schools financial position, and 4) Leadership

### Low pupil numbers

The critical concern is the fall in pupil numbers, which would inevitably result in an inability to provide the necessary breadth of curriculum experience and would also irrevocably undermine the schools future financial position.

The number of children at Clapham CE VC Primary School has been falling over the past few years. At the start of the 2019/20 academic year, there were 25 pupils on roll in the school and these fell to 9 pupils by January 2020. Since January a further 2 pupils have now left the school. This is well below the capacity of the school – which is designed to accommodate up to 59 pupils if all spaces are in use. Local Authority forecasts indicate that these numbers will not recover significantly in the longer term and may reduce further still in the following years as the larger year groups move into secondary education.

In these circumstances, it would be difficult to deliver and sustain quality education.

### Breadth of Curriculum

The LA has already identified concerns around the school's ability to meet the educational need of children with such small numbers alongside existing financial issues. As numbers continue to fall it will be increasingly difficult to provide the remaining pupils with access to the full range of experiences they need, particularly opportunities for working and playing with children their own age.

### The Financial Position

Pupil numbers determine the school budget. With these low numbers, and a reduced budget, the school may have to further reduce staff.

Examination of the predicted financial position has led to concerns about the schools ability to preserve the quality of education. The school is projecting in year deficits of £46k in 2020/21 and £77.9k in 2021/22, and cumulative deficit of £202.6k by the end of that year. These were based on pupil assumptions at the time of 27 in 2019/20 and 22 in 2020/21, and have assumed pupil numbers of 7 in 2021/22. The position will deteriorate further as pupil numbers fall with no reasonable prospect of recovery.

### Leadership

Despite a number of attempts to recruit a substantive Executive Headteacher this has not proved possible. With effect from September 2019, the Executive Headteacher from The Priestley Multi Academy Trust has been appointed to oversee school leadership and is using the skills and experience of colleagues in the Priestley MAT to provide additional support. A full time Head of School from the MAT has also been appointed for this school year. The LA is currently providing temporary financial support to meet the cost of the Executive Headteacher but this is not sustainable. The current interim arrangements cannot continue into the future. It has not been possible to identify another school locally that would be prepared to share a Headteacher.

## **Pupil numbers and admissions**

The numbers (distinguishing between compulsory and non-compulsory school age pupils), age range, sex, and special educational needs of pupils (distinguishing between boarding and day pupils) for whom provision is currently made at the school.

There are currently 7 pupils on roll at the school as of February 2020, all of which are pupils of mainstream school age with 0 nursery-aged pupils. 4 out of these 7 pupils are female and 3 of the pupils are male.

	Pupil numbers	PAN
Reception	0	8
Year 1	0	8
Year 2	0	8
Year 3	1	8
Year 4	0	10
Year 5	2	10
Year 6	4	10

Totals	7	
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The school's age range is 3-11 years, and provision is available for boys and girls. There is no boarding provision. Information on special educational needs of pupils is not provided as this would contravene the Data Protection Act. Total pupil numbers are significantly lower than the capacity of the school which is designed to accommodate up to 59 pupils.

## Displaced pupils

A statement and supporting evidence about the need for school places in the area including whether there is sufficient capacity to accommodate displaced pupils.

Details of the schools or further education colleges at which pupils at the school to be discontinued will be offered places, including—

- a) any interim arrangements;
- b) the provision that is to be made for those pupils who receive educational provision recognised by the local authority as reserved for children with special educational needs; and
- c) in the case of special schools, the alternative provision made by local authorities other than the local authority which maintain the school.

Details of any other measures proposed to be taken to increase the number of school or further education college places available in consequence of the proposed discontinuance.

There are four other North Yorkshire primary schools within reasonable travelling distance with places available currently. Across the area there are places available for all the pupils currently at Clapham CE VC Primary School. The nearest Church of England school is Austwick CE VA Primary School which is 2 miles from Clapham by road. There is also Ingleton Primary School which is 4.7 miles from Clapham, Bentham CP School at 5.5 miles and Giggleswick Primary School at 5.8 miles away, all of which were rated Good in their last Ofsted inspections.

It is proposed that the catchment areas of Austwick CE VA Primary School and Bentham CP School are expanded to include the current catchment area of Clapham CE Primary School. These schools both have capacity to take additional pupils and have indicated a willingness to do so.

For any children currently at Clapham CE VC Primary School, North Yorkshire County Council would work with each family to try to meet their individual preferences for other schools.

Parents have a right to express a preference for any school and, in the case of community and voluntary controlled schools, the relevant Local Authority is the admissions authority and will meet that preference provided there are vacant places or the school is happy to admit above the published admission number. In the case of Voluntary Aided schools, the governing body decide the conditions for admission to their particular school. Where a child attends a school which is not their normal school or nearest school, parents are normally responsible for making transport

arrangements.

- a) No interim arrangements have been necessary.
- b) Not applicable in this case
  
- c) Not applicable in this case

## Impact on the community

A statement and supporting evidence about the impact on the community of the closure of the school and any measures proposed to mitigate any adverse impact.

The school has an early years unit but currently doesn't have any children registered in the nursery.

The community shop has strong links with the school and has undertaken specific projects including a joint gardening project. They see much of their trade coming from parents, carers and children coming to the store before and after the school day, and also benefit from an account with the school. In a previous consultation, the community shop suggested that closure of the school would potentially reduce their contact with families and potentially put the future of the shop at risk.

Elderly residents in the parish currently visit the school each month for lunch, organised by Age UK. Members of the community have also delivered a series of 'lectures' at the school.

In a previous consultation, the Clapham School Action Group stated that the school ICT suite was opened with the benefit of reducing the number of people in the community who suffer from digital exclusion.

In some communities the school is the only meeting space. However, at Clapham, there is a Village Hall at Cross Haw Lane, which has capacity for 150. It was recently refurbished and has central heating and a fully equipped kitchen. There is also a Reading Room on Church Avenue which hosts afternoon games clubs, the Bethel Chapel at Cross Haw Lane, which currently hosts a weekly village playgroup, and St James' Church on Church Avenue. These could provide venues for the community activities that are currently taking place in the school building. It is not clear how extensively the school ICT facility is currently being used by the public. Public internet and computer access and help and support using IT is available at Ingleton and Bentham libraries (both 5 miles from Clapham).

The school building is not owned by the County Council, it is held on an implied Trust for the purposes of a school. The playing field is leased in by the County Council from a private landowner. Decisions about the future use of the school buildings and playing field will be taken by the owners after the closure proposal has been determined.

In a previous consultation, the Ingleborough Estate stated that they have a policy of letting cottages at below-market rents on the basis of full-time occupation, and for all appropriate properties, priority is given to families with young children. The estate saw the school as important for encouraging young families into the area. They have not made a formal response to the current consultation.

Both Craven District Council and Yorkshire Dales National Park Authority have previously stated that the proposal to close Clapham Primary School runs counter to their aims. Their proposals focus on building more affordable housing, creating jobs, and improving access to key services to promote the area as a place for young people to live. They have not made formal responses to the current consultation.

Whilst it is to be welcomed that the community and planning authorities in this area wish to encourage economic development including further housing there is no evidence that in the foreseeable future that the scale of this housing will lead to significant numbers of additional children on roll at the school to ensure its sustainability.

Whilst the impact on the wider economic and social sustainability of the community is an important consideration, the key consideration is to determine whether the proposal is in the best interests of children's education.

## Rural primary schools

Where proposals relate to a rural primary school designated as such by an order made for the purposes of Section 15 (Education and Inspections Act 2006 (EIA), a statement that the local authority or the governing body (as the case may be) considered Section 15(4) EIA.

Clapham CE VC Primary School is designated as a rural school under the Designation of Rural Primary Schools (England) Order. The School Organisation regulations and guidance contain a presumption against closure of rural schools, and it is a requirement that proposers must consider the effect of the discontinuance of any rural primary school on the local community. The statutory guidance specifically states that 'This does not mean that a rural school will never close, but the case for closure should be strong and a proposal must be clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area.' The guidance states that when producing a proposal, the proposer must carefully consider:

the likely effect of the closure of the school on the local community;

- the proportion of pupils attending the school from within the local community i.e. is the school being used by the local community;
- educational standards at the school and the likely effect on standards at neighbouring schools;
- the availability, and likely cost to the LA, of transport to other schools;
- whether the school is now surplus to requirements (e.g. because there are surplus places elsewhere in the local area which can accommodate displaced pupils, and there is no predicted demand for the school in the medium or long term);

- any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the closure of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase; and
- any alternatives to the closure of the school.

These are examined in turn below.

### **The likely effect of closure of the school on the local community**

Please see the section above 'Impact on the Community'

### **The proportion of pupils attending the school from within the local community i.e. is the school being used by the local community**

There are currently 7 pupils on roll at the school 5 of which reside within the Clapham School catchment area.

There are 32 primary aged children who reside in the Clapham CE catchment and attend a North Yorkshire maintained school.

### **Educational standards at the school and the likely effect on standards at neighbouring schools**

The Ofsted inspection in June 2019 judged the school to be inadequate in all areas. The school was judged to require Special Measures.

The report found that

- Over time, there has been a significant decline in the standard of education provided for pupils. Leaders have not been effective in reversing or halting this decline
- The arrangements for safeguarding pupils are ineffective. Leaders have not acted to ensure that pupils are safe
- Governors have not held leaders to account effectively for safeguarding, the quality of teaching and pupils' outcomes.

Since the start of the 2019/20 academic year, the new leadership of the school is working hard to address the many weaknesses identified in the inspection report. It is the view of the Local Authority's advisers that significant improvements have been made to safeguarding and improvements are also evident in the quality of teaching.

It is not expected that the closure of Clapham CE Primary School would have a negative impact on neighbouring schools.

### **The availability, and likely cost to the LA, of transport to other schools**

If the school closed, there would be a potential additional cost to the Local Authority in providing transport to other schools. Free home to school transport would be provided for entitled pupils within the enlarged catchment area in accordance with the County Council's Home to School Transport policy. The County Council's Home to School transport policy sets out that free school transport will be provided to the catchment school or nearest school to a child's home address if it is over the statutory walking distances set out by law. This is:

- Two miles for children under eight years of age;
- Three miles for children aged over eight; or
- where the route to the catchment or nearest school is not safe to walk accompanied by a responsible adult.

If the nearest catchment or nearest school is full, transport will be provided, in accordance with the authority's transport policy, to the nearest school with places available. In this case, it is estimated that there would be additional home to school transport costs in the range of £14,000 to £22,000 each year, dependant on the pattern of parental preference to alternative schools, and the mix of transport provision that would be required.

Children from low income families (children entitled to free school meals or whose parent are in receipt of the maximum level of Working Tax Credit) have additional eligibility criteria for additional home to school transport and details are available on the County Council's website at <http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/article/26071/School---travel-support>

**Whether the school is now surplus to requirements (e.g. because there are surplus places elsewhere in the local area which can accommodate displaced pupils, and there is no predicted demand for the school in the medium or long term)**

The latest forecasts are included in Appendix 4 of the report to the Executive 24 March 2020.

It is proposed that the catchment areas of Austwick CE VA Primary School and Bentham CP School are expanded to include the current catchment area of Clapham CE Primary School. The current pupil numbers and class structures of these schools are shown below.

Austwick	Pupil numbers	PAN
Reception	7	10
Year 1	9	10
Year 2	7	10
Year 3	7	10
Year 4	7	10
Year 5	10	10
Year 6	9	10
Totals	56	60

Bentham	Pupil numbers	PAN
Reception	18	25
Year 1	13	25
Year 2	17	25
Year 3	11	25
Year 4	15	25
Year 5	15	25
Year 6	15	25
Totals	104	180

There are 4 schools within 6 miles of Clapham School by road:

- Austwick CE VA Primary School
- Ingleton Community Primary School
- Bentham Community Primary School
- Giggleswick Community Primary School

#### Austwick CE VA Primary School

- 2.0 miles by road from Clapham
- Rated Good by Ofsted in May 2019
- Net Capacity 70
- 56 pupils on roll
- Forecast 63 pupils + 1 from housing by 2023/4
- Published Admission Number of 10

#### Ingleton Community Primary School

- 4.7 miles from Clapham by road
- Rated Good by Ofsted in June 2016
- Net capacity 180
- 166 pupils currently on roll
- Forecast 162 pupils + 17 from housing by 2023/4
- Published Admission Number of 26

#### Bentham Community Primary School

- 5.5 miles from Clapham by road
- Rated Good by Ofsted in March 2016
- Net capacity 210
- 104 pupils currently on roll
- Forecast 114 pupils + 36 from housing by 2023/4
- Published Admission Number of 25

#### Giggleswick Community Primary School

- 5.8 miles from Clapham by road
- Rated Good by Ofsted in January 2017
- Net capacity 90
- 65 pupils currently on roll

- Forecast 74 pupils + 4 from housing by 2023/4
- Published Admission Number of 13

It remains the view of the Local Authority that there are surplus places in the local area which can accommodate displaced pupils.

### **Any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the closure of the school, and the likely effects of any such increase**

It is not considered that there would be significant additional car use if the school were closed given the relatively small number of pupils. Some parents may choose to use their own transport but children in the catchment area are already travelling privately to alternative schools. 17 primary-aged children in the Clapham CE catchment area already travel to other primary schools, and 2 children attend Clapham CE who live outside the catchment area.

### **Any alternatives to the closure of the school**

The Governing Body and officers from the County Council and Diocese have explored alternatives to the closure of the school. There have not been any offers from multi academy trusts willing to take on the school, and it is considered that there is no potential for the school to convert to academy status or to join a multi-academy trust because it would not meet tests of due diligence due to its small size. The fundamental issues of low numbers and insecure leadership remain.

Attempts have been made during autumn 2018 to broker a federation between Clapham School and other primary schools in neighbouring counties. Discussions progressed with several schools but were unsuccessful. To date, no other school has come forward that would be prepared to share a Headteacher or to federate with Clapham CE. Federation is a decision for individual school governing bodies and cannot be imposed by the County Council. Whilst collaboration between schools can enrich children's educational experiences to some extent and lead to sharing of resources or services it cannot guarantee the security of a school, which has reached a critical level in terms of pupil numbers and associated budget deficits, without other forms of support or intervention.

## **Balance of denominational provision**

Where the school has a religious character, a statement about the impact of the proposed closure on the balance of denominational provision in the area and the impact on parental choice.

Clapham is a Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School. The LA is under an obligation to consider the impact on the proportion of church places before it determines the outcome of school closure proposals.

The nearest Church of England school, 2 miles from Clapham, is Austwick CE VA Primary School. There is also a Church of England school at Settle CE VC Primary School, 7 miles away.

The Diocese is supporting the LA with the consultation and given the availability of

places at other local Church of England schools has expressed no specific concerns about the impact on proportionality of places in this area.

## **Maintained nursery schools**

Not applicable

## **Sixth form provision**

Not applicable

## **Special educational needs provision**

The existing provision at Clapham CE VC Primary School is not reserved for pupils with special educational needs.

## **Travel**

Details of length and journeys to alternative provision.

The proposed arrangements for travel of displaced pupils to other schools including how the proposed arrangements will mitigate against increased car use.

Eligibility for home to school transport will be determined in line with the County Council's current home to school transport policy and procedures based on each child's home address and individual circumstances.

Where a child attends a school which is not their normal school or a nearer school, parents are normally responsible for making transport arrangements.

Parents were and will be reminded of the County Council's home to school transport policy when considering alternative schools. Pupils up to the age of 8 would normally be eligible for free home to school transport if they live more than 2 miles from their normal area school (or 3 miles for those over the age of 8). Parents can always express a preference for a school other than their normal area school however they would usually be responsible for making transport arrangements. Eligibility is assessed on an individual basis taking into account the child's home address.

North Yorkshire County Council's Home to School transport policy states that 'Transport will be arranged so that children will not normally spend more than 1 hour 15 minutes travelling to a secondary school or 45 minutes to a primary school. Journey times might need to be longer than this in some more rural areas and where road or weather conditions mean that these times are not practical.' This is in line with statutory guidance from the Department for Education. The journey time for children living within the current Clapham CE VC Primary School catchment area would depend on which other school they attended and their home address. The nearest schools are Austwick CE VA Primary School (2 miles from Clapham CE School, approx. travel time 6 minutes), Ingleton Primary School (4.7 miles from Clapham School, approx. travel time 12 minutes), Bentham CP School (5.5 miles, approx. travel time 14 minutes), and Giggleswick Primary School (5.8 miles away, approx. travel time 10 minutes). The travel times to all these schools from homes in the Clapham CE School catchment

area are well below the maximum travel time of 45 minutes for primary-aged pupils. Pupils would be eligible for travel arrangements from NYCC in line with the transport policy.

### **Procedure for making representations (objections and comments)**

Within four weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to Corporate Director- Children and Young People's Service, North Yorkshire County Council, County Hall, Northallerton, DL7 8AE, by 21 May 2020.

### **Consultation**

The decision to consult on closure was taken by the Executive Member for Schools on 17 December 2019 following a request from governors. A consultation paper setting out the proposal was sent to parents of pupils on roll, staff at the school as well as other interested parties and individuals. A copy of the consultation paper and a list of the consultees is included in Appendix 1. The consultation period ran from 10 January to 28 February 2020. A public meeting was held at the village hall on 4 February 2020, a note of that meeting is attached as Appendix 2. There have been 27 consultation responses received (Appendix 3).

### **Appendices**

Appendix 1 - Consultation Paper and list of consultees

Appendix 2 - Notes of the Public Meeting

Appendix 3 - Consultation Responses



# ***Consultation Document***

**Proposal to close Clapham Church of England**

**Voluntary Controlled Primary School**

**from 31 August 2020**

# Clapham Church of England Voluntary Controlled Primary School

10 January 2020

This paper sets out details of a proposal to close Clapham CE VC Primary School with effect from 31 August 2020. It gives the background to the proposal. There will be a public meeting on:

**Tuesday 4 February at 6.30pm**

**at Clapham CE VC Primary School, Lancaster, LA2 8EJ**

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## The Current Position

At a meeting on 4 November 2019 the Governing Body of Clapham CE VC Primary School voted to request that the County Council begin consulting on a proposal to close the school at the end of the current academic year. Officers from the Local Authority and the Diocese agree that this is in the best interests of current and future pupils from Clapham because numbers have fallen to a level where it will be difficult to provide a high quality of education for pupils in the long term. The County Council is therefore now consulting on the proposal to close the school with effect from 31 August 2020.

## Background

Pupil numbers at the school have been falling, reducing from 42 on roll in 2014/15 to 28 at the start of the 2018/19 academic year. The drop in numbers increased concern around the financial sustainability of the school and its ability to providing good quality education.

On 5 February 2019 Executive Members gave approval to progress a consultation on a proposed closure of Clapham CE VC Primary School with effect from 31 August 2019. During the consultation period a number of responses were received including a

detailed response from the Governing Body showing a recovery plan, which they felt, along with ongoing community support, could see the school recover to a position that would enable the school to stay open. At a meeting on 30 April 2019 the Executive agreed that the proposal to cease to maintain Clapham CE VC Primary School should be stopped to allow the Governing Body to implement their recovery plan, with a formal review of the position scheduled for the end of the spring term 2020.

Since the April Executive meeting the school has been inspected by Ofsted and placed in special measures. The publication of the recent inspection result in September has led to a further decline in pupil numbers making the Governing Body's recovery plan no longer viable. This led to the Governing Body requesting a consultation on a proposed closure.

This is a wholly new consultation and focusses on four key areas of concern: 1) Low pupil numbers; 2) Breadth of curriculum, 3) The schools financial position, and 4) Leadership

The critical concern is the fall in pupil numbers, which would inevitably result in an inability to provide the necessary breadth of curriculum experience and

would also irrevocably undermine the school's future financial position.

**Pupil Numbers**

At the start of the 2019/20 academic year there were 25 pupils on roll. This is well below the capacity of the school – which is designed to accommodate up to 59 pupils if all spaces are in use. Since September there has been a further fall in numbers and in November 2019 the school had 10 pupils on roll. Forecasts indicate that these numbers will not recover significantly in the longer term.

In these circumstances, it would be difficult to deliver and sustain quality education.

- Total roll numbers:
- 2014/15 – 42
- 2015/16 – 39
- 2016/17 – 34
- 2017/18 – 27
- 2018/19 – 28
- 2019/20 – 25 (at the start of the year, dropping to 10 in November)

Pupil numbers as at 7 January 2020:

REC	0
Y1	0
Y2	0
Y3	3
Y4	0
Y5	2
Y6	4
Total	9

Latest forecast information predicts only one new Reception aged starter in 2020/21. This combined with the progressive reduction in existing year groups results in a forecast total roll of 6 in 2020/21.

**Breadth of Curriculum**

The LA has already identified concerns around the school's ability to meet the educational need of children with such small numbers. As numbers on roll continue to fall it will be increasingly difficult to provide the remaining pupils with access to the full range of experiences they need, particularly opportunities for working and playing with children their own age. The Ofsted inspection in June judged the school to be inadequate in all areas.

**The Financial Position**

Pupil numbers determine the school budget. Examination of the predicted financial position has led to concerns about the school's ability to provide a good quality of education. The school is projecting in year deficits of £46k in 2020/21 and £77.9k in 2021/22, and cumulative deficit of £202.6k by the end of that year. These were based on pupil assumptions at the time of 27 in 2019/20 and 22 in 2020/21, so the position will deteriorate further as pupil numbers fall with no reasonable prospect of financial recovery.

**Leadership**

Previous attempts to recruit a substantive headteacher or identify another school prepared to share a headteacher has not proved possible. With effect from September 2019 an Executive Headteacher from The Priestley Multi Academy Trust has been appointed to oversee school leadership. A full time Head of School from the MAT has also been appointed for this school year. The LA is currently providing temporary financial support to meet the cost of the Executive Headteacher but this is not sustainable.

## **The Proposal**

For the reasons outlined above it is proposed that Clapham CE VC Primary School should close with effect from 31 August 2020.

The nearest Church of England school, 2 miles from Clapham, is Austwick CE VA Primary School. There is also, Ingleton Primary School which is 4.7 miles from Clapham, Bentham CP School at 5.5 miles, Giggleswick Primary School at 5.8 miles, Settle CE Primary at 6.9 miles and Long Preston VA School at 9.7 miles away.

It is proposed that the catchment areas of both Austwick CE VA Primary School and Bentham CP School are expanded to include the current Clapham catchment area.

The County Council would welcome consultees' views on the proposed catchment area extension.

For children currently at Clapham CE VC Primary School, North Yorkshire County Council will work with each family to try to meet their individual preferences for other schools regardless of the catchment area defined. Staff and governors at Clapham CE VC Primary School are also committed to supporting families in their choice of school and in making a smooth transition.

Eligibility for home-to-school transport will be determined in line with the County Council's current home-to-school transport policy and procedures, based on travel distances from each child's home address and individual circumstances.

Parents have a right to express a preference for any school and, in the case of community and voluntary controlled schools, the Local Authority

is the admissions authority. In the case of Voluntary Aided schools, the Governing Body is the Admissions Authority.

All of the local schools have indicated a willingness to admit pupils potentially displaced from Clapham School, subject to available capacity and resources being available for the specific year groups concerned. Where a child attends a school, which is not their normal school or nearest school, parents are normally responsible for making transport arrangements.

North Yorkshire County Council's Admissions Team is always happy to give advice to parents – please contact Vickie Hemming-Allen on 01609 535481 or Lisa Herdman on 01609 534953.

## **The School Site**

The school building is not owned by the County Council, it is held on an implied Trust for the purposes of a school. The playing field is leased in by the County Council from a private landowner. Decisions about the future use of the school buildings and playing field will be taken by the owners after the closure proposal has been determined.

## **What Happens Next?**

Your views about this proposal are welcomed. You can either complete and return the attached response sheet, or submit an online response.

Paper responses should be returned to North Yorkshire County Council at the address below:

FREEPOST RTKE-RKAY-CUJS  
Clapham  
Strategic Planning  
North Yorkshire County Council  
County Hall  
NORTHALLERTON  
DL7 8AE

Additional background information is available on the NYCC website. Online responses may be submitted by following this link:

<https://consult.northyorks.gov.uk/sn/apwebhost/s.asp?k=154755992143>

**The closing date for responses is  
Friday 28 February 2020**

All responses to the consultation received by this date will be considered by the County Council's Executive on 24 March 2020.

If the County Council's Executive decides to proceed with the closure proposal, then statutory notices would be published in the local press on 20 April 2020. These notices provide a further four weeks for representations to be made. A final decision would then be made by North Yorkshire County Council's Executive on 9 June 2020. If agreed the school would close on 31 August 2020.

**Anticipated Key Dates**

All dates are subject to approvals at each stage.

Consultation opens	10 January 2020
Public meeting at the school	4 February 2020
Consultation closes	28 February 2020
County Council's Executive considers consultation response	24 March 2020
Statutory Notices published (4 weeks for representations to be made)	20 April 2020
Final decision by County Council's Executive	9 June 2020
Proposed school closure date	31 August 2020

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**Clapham CE VC Primary School**  
**A consultation on whether the school should be closed**

Observations and/or suggestions:

Interest/Status .....

e.g. Parent/Governor/Teacher/Community

Name of School .....

Signed .....

Date: .....

Name (Block Capitals) .....

Address: .....

.....

.....

Postcode: .....

To help us assess whether we have provided clear information, please let us know whether you found this consultation easy to understand? YES/NO

Do you have any suggestions for improvement?

.....

**Under the provisions of the Freedom of Information Act 2000, responses to the consultation will be published on the County Council's website where it may be accessed by members of the public. Your personal details will not be published.** Please send this response sheet to the following "FREEPOST" address. You do not need to use a postage stamp.

FREEPOST RTKE-RKAY-CUJS

Clapham

Strategic Planning

North Yorkshire County Council

County Hall

NORTHALLERTON

DL7 8AE

Or go to:

<https://consult.northyorks.gov.uk/snapwebhost/s.asp?k=154755992143>

and submit your response there

**To be received by no later than 28 February 2020**

*We are collecting this information for the purpose of gathering views on the proposal. Your personal data will not be published or passed to any other organisation unless a legal obligation compels us to do so. We may contact you to discuss your views further. For more information about how your personal data is handled at North Yorkshire County Council please visit: [www.northyorks.gov.uk/privacy](http://www.northyorks.gov.uk/privacy)*

## Clapham C of E Primary and Nursery School – List of Consultees

Parents of pupils of Clapham  
Staff and governors of Clapham  
Chair of Governors  
Local Authority – North Yorkshire County Council  
Local Primary Schools – within 10 miles  
Unions and Professional Associations  
Diocese  
**Any Interest/ user groups nominated by the school**

Neighbouring Local Authority  
Yorkshire Dales National Park  
Lancashire County Council  
Local County Councillor  
District Councillor  
Craven District Council  
Local Parish Council  
Local MP  
Local Early Years Providers within 10 miles

RSC  
Secretary of State

Internal distribution:  
Advisor  
Governor Support  
HR Advisers  
School Admissions  
Passenger Transport  
Catering  
Building Cleaning  
Press Office

## Record of Public Meeting concerning Clapham CE VC Primary School

Meeting held on 4 February 2020 at Clapham Village Hall

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**Present:** Rob Atkins (Co-chair of Interim Executive Board), Janet Booth (Co-chair of Interim Executive Board), Matthew Atkinson (Executive Headteacher), Adam Kay (Head of Clapham Primary School), County Cllr Patrick Mulligan (Executive Member for Education and Skills, NYCC), Judith Kirk (Assistant Director, Education and Skills, NYCC), Andrew Dixon (Strategic Planning Manager, NYCC), Julia Temple (Strategic Planning Officer, NYCC), Kate Lounds (Lead Advisor, NYCC), Richard Noake (Director of Education, Anglican Diocese of Leeds), Simone Bennett (Anglican Diocese of Leeds), Maria Farrer (Governor), Claire Pearson (Headteacher, Bentham Primary School), Rev Anne Russel (Vice-chair of Govs, Bentham Primary and C of E Area Dean), Jenny Thistlethwaite (Governor, Ingleton Primary)

Additionally, there were 7 parents, 9 residents and 1 member of staff.

**Apologies:** Councillor David Ireton sent his apologies prior to the meeting.

32 people were present

### AGENDA

6.30	Meeting opens – brief welcome	Rob Atkins – Co-chair of Interim Executive Board
6.40	Executive Members Opening Remarks <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduction to the Panel</li> <li>• Short statement about background</li> <li>• Handover to LA Officer for presentation</li> </ul>	County Cllr Patrick Mulligan
7.00	Presentation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The proposal</li> <li>• Background to the proposal</li> <li>• Pupil numbers and housing</li> <li>• Finances</li> <li>• Local Schools</li> <li>• Catchment area</li> <li>• How can people comment</li> </ul>	Andrew Dixon
7.30	Question and Answer Session	County Cllr Patrick Mulligan and panel
8.00	Meeting Close	County Cllr Patrick Mulligan

#### 1. Welcome

Rob Atkins, Co-chair of the Interim Executive Board, opened the meeting a little after 6.30pm and welcomed those present.

## **2. Executive Member opening remarks**

County Councillor Patrick Mulligan introduced himself and the rest of the panel.

## **3. Presentation by Andrew Dixon**

Andrew Dixon introduced himself as the Strategic Planning Manager at NYCC and explained that the purpose of the meeting was to consult on a proposal to close Clapham CE Primary School, and to seek observations and comments around the future treatment of the catchment area if the school was to close.

AD explained the process and followed with a presentation which gave information on the background, the current position and what happens next.

## **4. Questions and Answers**

A local resident began by enquiring as to whether the available spaces at other local schools takes into account pupils that have already moved from Clapham. Andrew Dixon confirmed that was the case.

Another resident questioned how much the County Council is committed to its policy of maintaining rural schools. Andrew Dixon responded that NYCC supports rural schools as far as they are able to do so. This has been evidenced by the County Council's response to the school last time when the closure proposal was halted. Cllr Mulligan added that it is ultimately about the social, personal, and emotional wellbeing of the children, and that when a school gets into a situation of such low numbers the impact upon those children has to be paramount.

A resident asked if the proposal is to create a shared catchment area, would there be transport to Bentham and Austwick. Andrew Dixon said yes, if the journey was over the relevant qualifying distance of 2 or 3 miles dependent on age, or the route was deemed not be safe.

The Chair of Governors at Ingleton expressed her sadness at the school being in this position again. She wanted to make the point that if the school was to close, there was no reason the catchment area couldn't be shared between three schools to include Ingleton Primary. She felt that this would give parents choice. Andrew Dixon welcomed any comments on the treatment of catchment areas and would be interested to hear people's views. He explained the reason behind the proposal for the two way shared catchment was that Austwick seemed the obvious choice, being a church school and the closest to Clapham, and there was more comfort in Bentham providing sufficient places. Adding Ingleton would add complications and cost to home to school transport arrangements. The proposal avoids splitting the existing catchment by drawing arbitrary lines between schools which are often unhelpful to parents. Andrew Dixon gave assurance that any points raised would be put to Members, and said a meeting had been held with local schools prior to the consultation process getting underway.

A local resident who has been looking at the existing catchment maps felt the areas need to be redrawn, particularly the Ingleton catchment area which splits the town. Previous school closures have resulted in catchment areas that no longer serve the schools they represent.

A parent commented that there are already children living within Clapham who attend the nursery at Ingleton, and they would like a guarantee that their child would receive transport to whichever school they choose. Cllr Mulligan said they cannot give any guarantees but would welcome responses on the catchment area issue.

A resident expressed concern around the future of Clapham once the school was gone. He felt the County Council was not being true to its own commitments. Cllr Mulligan responded to say they are facing enormous challenges in North Yorkshire with the number of small rural schools. He confirmed the County Council does not have a plan of rural school closures. This very issue is currently being looked at via the Rural Commission and there are wider, more complex issues at play and it is not just about schools.

A parent commented that the house prices in the area are too high for young families and questioned where were the affordable homes.

Questions were asked around the recent Ofsted outcome and in particular how the school got itself into special measures, and why an inspection was carried out at this time. Kate Lounds said the Ofsted inspection was carried out in June but they had previously requested a visit in February. When they rang in June the Ofsted inspectors were not minded to postpone again because of a HeadTeacher absence. Judith Kirk added that Ofsted are an entirely independent organisation and the local authority cannot influence their decision. A further question was asked about why it had been left so long between inspections. Kate Lounds explained that a law had been passed that said schools would not be re-inspected following an outstanding judgement so that local authorities could focus on schools that were not as good. This has now changed but local authorities continue to have no involvement in when an Ofsted inspection is carried out.

A resident asked why alarm bells did not start ringing when a large number of children were removed all at once and there was a fast turnover of HeadTeachers. Judith Kirk responded that changes in headteacher are not generally a cause for alarm. Work was being done but the changes happened quickly. Kate Lounds added that she has been working closely with the Governing Board. Simone Bennett talked about the difficulty in finding interim leadership and headteachers for small rural schools and although none of these are excuses they are reasons for the decline in standards. It was known that changes needed to be made.

A parent or resident asked does the local authority not have a duty to maintain an outstanding judgement? Judith Kirk responded that when a school is sat on an outstanding judgement, the focus of school improvement moves to support schools that are not doing so well. It is only when other factors come into play that checks and re-evaluations are then carried out.

A resident said he noticed that there has been no mention of federation or amalgamation and asked if this had been revisited. Andrew Dixon said that last time there was no appetite from other schools to join a federation with Clapham and given the further fall in numbers it would be unlikely that this would be an option now. Andrew also added that it would not pass due diligence by Academy Trusts.

A further comment was made that if the local authority was aware the school was on a downward slide then so too would the parents be aware and that is why they would pull their children out. Judith Kirk responded that the school community also has a role in turning a school around and although the local authority has a duty to provide support it is the Governing Body's duty to lead.

Anne Russell, Vice Chair of Bentham and area Dean, wanted to say Bentham is a super school and that they already do have pupils on roll from the Clapham catchment area. She said that sustainable communities are key and every rural school is vulnerable. In response to a query on how parents and Governors can be expected to take on the responsibility of a school Anne said that although as Governors they start off unprepared you just have to get stuck in, even if you haven't yet got those skills. Judith Kirk added that there is no blame here, that it is a set of circumstances that had a series of consequences. She said the local authority, school, and Governors did their best. Last July there was no headteacher and no teachers. Over the summer the local authority worked hard with the Diocese, Governors and the Priestley Academy Trust to ensure the school was in a stable position for the start of term. It was a real positive at the time, then the Ofsted judgement came and numbers started to drop further. There are now no KS1 children in school.

A Governor of Clapham said the challenges the school has faced over the past few years have been extraordinary. They would like to recognise the support of the local authority and in particular Stuart Boothman (School Governance Team) for their support. Leadership at the school is now fantastic. They would also like to thank the neighbouring schools for their continued support.

A member of the Community Action Group said he was there at the Executive meeting last year and felt the full support of the County Council which led to the U-turn on the closure proposal. He fully endorsed Judith's last comments and wished local parents the very best.

The meeting ended with parents thanking Matthew Atkinson and Adam Kay for their leadership since the start of term.

The meeting closed at 7.55pm.

<p>1.</p>	<p>As the Executive Head who joined the school this year, I did it to turn its fortunes around and make things better for the children and the community. It is with a massively heavy heart, that after all of the hard work and progress that I write this response. In my view the LA would be wrong to continue to maintain this school given its numbers. The school is not viable. It saddens me that we can barely organise a playground game. Classroom activities are so hard to deliver with such limited children. The curriculum offer is not feasible to such a small heart. I genuinely wanted to turn this schools fortunes around but I cannot see a feasible future for the school.</p>
<p>2.</p>	<p>The transfer of catchment of Clapham school to Austwick and Bentham should surely be shared between Ingleton as well. There are children who would have a far longer and more hazardous journey than if they were to travel in Ingleton with the A65 and many hazardous minor roads to be negotiated. The fact that Burton's entire catchment was transferred to Bentham when it closed was in itself ridiculous. When you look at a map and consider the distance from places such as Westhouse, Thornton and Masongill (which now fall into Bentham catchment) a strong case exists for this to be the opportunity to redraw the catchment areas for all 3 schools - Austwick, Ingleton and Bentham to future proof the sustainability of each and ensure the safety of students travelling there. Surely just adding mile upon mile of catchment to Bentham school will result at some point in a catchment more akin to a secondary than a rural primary school and further fragment local communities. As an example In Burton in Lonsdale and Westhouse alone children go to at least 6 different primary schools as catchments areas are so divisive and nonsensical, this has resulted in a village where children don't actually know other children in the village. Extending Bentham's catchment to such a degree is only going to make this worse as people choose other closer, more preferred primary schools rather than go with the distant catchment offer in a totally different community.</p>
<p>3.</p>	<p>I am concerned that on the proposed closure of Clapham Primary School, clapham parish children will be in the catchment area of either Bentham or Austwick Primary School, and Ingleton Primary School has not been considered. The proposal is that the catchments of both Austwick Primary (2 miles away) and Bentham Primary (5.5 miles away) are expanded to include the current Clapham catchment area even though Ingleton Primary is closer to Clapham - 4.7 miles away. I am concerned that this is discriminating against future families living in the Clapham area who might want to choose Ingleton Primary for their children in the years to come. Bentham's catchment area already includes Thornton, Westhouse, Masongill which are all closer to Ingleton than Bentham, and Burton which is also very close. Ingleton has been left with a very small catchment area compared to Bentham. This seems very unfair in terms of parental/family choice for the future. I really think this needs further consideration, in order to be fair to all local schools and not just bias to Bentham Primary School.</p>

4.	<p>I can't deny that closing Clapham as a primary school is the right choice but the catchment area suggestions area an absolute disgrace and an embarrassment. Looking at simple straight line distances, Newby (currently in the Clapham catchment) is 2.2 miles from Ingleton Primary School and 4.6 miles from Bentham. By car, it is 3.4 miles to Ingleton and 4.6 miles to Bentham, which is even further than to Austwick even. That, by itself, is enough to raise an eyebrow when you suggest extending the already extended Bentham catchment area to include Newby. But then you look at the impact North Yorkshire's school previous school closures has had on Ingleton's catchment and it's even more farcical. Thornton is in Bentham's catchment area. Thornton is 2.99 miles from Bentham and 0.85 to Ingleton. By car, it is even more ridiculous: 4.6 to Bentham and 1.6 to Ingleton. What is this anti-Ingleton prejudice that is running through the local authority? Why is more money being pumped in to Bentham than Ingleton? Why is Ingleton being squeezed and restricted on all sides? This screams of discrimination and a conscious and deliberate act by the council to prevent Ingleton from having an equal standing in the area. I understand that a lot of money was spent on a new school building, but that doesn't mean you can squeeze other schools until they yield to the will of the council. It causes resentment from the local community and division between the two villages. Even worse, whilst both schools remain very professional, it is obvious that this will be causing a strained relationship between the two. As you may be able to tell, I work in a school (in Cumbria, thank goodness) and therefore fully understand the importance of local schools working collaboratively and maintaining a positive relationship. What the council is already doing is driving a wedge between two good schools that would have more energy and ability to thrive if they were allowed to work together. By totally ignoring Ingleton with the catchment split from Clapham, you are highlighting the inequality in the council and how they will stop at nothing to force people to one school. Parents vote with their feet: the council trying to bully them in to going to Bentham by withholding transport that they should be entitled to is at best petty, and at worse discrimination. If the split does not include Ingleton, we shall be putting in a range of freedom information requests (a pain in the neck at the best of times) to investigate the funding differences and the decisions that have gone to promoting Bentham against all others, regardless of distances and practical considerations. And in this day of environmental awareness, can you really say that trying to force people to travel further by car to get to their local school is the right thing? Instead of having a school they can cycle to, they have a school they need to drive to. Brilliant - Greta would love that one... We will not be supporting the proposal as it stands and will be resisting it in the strongest possible terms if you decide to go ahead with it. Parents will not be forced in to going to Bentham just because the council decided they want them to, they will just resent missing out transport - or is that the plan to avoid having to pay for it? Either way, the council is wrong and needs to alter things somewhat. As a post script to this, I have the highest regard for Bentham as well. Pitching the two school schools against each other is not the answer, so please stop it.</p>
5.	<p>Having looked at the boundary map for the local schools it seems that the catchment area should be shared between Ingleton, Bentham and Austwick. Children at for example Newby an Clapham who's parents may well work in Ingleton as there are more job opportunities will be able to choose which school of the three suits them most as they are all so close in proximity.</p>

6.	The proposed changes to the catchment areas would seem to be ill thought out. If there is space available at the two nearest schools to Clapham it seems perverse to propose transporting children to the furthest of the three local schools, surely it must be more environmentally sound to reduce unnecessary transportation as much as possible by dividing the existing catchment in such a way that children go to the school that is closest by road or footpath. Perhaps this might present an opportunity to reassess catchment areas across North Craven to try and reduce unnecessary emissions from road travel as it seems contrary to current thinking that pupils living within the village of Ingleton, or Thornton in Lonsdale who could potentially walk or cycle to school instead are encouraged to drive to Bentham, or are entitled to funded road transportation.
7.	Please consider widening the catchment of Ingleton rather than the catchments of Austwick and Bentham. We have a beautiful village school which needs continued numbers to thrive. Parents should always be offered the closest school as this is better for them in terms of travel and for the children and friendships. Austwick school is already bursting at the seams whereas Ingleton has lots of room for a larger community.
8.	The catchment areas are unfair and only sets out to benefit Bentham Primary School in the hope that NYCC can justify the amount they spent on it, and not giving other local very good schools the opportunity for funding and development.
9.	Surveys like this are a waste of time as will close anyway, my primary school (burton) and middle school (ingleton) were both closed and I saw a massive decrease in families with children moving to burton and it became a bit of a ghost town. I have a feeling the same will happen to Clapham as other than the school they don't have much else to offer. And for current students of clapham, uprooting them and chucking them into a larger school like bentham or ingleton could come with some problems for them and their parents but not the biggest concern right?
10.	My observations are in regard to the exclusion of Ingleton in the catchment area which takes away parent choice. I was not aware of how this could impact on Ingleton as a thriving village going forward. I don't think many villagers know that the catchment are for Ingleton school ends at the waterfalls entrance and at the iron bridge in the A 65. There is no logic or sense to this, why are very young children travelling to school further than they need to? It's certainly not environmentally friendly and makes their school day longer than necessary. Really, I fail to see any positives from this.
11.	I feel that Clapham should be included in the catchment area for Ingleton Primary School. It is closer geographically than Bentham and Bentham Primary has already had loads of money thrown at it. Ingleton school desperately needs a new classroom.
12.	The closure of Clapham primary has been inevitable for a while but I cannot understand why you would want the children of Clapham, and Newby in particular, to go anywhere other than Ingleton Primary. It makes me wonder if you have ever been or if you are just drawing lines on a map!
13.	I am pleased with the catchment going to Austwick & Bentham Primary Schools. Our children at Ingleton are full to bursting and children are always accepted out of catchment area anyway. I would rather see the other 2 local schools who have space fill theirs.

14.	<p>On behalf of the governing body for Bentham Community Primary School I wish to express our sadness that Clapham Primary has again reached the decision to consult to close. We know how difficult school governance can be, and how passionately everyone at Clapham works for the needs of the school and the community - and in most cases voluntarily. Clapham is a wonderful village with a strong community spirit and I am confident that it will continue to flourish. We are happy to have been considered in the proposed catchment of the Clapham area should the closure take effect. It seems appropriate that Clapham parents would have a choice of a church school and a community one. We are incredibly lucky at Bentham to be able to offer children a modern, spacious and nurturing learning environment and with capacity for growth, the proposal offers long term sustainability for education in the area. As has always been the case, we at Bentham Community Primary will continue to offer help and support to the Clapham community and its children however it is required.</p>
15.	<p>I would like to make particular reference to the proposed catchment area. The proposal is that the catchments of both Austwick Primary (2 miles away) and Bentham Primary (5.5 miles away) are expanded to include the current Clapham catchment area even though Ingleton Primary is closer to Clapham - 4.7 miles away. I feel that this is discriminating against future families living in the Clapham area who might want to choose Ingleton Primary for their children in the years to come and could in the future negatively impact on Ingleton Primary School which already has a very small catchment area.</p>
16.	<p>Clapham Consultation – a response from the Headteacher at Ingleton Primary School  Clapham is our “neighbour” and we have always worked closely with members of the school community. We have helped informally and formally as much as we could and we are genuinely saddened by this second proposal for closure. We have provided headship cover and support, teaching input and training, as well as admin support over the past few years. We also initiated a teacher secondment to relieve some of the financial/staffing pressures. Unfortunately we have been aware of the challenges this lovely small school has faced. Last year before the first consultation on closure our Governing Body considered a shared Headship, but felt that assisting on a permanent basis would be detrimental to Ingleton Primary School. In the consultation document Austwick is named as the nearest church school and we are named as the nearest community school, yet it is proposed that the catchment areas for Bentham CP School and Austwick are expanded to include the Clapham area. We object to this and we would like our catchment area to be reviewed too. We request that the Clapham catchment be shared between Ingleton, as well as Austwick and Bentham. As a school we feel very strongly that this is discriminating against future families living in the Clapham area who might want to choose Ingleton Primary for their children in the years to come. This isn't about us taking in additional children to expand our school now, it is about future-proofing our school and giving a fair choice to families in the area. The Ingleton catchment area is already quite small in terms of populated areas. Families who live over the second bridge in the bottom of the village are actually in the Bentham Primary catchment. Thornton, Westhouse, Burton, Masongill are all out of our catchment area. When Richard Thornton’s (Burton-in-Lonsdale) closed, the authority gave the entire catchment to Bentham Primary School even though Thornton and Westhouse pupils live considerably closer to Ingleton and they have always attended our school. Our school catchment suffered because of the Burton closure and we want to avoid history repeating itself. If the proposed catchment area is actually mapped then we could potentially have a geographical area (which incidentally includes very little populated land up from Chapel-le-dale) nearly surrounded by a vast and well populated Bentham Primary catchment area which includes plenty of built up places including Low Bentham, High Bentham, Burton-in-Lonsdale, Westhouse, Thornton-in-Lonsdale, Keasden, Clapham, Newby etc. In the future this proposed catchment would be extremely detrimental to our school and our community.</p>

	<p>We are very supportive of our local schools and we work together closely. We do care about the sustainability of all the remaining schools in this area, ours included, and that is why a fair decision is needed.</p>
17.	<p>I think it is a shame for the parents who want their children to go to Clapham C of E Primary School that it is closing, but the school has struggled for a long time, so its closure seems inevitable. As a parent with children at Bentham Community Primary School, I believe that the children who currently attend Clapham School would definitely benefit from attending Bentham School. Bentham is a brilliant school with wonderful teachers and lots of extra-curricular opportunities. Bentham School has plenty of space to accommodate more children (it in fact has the capacity to take lots more children) and already has lots of positive links with Clapham. I believe the catchment should include Austwick as a church school and Bentham as a community school. There is no need for other schools to be included in the catchment.</p>
18.	<p>I would like to support the proposal that the Clapham catchment area be shared between Bentham C P School and Austwick C of E School. I believe the children within the catchment area should be given the option to choose between a community school and church school. I also strongly believe that no other schools should share the catchment area as Bentham school was built with the capacity to take on more children and so far these places have not been wholly fulfilled. This, in turn, means high building costs and mixed age classes. As a parent I would like to see single age classes, in the future, to better meet the needs of the children. Additionally, Bentham School needs better financial security for the future as currently building maintenance costs and empty classrooms are compromising that.</p>
19.	<p>It is very sad that Clapham CE Primary School finds itself under consultation for closure again. The school has been at the heart of the local community for a long time. Should the decision be taken to close the school on this occasion, I would like to express my views on the proposed division of the Clapham School catchment. As the document notes, there are a number of alternative good schools around and I believe that this should be fairly represented between the 3 remaining schools in the locality - Ingleton Primary, Bentham Primary &amp; Austwick Primary. All children living along the A65 from Ingleton as far as and including Newby would have Ingleton Primary School as their nearest school with the closure of Clapham, yet my understanding is that the Clapham catchment would only be divided between Bentham and Austwick. This would mean that the nearest primary school from my home from September 2020 will not become my child's catchment school. I live along the A65 within the current Clapham catchment. Under the current proposals, this would mean that my child would have longer travel times to school each day and have to travel on back roads rather than a direct route to Ingleton. I understand that my child's catchment school would become Bentham Primary under these proposals. From my home in the Newby Parish (LA2 8JD), these are the distances to the 3 remaining schools (Googlemaps) Ingleton - 2.7 miles Austwick - 4.1 miles Bentham - 5.0 miles I would always choose to send my child to Ingleton Primary as the nearest good school (February 2020). From Newby village: Ingleton - 3.1 miles Austwick - 3.4 miles Bentham - 4.4 miles Therefore, to reduce travelling times and costs, I hope you will consider how the division of the Clapham catchment impacts on children and parents, and ensure that our children have the right to attend their nearest primary school, not one at a greater distance imposed on us. Should the outcome of the consultation be to close Clapham, I hope that the division of the catchment will be fair to ensure the long term future of our 3 remaining village schools with the best interests of our children at the heart of this difficult decision-making process at this difficult time.</p>

20. I am a lifelong resident of Keasden, the small hamlet just outside of Clapham and work on a self-employed basis serving my community as a community physiotherapist. I have two small children under the age of two whom I had wished to attend Clapham Primary School. I feel the current situation with the school is extremely sad and disappointing and struggle to comprehend the circumstances which have led to the schools demise. I attended the school as a child as did three generations of my family before me and am very grateful for the excellent education the school provided for me and for other members of my family, which is why I find this situation so upsetting. I am heartbroken, that after my husband and I have worked, and continue to work so hard to provide them with a grounded rural childhood similar to that which we received, the opportunity to attend such a fantastic local school has now been taken away. People with young families who have been born and bred in this area already face a struggle to remain in the area they have grown up in and pay extortionate rents and mortgages for the privilege of doing so. In addition to this, we, in this area, pay a considerable amount in council tax compared to our counterparts in the city yet our public services have been, and continue to be, cut to the bone. Unfortunately it is getting to the stage where this area will be a place where young families just can't afford to stay and I'm sad to say closure of Clapham School is yet another step in that direction. I feel very strongly that there is a need for small rural schools, not only for rural children already living in the area but also for those who will undoubtedly move into the area given the amount of new house building that is currently being undertaken. Additionally, the surrounding schools which are similar to Clapham are already full, clearly demonstrating the appetite among parents to have their children attend a school that has reasonable class sizes and provides a good quality education. Therefore, it is my sincere opinion that to close Clapham primary school, even given its poor OFSTED report is a mistake, not only for the children of Clapham and the surrounding area but also for the community. Removing the school from Clapham is going to have a huge detrimental effect on the village both in terms of community adhesion but also for the businesses in the village, as there will now be a reduction in the amount of people passing through to support these businesses. If the school closes, the council's planning department should review its procedures and cease passing planning for new developments in the Clapham area when there is no longer a school. Certainly, families with primary school age children are now very unlikely to choose to live in Clapham when there isn't a school within the village. This will almost certainly result in the village becoming a retirement village which will, in time, enhance the social care problems that all communities are now facing with an aging population. However, for this area these problems will be further compounded if few young people remain. Having a balance between the younger and older generations is essential for good community relations and social adhesion, particularly in a rural area and I feel strongly that the community as a whole will be much poorer with the loss of the school. However, having attended the recent consultation meeting I am of the sad opinion that the end result of this consultation will be closure of Clapham Primary School. Therefore as a parent, I am deeply concerned about the future of my children's education and moreover the council's ability to provide it, given the circumstances surrounding Clapham's demise. In particular, the council's specified desire to reallocate children in the Clapham catchment area to either Austwick or Bentham and not include Ingleton, despite it being nearer to Clapham than Bentham and on the list of alternative schools at the meeting, concerns me particularly as this reduces parental choice, something which I believe to be essential both for current and future parents in the Clapham area. It is vital that parents in the Clapham area, like myself, have the choice as to which of the three nearest schools their child/children attend without any barriers, for example to funding for their place or school transport. In order to give parents that choice, it is essential that the catchment areas of Austwick, Bentham and Ingleton be expanded to include the current Clapham catchment area, encapsulating the three nearest schools to Clapham, thus

offering parents a real choice. This would also ensure that each of the three schools nearest to Clapham and proposed as alternatives by the council in both the previous and current consultation meetings, receive the correct funding and assistance to fully meet the needs of both the current and additional pupils they will gain as a result of this school closure, both in the short and long term. Additionally, home to school transport should be provided by the council, without question, to the three nearest schools, Austwick, Ingleton & Bentham (ordered in distance from Clapham) for those children in the current Clapham catchment area who will now be forced to attend elsewhere due to the closure of their local school. It is not the fault of the children or their parents that the school has closed and therefore, parents and future parents in this rural area should be supported by the council with home to school transport to the three nearest schools. Moreover, the environmental cost of closing the school must be considered with parents facing the prospect of travelling their children to one of the three nearest schools. Surely it cannot be environmentally beneficial to have an influx of cars running from the Clapham area either end of the day to Austwick, Ingleton and Bentham? Certainly if the council were to allow this to be the case, it would be a direct contrast to the pledges made by the UK government in its climate change policy. Congestion in Austwick, Ingleton and Bentham already causes significant issues, clearly signalling the need for school transport in order to reduce this, if these schools are to take on additional pupils resulting from the closure of Clapham. It is essential that all steps are taken to prevent further traffic problems in these areas for residents, businesses and for the environment, both now and in the future. It is said that education is the wing on which dreams fly, something I have found from personal experience to be very true. Therefore, it is imperative that children in this area receive the highest possible standard of education and the duty of the council to ensure that this is the case, by supporting the current and future children of the Clapham area and their parents, be it by maintaining Clapham Primary School or supporting parents' choice with regard to the three nearest alternative schools. Additionally, the council must support the staff and governing bodies of Austwick, Ingleton and Bentham in ensuring these schools have all the provisions they require in order to cope with the increased demands placed upon them, should the school close. Lessons must be learnt from the sad situation Clapham Primary School has found itself in and it is the duty of the council to ensure no other school in the area ends up in the same situation, as ultimately it's not just the children and their parents that lose out, the entire rural community is irreparably affected.

21.	<p>As a school we were very saddened to hear that Clapham School is once again under consultation to close and we recognise the strength of feeling within the local community at potentially losing another small school within North Craven. Before the formal consultation process began, local schools were invited to meet to discuss the options, moving forwards, to the catchment arrangements should the decision be made for Clapham School to close. We were pleased that the Local Authority held this meeting so that an open and honest discussion could take place and that Bentham School is named as part of the proposal for the current catchment area of Clapham School alongside Austwick School. We believe that this is the best option moving forwards for the following reasons: Austwick School is a Church school and the families, both present and in the future, should be given the option of their child attending a church school, as they would have done if Clapham School were to remain open. Austwick School has some available space for new children and adequate sufficiency of places in the future. Bentham School has sufficient space both now and in the future, in all year groups, without the need to build additional classrooms. Bentham and Austwick School are both within short travelling distance to all parts of the current Clapham catchment area. Bentham School has school transport already in place, providing transport from the current Clapham catchment area. Bentham School needs to be sustainable and the additional children from an extended catchment area would support this sustainability. Throughout the consultation process, there have been discussions around a three way shared catchment area with Ingleton Primary School. As a school we accept that Ingleton School does lie closer to some areas of the current Clapham catchment. However, we believe Ingleton Primary School should not be included in the proposal for the following reasons: A three-way division of transport is not financially viable, sustainable or environmentally productive. A three-way division of the catchment area would make projecting future intake of children more challenging. Ingleton School draws from a densely populated, albeit small, catchment area with housing continuing to be built within the current catchment area. Ingleton School has already used their hall as a classroom to be able to accommodate increased numbers demonstrating lack of space currently. Ingleton School have applied for, and had refused, funding to build an additional classroom; demonstrating the issues around sufficiency of places both now and in the future. Austwick and Bentham both have space within their schools, without needing to extend or use further LA funding to create additional space. As a school we would urge the County Council's Executive to consider the above very carefully and encourage a decision to be made that secures the sustainability of the remaining schools in North Craven.</p>
22.	<p>As a parent of a child in Bentham CP I would welcome more children at my daughter's school. It is a wonderful, spacious, purpose built school and is not even near capacity at present. We would also very much welcome single aged classes which, with more children and more finance would be more likely to become a reality.</p>
23.	<p>Being involved in the previous attempt to keep Clapham Primary School open made me realise how vulnerable village institutions are in small rural communities. Yet in this age where child and adolescent mental health, carbon footprint, an ageing population and social isolation are such enormous issues, bigger is not always better. I hope that other villages will learn from our loss and realise that a school is a vital element of a happy, sustainable and balanced community.</p>

24.	<p>The very low number of pupils remaining at Clapham means that maintaining the school is no longer educationally or financially viable. NYCC should ensure that it provides the current school leadership with the right resources and support to complete the current school year and to close the school whilst ensuring the best possible outcomes both for the current pupils and for the community in the long term. Careful consideration should be given to the reallocation of school catchment areas upon closure of the school. This should be based on the needs and wishes of the community and not purely on distance. Many members of the community clearly feel more closely connected to Ingleton than to Bentham. Ingleton is connected via a faster road connection and a reasonably regular, fast and convenient bus service. Historically, the communities have been closely connected socially and economically. I understand that the temptation may be to prioritise Bentham, which is a slightly closer option for many and is likely to have greater capacity, however I ask that the Council carefully consider the needs and wishes of the Clapham community, who (subject to the result of this consultation) are already losing their community school.</p>
25.	<p>I object to the proposal re sharing the catchment area not including Ingleton Primary School which is the second nearest primary school to Clapham. I understand NYCC concerns regarding Bentham Primary School having significant spare capacity - however this is not Clapham parents problem. To not include Ingleton compromises parental choice and results in a longer journey to Bentham and therefore a longer school day. The route to Ingleton is also more direct than the route to High Bentham. At the recent public meeting current Clapham parents expressed, quite strongly, their support for the above. I sincerely hope NYCC will consider this and put the pupils and parents welfare first as opposed to decisions based purely on finances.</p>
26.	<p>Regarding the new proposed catchment areas, I would strongly prefer Austwick Primary School to be the catchment school for Keasden and Clapham and Newby too if Austwick School has the capacity to cover the whole of the old Clapham School catchment area, as Austwick is much nearer and is the nearest match in size and culture to Clapham School, to help existing and future pupils.</p>
27.	<p>I have been a resident of Clapham for 15 years, am the parent of three sons, grandparent of eight children and have worked in the schools sector for a number of different Local Education Authorities for a total of 30 years. I am totally committed to State education in both principle and practise.</p> <p>I attended the consultation meeting held in Clapham on 7 March 2019 to consider the closure of Clapham Primary School and the meeting held in Clapham on 4 February 2020 to again consider the closure of that school. I am one of the people who, when the school was threatened with closure, gave money to help to solve the budgetary issues which confronted the school.</p> <p>I am compelled to say that at the February consultation meeting I was disappointed by the demeanour of the LA and Diocesan officers laying out their case for the closure of the school. They gave every appearance that the decision had already been made and that the school would close whatever parents and other residents said. The Consultation Document unequivocally proposed that the school close with effect from the end of this coming August. There appears to be no plan for any alternative to closure.</p> <p>It was pointed out that Clapham Primary School currently has few children on roll. At the meeting I made the point that the stated policy of North Yorks County council is to support its many small rural schools. I see from their website that the County Council has, in response to draconian cuts in funding, established a Rural Commission which seeks ways in which to "...maximise the sustainability of the super-sparse rural communities..." and to find ways in which to "halt and reverse rural decline". The view of the County Council is there stated to be "... that if small schools are to survive, then communities must remain sustainable...".</p>

These are reassuring words which suggest that Clapham School should be kept open, that every attempt will be made to keep it open in spite of budgetary constraints. And yet, at the consultation meeting, this did not appear to be the case. Neither the Local Authority nor the Diocesan authority appear to have taken to heart the County Council's commitment to small rural schools.

The aim of the NYCC's Rural Commission is stated on the NYCC website to be to identify actions which would "...maximise the sustainability of the super-sparse rural communities in North Yorkshire" and would "...strengthen the case for greater government support in seeking to maximise rural sustainability".

The website claims that the Council is "transformative", "entrepreneurial", that it promotes "stronger communities", that it is "outstanding across the board for children's services, that is "...working...to maintain the life and economic viability of rural areas...". The website also points out that North Yorkshire is "...ageing faster than other parts...", that it has fewer young people than the national average.

The decision to close Clapham school would condemn the village to housing an ageing community with fewer children and young people as families of prospective residents look elsewhere for a home near a school for their children. Clapham would become a geriatric ghetto. This would clearly not be the government's intention. The statutory guidance on school closure ([www.Opening\\_and\\_closing\\_maintained\\_schools1012](http://www.Opening_and_closing_maintained_schools1012)) exhorts decision makers to "Provide evidence to show they have carefully considered... the overall and long-term impact on the local community of the closure of the village school..." it would be helpful if the conclusions of such consideration were made available to the Clapham community.

The LEA closed Keasden School in October 1946, closed Newby School in 1977, closed Horton School in July 2017 and now plans to close Clapham School in 2020. This cannot be the way to support small rural communities. The LEA is clearly failing to uphold NYCC policy towards those communities, it is indeed working against that policy and appears to have been doing so for some years.

The NYCC Rural Commission states that it plans to "...provide an action plan and workable recommendations by next summer to maximise sustainability...". Assuming that the summer in question is that of 2020 I would beg the LEA to review its closure decision and instead to give Clapham School another year or two, during which the Rural Commission's action plan could be put into effect and given time to demonstrate its efficacy. To fail to do so would be to condemn the plan before it is even announced.