

ENGLISHCOMBE PARISH COUNCIL

Serving Barrow, Englishcombe, Haycombe, Inglesbatch, Kilkenny & Nailwell.

www.englishcombe-pc.gov.uk

Summary: Meeting Regarding The Old Schoolhouse – 21st May 2025

Attendees:

Representatives from Englishcombe Parish Council, the Duchy of Cornwall, and the Save Our Schoolhouse Residents Action Group.

Purpose of Meeting:

To discuss the future of *The Old Schoolhouse* building in light of its disrepair, and to explore options for community benefit following the Duchy's decision to sell the property.

Key Points from the Duchy of Cornwall:

- **Building Condition:** The Old Schoolhouse has serious compliance issues (electrical safety, energy efficiency, fire safety, accessibility) and is not viable to refurbish for commercial use.
 - **Decision to Sell:** The Duchy has decided to sell the building, but intends to reinvest proceeds into developing *The Wheelwrights Workshop* (already leased to the Parish Council) into a sustainable community space.
 - **Conditional Investment:** If the community does not support this alternative space, the Duchy may withdraw its reinvestment plans.
 - **Sale Details:** The sale is planned to begin in August 2025, once the lease ends in September. It will include the adjacent field as a single package.
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Residents' Concerns and Proposals:

- **Parking and Safety:** Concerns were raised about increased traffic and the safety of alternative play areas like the Millstream.
 - **Alternative Use:** Suggestions were made to transform the Schoolhouse into an environmental and exhibition centre.
 - **Business Case Option:** Residents asked whether a community entity could present a business case to take over the building.
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Duchy's Responses:

- The Duchy will consider a proposal from a charity or CIC to lease the building, provided:
 - A fully costed business plan is submitted within two months.
 - The group agrees to fund and complete all necessary upgrades.
 - A new lease would then be granted under favourable terms.
 - The Duchy reiterated it will not fund any refurbishment directly and does not intend to run or staff the building.
 - Covenants will be applied to the sale to ensure future development aligns with the local area.
 - Use of Millstream for community events was suggested as a viable alternative venue, including space for structures like marquees.
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Parish Council and Community Action:

- A community survey is underway, with results to be presented at the Parish Assembly on 4th June and shared with the Duchy thereafter.
- The residents group is considering forming a legal entity to take on the Schoolhouse project.
- All parties agreed to maintain open and transparent communication going forward.

Meeting Closure:

Emma Pryce (Duchy) closed the meeting, reaffirming the Duchy's desire for a cooperative relationship with the Parish and its willingness to invest in an alternative community space if consensus is reached.