

Bohunt School 6 th form

Conservative Councillors write about the failure to provide the 6th form at Bohunt on time

Bohunt Sixth form expansion delayed again...

In March 2022 following a long public campaign by residents of Finchampstead Wokingham Borough Council reached a deal with the Bohunt Trust to expand the educational provision at Bohunt School. Two petitions were raised by local residents with well over 1400 signatures and the campaign was supported by local conservative cllrs as well as the local MP James Sunderland. This agreement was that WBC and Bohunt would fund the provision of a brand new 6th form facility, additional year 7 places and send provision. This new facility was scheduled to open in September 2023 giving much needed provision for an additional 200 – 300 pupils

In May 2022 following the local elections the Liberal Democrats took control of Wokingham Council. In public they were keen to reassure residents they still planned to proceed with expansion at Bohunt however the lack of any meaningful progress on the ground made it clear that all was not well. Costs had risen on the building programme and the crucial stumbling block was Wokingham Borough Council insisting on a new scope and refusing to part fund its share. 14 months after the Liberals took control of the council there is still no agreement on funding and without movement from Wokingham Borough Council no chance of this moving forwards

We have been advised that even if funding was agreed today there is little chance of a new building being ready by September 2024 due to logistical issues of construction and hiring the relevant staff. The council have now formally admitted the sixth form will not open (as they promised at the may 2023 local elections) in September 2023. It is now time for them to be honest and commit publicly to fund this expansion rather than the endless misleading statements about commitment with no funding

We are very dissapointed that WBC continues to fail to honour the promises it gave to the Finchampstead and Aborfield community in March 2022. It is wrong that children from across the south of the borough face long journeys out of borough at Farnborough or to the north of wokingham for 6th form provision because there is no facility nearby. It is wrong that WBC is building 2 new send schools on green fields at Rooks Nest when alternative provision could have been provided earlier and at less cost to the taxpayer at Bohunt. It is wrong that WBC is walking away from additional year 7 provision at Bohunt meaning children from Finchampstead face long journeys across wokingham every day because the capacity at bohunt is full. The catchment area at bohunt gets smaller year by year. Bohunt is a successful and well loved school. WBC should be supporting and developing successful schools in the borough. Children in the south of the borough are being treated like second class citizens and this is not acceptable. The south is forced to take all the housing but gets no infrastructure – this is wrong

We remain fully committed to seeing the 6th form, extra year 7 and send provision at Bohunt and will continue to campaign for this important facility to be provided

Cllr Charles Margetts, Cllr Rebecca Margetts, Cllr Peter Harper and George Evans former Conservative candidate for Barkham |)