

# **Notes from the ODEF Forum Meeting held on Monday 24<sup>th</sup> November 2008, 6.30pm at The Dukeries Construction Centre**

## **Future Plans for the Dukeries College**

Refreshments preceded the meeting with a chance for networking.

1. **Present:** see attached list
2. **Apologies:** B. Wells, K. Hiseman, P. Tipping, J. Insley, K. Vidhani, M. Lindley, T. Thorpe, M. Manning, K. Parkes, D. Spencer, J. Seager.

### **3. Welcome and introductions:**

Christine Ford chaired the meeting, welcomed everybody and gave introductions. Carol White informed everyone of general housekeeping and fire alarm procedures.

### **4. Presentation by Danny Smith on the future plans for the Dukeries College:**

The Forum guest speaker, Danny Smith, the Principal of the Dukeries College gave a very informative and interesting presentation about the future plans for the school.

Danny Smith introduced himself and gave a brief potted history of his background in teaching. He was appointed in January 2008 as the new Principal of the Dukeries College.

He gave a brief background to the Dukeries College. It was built in the mid 1960's and was a state of the art school in its time. It has since developed over the years into what it is today. It is unique in that it has amongst other things a public library, a day centre for the elderly, a disabled riding centre, a school farm, community workshops, a construction centre, a leisure centre and a fire training centre.

A video clip from East Midlands Today was then shown about the newly built construction centre and the visit by Ed Balls MP who called the Dukeries "...a 21<sup>st</sup> Century school....". It was great publicity.

The school serves a mixed catchment area with significant areas of deprivation. However 2008 has seen it's best ever GCSE results with 52% gaining 5 A\*-C grades. 100% achieved at least 1 GCSE showing how committed the Dukeries is to inclusion.

Future plans for the Dukeries are not set in concrete but there is a proposal that the school becomes Nottinghamshire's next Academy School.

An Academy is still a State school but it is independent and must have a main sponsor.

BSF – Building schools for the future

Some concerns with Academy's:

- Nature of sponsor – is it appropriate?

The sponsor will be the L.A (Highways department) and Higher Education institution so gets over this concern.

- Potential to damage other local secondary schools

Because of the geographical location of the Dukeries this will not be an issue.

- Severing links with L.A.

L.A. wants to commit to the Dukeries being a flagship community Academy so again not a problem here.

Much of this proposal will be a new build; however some existing buildings will stay such as the construction centre, the farm, Whitewater, fire training centre.

The timeline is likely to be 2009 for agreement and 2012 for build (however not sure yet if this will be start date or completion date yet).

Still need to secure funding sources. The school is central to the community so any Academy needs to take this into account and be for the community.

Central to the school are the 3 R's –

Respect for education  
Respect for each other  
Respect for the environment

Danny then introduced Jane Paling who is the new Community Liaison Officer and has been in post since April 2008.

Jane's role has two parts. The first is bringing organisations on the complex together and taking work out into the community. The second is working on Extended Services such as childcare, homework clubs, after school clubs, extra curricular activities. At the Dukeries there are 130 clubs that meet every week and 1200 participants in any one week.

Next stage is to identify the students that do not take part in anything and encourage them to participate – called ‘Dukeries Extra’ by the students at the Dukeries.

Also working on activities week – 47 activities have been put together this year and a booklet produced.

## **5. Question & Answer session:**

The floor was opened to any questions regarding the presentation.

- SJ praised Jane Paling for the work she is doing and how she will always go that extra mile.
- SJ – will the Dukeries become a selective school? No it won't be selective. If it becomes over subscribed then it will follow an adopted admissions criteria.
- PE – who will other sponsor be? Will it be a university? It could be any higher education facility.
- What will be the capacity of the Academy? It will remain the same 1200 pupils. There is however a proposal for it to become a 3-19yr school and if this was the case it would be a bigger build to encompass the primary school.
- LT – if the proposal for an Academy is unsuccessful what will happen? It would become part of the other BSF programme.
- SJ –Can we have an assurance that the Community Workshop will have a place in the new build? We have very good relations with you and would do everything in our power to ensure there is a place but at this stage cannot personally guarantee it.
- GF – How many different skills are being taught at the Construction Centre? And what is the measure of success? There are 3 separate workshops painting and decorating, woodwork and brick work. They are also building a traditional oak framed building using traditional methods and adult learners use the building for courses such as childcare, etc and Whitewater students for life skills.

Success – 50% of Yr 11 students have already achieved 2 GCSE outcomes and expect all to achieve at least 2 by end of the year.

F.E courses – there is a 70% success rate.

Have also got involvement of local industry and will be hosting a construction breakfast event in the New Year. Also all of our trainers are from a construction background.

## **6. Open Forum:**

- Eco Shop – this is now open and has two volunteers. It is open on Tuesday and Thursday 10am-12noon. It is operating as an environmental / eco information resource centre at the moment. Future plans do entail selling via shop and internet.

On Friday students from the Dukeries became volunteers for the Eco Shop and used it to sell plants and hanging baskets. It went really well and about £60 was raised in 2 hours. The students are now looking at putting together a business plan and running future events from the Eco Shop.

The Eco Shop is available to any local environmental / eco community group / organisation to showcase its work and use it to sell from. It was suggested that the Dukeries Community Workshop could also use it to show and sell their work to raise funds for their group and raise profile.

A further funding bid has also gone in to develop the Eco Shop further in partnership with the Dukeries College and Feel Good Foods. If this is successful then there will be a paid worker and environmental training courses on offer.

- Volunteering – ODEF offering new volunteering service. Advertising volunteer vacancies of groups and matching potential volunteers with them. This is going extremely well and a number of volunteers have been matched to volunteer vacancies within local groups / organisations. Any group wishing to advertise or anyone wishing to volunteer should contact either Carol or Mike at ODEF on 01623 863887 or call in and see them at their offices on Forest Road.
- Website – this is being developed and improved. Any local events that are appropriate can be advertised on it. The web address is [www.odef.co.uk](http://www.odef.co.uk)

## **7. Closing Remarks:**

Christine thanked everyone for coming and commented on how exciting it was to hear about all the new things going on in the community and the future plans for the Dukeries. Everyone was invited to have another drink and to network and reminded to hand in their evaluation forms before they left.

**Meeting Closed 8pm**