



Meeting with MP Danny Kruger
at HoP 19 November 2024

Sam Wolcough – Chair of Governors
Katie Turner – Headteacher



Summary

- Our school is thriving: 15 Reception pupils joined in Sept '24, a solid intake given birthrate trends (17 Reception pupils in '23). NOR (Numbers on roll) = 95. To sustain our village school, we need to attract pupils. Shalbourne (VA) School's closure this year is an illustration of the risk we are mitigating
- We believe healthy competition alongside collaboration between the schools in our local area is positive. It drives improving standards for pupils and provides choice for parents
- We have invested in our facilities steadily over 10 years and the building and grounds now reflect the high academic standards offered
- A successful toddler group has not built our NOR pipeline, now looking to introduce a preschool
- There are always 'bumps in the road' but we have a capable and committed team and much to celebrate!

Our meeting with MP DK was to proactively highlight our risks and seek support to better understand them and mitigate them









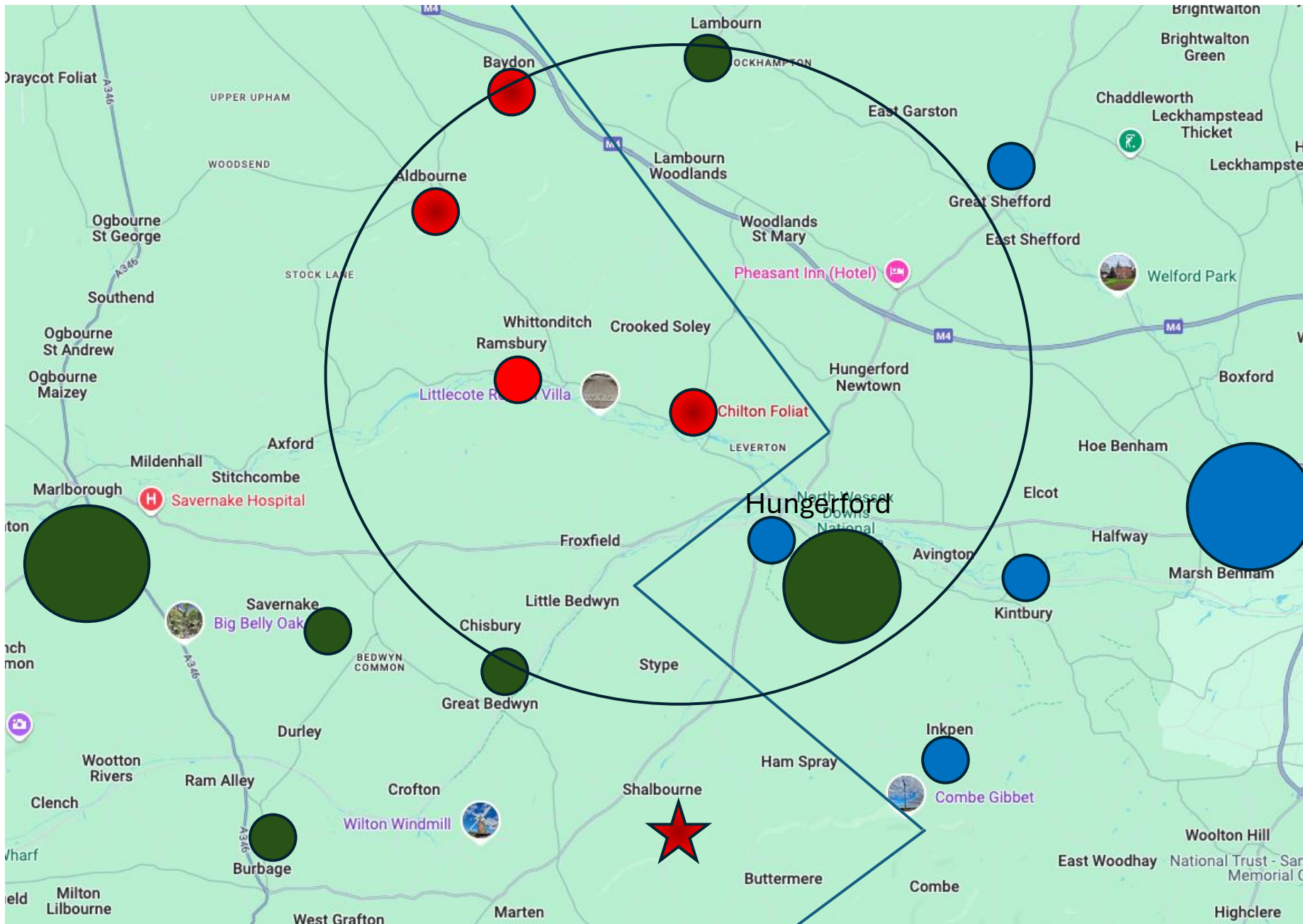
Risk to Numbers on Roll

- Will families (Wilts & West Berks) choose Excalibur academies to secure secondary places at St John's Marlborough later?
- Parents perception of risk in accessing St John's Marlborough
- St John's Marlborough (Excalibur) admissions policy (see Appendix 1), but more importantly, Excalibur academies' messaging around that (positioning themselves as a route into St John's regardless of catchment boundaries
- Impact/capacity pressure at secondary level due to introduction of taxation on private school fees.

The reality is that to-date CF pupils access secondary school where they choose and downturn in birthrate has provided capacity. We don't know how these broader factors will play out, but concerned we are not on a level playing field



-  Excalibur schools
-  Wiltshire LA schools
-  Wiltshire VA schools
(LA & Salisbury Diocesan Board of Education)
-  West Berks schools
-  Shalbourne School
(closure '24)
-  Region where choosing an Excalibur primary could be perceived as less risk from a secondary perspective





Voluntary Aided Schools (VA)

Funding

- Running costs of ***maintained voluntary aided*** schools, like those of other state-maintained schools, are fully paid by central government via the local authority. (Fair)
- 90% of capital costs of VA schools are met by the state, ***with the school's foundation contributing the remaining 10% plus admin fees to the Diocese***. The Diocese always charge their 'professional fees' even when we have done all the work, and then the 'governor's contribution' means the school is invoiced by 10% of the total (see appendix 2 for recent example). This is paid for from our school budget/fundraising etc (Unfair)
- We have spent >£52,000 of our funds towards capital costs so this money could not fund our operation costs

Our concern is that other schools do not have this additional overhead, and can spend those precious funds on educating their pupils



Voluntary Aided Schools (VA)

Multi-Academy Trust Agenda

- The Diocese must approve joining a Multi Academy Trust and the SDBE stipulates 50% of the MAT's board must have Foundation status. This significantly reduces the options for VA schools. (Unfair)
- Note: SDBE have been proactively pushing this agenda and downplaying the services offered by the LA. Our experience of the LA is exceptional. We feel we gain terrific value for money and are well supported.

Our concern is that our VA status limits our options. We cherish our CofE ethos and foundation, but why should we be discriminated or dealt with differently because of that?

Why did the Regional Commissioner not allow them to set-up a MAT?



Appendix 1 – St John’s Admissions Oversubscription Criteria

Children with an Education, Health and Care Plan (EHCP) - All children whose Education, Health Care Plan names a school must be admitted.

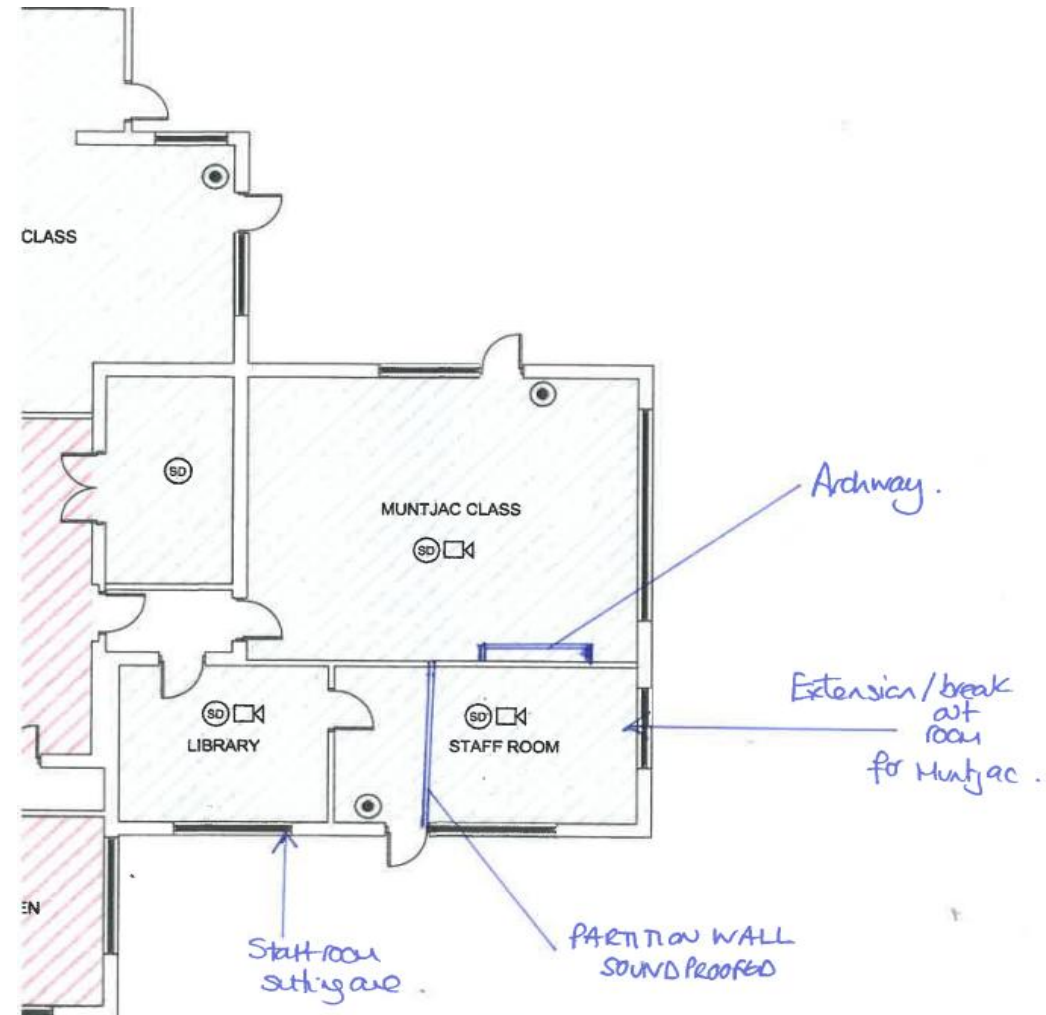
1. Looked After Children or a child who was previously looked after
2. Vulnerable Children
3. Students attending a linked academy or living in the catchment area and attending a feeder primary school. Priority will be given to siblings
4. Other students living in the catchment area. Priority will be given to siblings.
5. Children of Excalibur employees
6. Out-of-Area applications attending a feeder primary school. Priority will be given to siblings
7. All other applications. Priority will be given to siblings



Appendix 2 - Voluntary Aided Schools (VA) Capital Spending Example – Summer '24

Muntjac Class Building Project

- We collated 3 quotes, establishing best value at **£3,698.00** and completed all associated project management functions
- SDBE had no project involvement, they only approved the application and handled the admin of dealing with our claim





Appendix 2 - cont – SDBE project statement

SCHOOL: Chilton Foliat CE VA Primary School
PROJECT: Muntjac Class Extension (3 July 2024)
PROJECT NO: 2063

The above project has been approved by the Diocesan Board of Education at a cost of £4008.54. The DFC element of this cost is £4008.54 in 100% terms. A breakdown of the financial liabilities for the DFC spend is detailed below:

DFC grant expenditure (shown in 100% terms)	
Building works (funds requested by school)	£3698.00
VAT on building works	£199.60
Professional fees	£92.45
VAT on professional fees	£18.49
Furniture, fixtures & fittings	£0.00
VAT on furniture, fixtures & fittings	£0.00
Total DFC	£4008.54
Other Funding Sources	£0.00
Total Cost	£4008.54

Please note all **DFC grant claims will be paid at 90%**

The school is subsequently invoiced £400.65



Appendix 2 - cont – Muntjac Class Building Project Outcomes

- Creating a fit for purpose intervention area for learning
- Enabling teacher oversight for all
- Enabling small group work in a large enough number
- Increased floor space in Muntjac Class
- Enabling storage for essential classroom items
- Providing a purposeful and pleasant learning environment
- *Compliance to the school's Equality & Diversity Policy and Accessibility Policy & Plan*

The school has had to fund 10% of this and all capital projects due to our VA status.