

Madras College Parent Council

PRESS RELEASE

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FROM: John Barnett, Chairman
RE: Madras College, St Andrews
EMBARGO: For immediate release

Parents Welcome Decision as Opportunity to Move On to Deliver New School Fit for Purpose

“Understandably, parents are extremely disappointed by the news that the new Madras College school building on the University’s Langlands site will not now go ahead,” said John Barnett, Chairman of Madras College Parent Council.

“However, I have always recognised that negotiations on such a complex collaborative project would not be simple, and that the eventual outcome could not be forecast with complete certainty.”

“Parents in St Andrews and across the whole catchment area have been united in supporting the ongoing negotiations to deliver this project whilst reflecting a growing anxiety that the process was not progressing as fast as many had hoped. The continued uncertainty and seemingly endless negotiations have recently led to calls from some for an early decision to be made one way or the other.”

“Whilst parents and children are sad that the preferred proposal is now not to be, strangely enough, everyone with whom I spoken welcomes the clarity which yesterday’s decision by the University has now provided. Parents, and also I am sure people in general in the wider communities which Madras College serves, are now keen to participate in an immediate, thorough and speedy evaluation of the available options. It is fair to say that there is not at present unanimity on the optimum alternative site and plan.”

“Whilst all the options must be afforded due consideration and critical analysis of their respective pros and cons, including environmental implications, this stage should be conducted with all energy and intensity within a strict timetable. Any statutory requirements for consultation and planning must be started without delay so that work can be commenced as soon as possible.”

“Everyone acknowledges that the fabric of the existing two buildings has not been well maintained over the years and we owe it to present and future generations of children to make available as soon as possible a single site school building fit for purpose and capable of delivering the first class education which they deserve.”

“The efforts of the University and Fife Council to reach an agreed settlement must be acknowledged, and so also should the active and patient engagement of many parents, some of whose children will not now see the new school they had expected.”

“I would very much hope that the existing academic collaboration should be continued and strengthened in the future in spite of the impossibility of the original vision of a shared location and facilities. Indeed the parent body is very keen to become more engaged in supporting the school in its efforts to improve overall performance and views the continued involvement of the University of St Andrews in assisting with that aspiration as a key element. As parents, we strongly believe that the creation of a successful first class school - an exemplar to other state schools in Fife and throughout Scotland – is still both desirable and deliverable.”

“On a final note, I am delighted to have confirmed earlier today that the leadership and senior officials of Fife Council will be meeting all parents of pupils at Madras College and feeder primary schools next week in order to address the options and choices which are presently available. I am sure that they will be as eager as are the parents to move towards an early resolution of the best way to deliver the long-overdue quality teaching and learning environment to which the parents, pupils and community at large are entitled to expect.”

ENDS

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