



THE BEWDLEY SCHOOL FOUNDATION

Alis volamus propriis

Public Meeting
Wednesday 8th March 2023



BACKGROUND

The Bewdley School began its life as Bewdley Secondary Modern (11-16) School in 1956. A Sixth Form was added in the 1970s and then Hereford and Worcester County Council (HWCC) transitioned education in Wyre Forest to a 3 tier system.

The school became Bewdley High (13-18) School and the school fields were taken to build Wribbenhall Middle School. The grounds of Nethererton House to the south of the school, were bought by the County Council to replace the school fields.

In the late 1980s HWCC negotiated a lease of the sports fields with Wyre Forest District Council (WFDC) which would allow community access 'out of school hours':

1. The lease, which commenced in 1990, was for a 125 year term, with a first exit period without mutual agreement being 40 years (2030).
2. It was agreed that WFDC would build a leisure centre, but HWCC, now Worcestershire County Council (WCC) would partially repay the costs of this if the lease was terminated before the full term.
3. A dual use agreement was instituted between the two councils which gave priority use of leisure centre and fields to the school during term-time between 9am and 5pm.
4. At some point during the build period, WCC sectioned off a piece of the sports field and built Bewdley Youth Centre on it, which they funded and staffed.

In 2005, WCC decided to convert Wyre Forest Schools from 3 tier to 2 tier education. In 2007 Bewdley High School ceased to exist and reopened as The Bewdley School and Sixth Form Centre, whilst Wribbenhall Middle School ceased to exist and reopened as Bewdley Primary School. The neighbouring schools immediately shifted age range from accommodating 9 to 18 year olds, to accommodating 4 to 18 year olds. Clearly the younger age children would need bringing and collecting, but there was no strategic planning for increased parking or drop-off facilities.

In 2008, The Bewdley School and Sixth Form Centre became a Foundation School, adopting ContinU as its Trust (ContinU Trust was dissolved on 13th July 2021). Whilst still being Local Authority maintained schools, Foundation Schools have 3 distinct differences to Community Schools:

1. The governing body is the admission authority for a Foundation School.
2. The governing body employs the school staff.
3. The school land and buildings are owned by the governing body or a charitable foundation or trust.

In undertaking the third of these conditions, a feasibility study was commissioned and carried out in 2011 by a firm of solicitors, and due to complications relating to the lease and dual use agreement, the school withdrew its efforts to take on the land and buildings in 2013.

The current Head Teacher, Dave Hadley-Pryce, joined the school in January 2017.

ISSUES TO BE RESOLVED

There are key issues which the transport and buildings infrastructure causes for the schools and community:

1. Stourport Road is frequently gridlocked for 30 minutes or more at the start and end of every school day.
2. Five school and public buses enter the school site by the same entrance as hundreds of children exit on foot.
3. The provision for youth activity, sports and leisure in Bewdley is poorly resourced compared to its near neighbours.
4. The teaching of physical education on the school sports fields is often compromised by members of the public during the day.

These issues, taken together, put the Stourport Road and town communities at significant disadvantage, which needs 'levelling up'.

PROPOSED SOLUTION

In order to help us to resolve these issues, the School Governing Body has established a charitable foundation in partnership with its community. The Bewdley School Foundation was formed as a charitable private limited company (company number 14025726) on 5th April 2022.

It is a partnership between The Bewdley School, Bewdley Festival and Bewdley Civic Society. There are also community members who have been appointed as Directors of the Foundation, in addition to 2 Directors appointed by each of the partners.

The first task of the Foundation is to transfer the land and buildings into the Foundation's ownership, which is currently underway. Alongside this, the Foundation has formulated a strategy to try to resolve the issues above.

Three phases are proposed to resolve these issues, each more challenging than the previous phase:

PHASE 1

Bewdley Youth Centre was closed in 2012 when WCC's youth budget was slashed by 90% as a consequence of central government austerity cuts. After lengthy negotiation, WCC have agreed a 25 year lease for The Bewdley School to re-open the centre.

Thanks to a collaboration with our charitable partners, The William Mills Foundation, we have been successful in obtaining a £200,000 'Reaching Communities' National Lottery Grant, to refurbish the Youth Centre and pay for a manager for the next 5 years, opening as The Will Mills Centre.

The William Mills Foundation is able to run its programmes for young people from the centre, and the centre also provides a multi-agency hub for support organisations to use during the school day. The centre is also available for members of the Bewdley community to let outside school hours.



Proposed 200 space car park

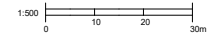
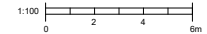
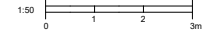


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Where drawings are based on survey information received, surveys are available on request. All drawings to be read in conjunction with all relevant Structural and M&E Engineers drawings and specifications.

It is assumed that all works on this drawing will be carried out by a competent contractor working, where appropriate, to an approved method statement.

SCALE BAR



STATUS	PURPOSE OF ISSUE
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PROJECT

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

TITLE

BEWDLEY SCHOOL, STOURPORT ROAD, BEWDLEY

CLIENT

BEWDLEY SCHOOL

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1:750

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PHASE 2

The Leisure Centre is in poor condition and there is insufficient parking. The Bewdley School Foundation is therefore discussing with both councils, the possibility of taking on the leisure centre as part of the land transfer. The proposal is:

1. All previous lease arrangements and agreements to be terminated with a recognition that the site is for exclusive school use during the school day.
2. The Foundation to agree to create a 'dog walk' around the perimeter of the school field, giving access to the river path and creating a new right of way (in recognition of historic community use of the fields).
3. The Foundation to agree to make available leisure facilities outside school hours 'in perpetuity' as a service to the town of Bewdley.
4. WCC agree to pass the freehold of the Youth Centre to the Foundation/schools' estate as their contribution to the development.
5. WFDC agree to pass their interest in the Leisure Centre to the Foundation/schools' estate as their contribution to the development.

This development would be contingent on being able to raise capital funding and agree acceptable plans to:

1. Create a 'circular access' car park with significantly increased capacity to:
 - Take parking and drop-off pressure from Stourport Road.
 - Allow buses to pull in, drop off and leave without entering the school gate.
 - The removal of buses from the main school site would in turn increase its parking capacity.
2. Refurbish the existing leisure centre and if feasible, install a mezzanine floor creating a modern gym.
3. Build a 6-badminton court sports hall and extend the changing facilities in line with increased need.



PHASE 3

Within the grounds of the school site, to build a 500 seat performing arts centre, for both the school and the Bewdley community.

This would be a home for Bewdley Festival and allow high profile acts to perform in Bewdley as they tour through the West Midlands.



POSITIVE OUTCOMES

For the School, the Community and the Town:

1. Improve the school parking and decrease congestion/disruption on Stourport Road.
2. Modern sports and leisure facility for the school and the town.
3. Large meeting space for the school for meetings, lessons and theatre studies/the arts.
4. Home for Bewdley Festival with a community theatre, creating the largest meeting space in the town.
5. Improve the safety of the site for our children.
6. Improved landscaping and environmental improvements.
7. A development the town can be proud of.

"This development to the Bewdley Leisure Centre and school facilities would not only revolutionise our teaching of Physical Education, but have a huge impact on the mental health and well-being of our students.

We are striving to meet the interests of the current and next generation of The Bewdley School students and this development would aid this massively.

Having more space and new facilities would drastically improve the range of activities that we could offer within school and have a lasting impact upon students having a balanced, active, healthy lifestyle once they leave us here at Bewdley.

We would be extremely grateful for any support with this development".

The Bewdley School Physical Education Department



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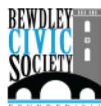
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Positive Outcomes
For the School, Community and the Town

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THE BEWDLEY SCHOOL

We fly with our own wings