



FEARNHILL SCHOOL

Headteacher – Ms E Ellis BA, MA

3rd May 2022

Dear parents and carers

Consultation on the dissolution of the combined Schools' Co-Operative Trust Partnership

Nearly ten years ago, The Highfield and Fearnhill Schools entered a Co-Operative Trust Partnership ("Partnership Trust"). This was seen at the time as a new, innovative, and unique way forward for the independent Governance of Schools. The Partnership Trust's primary objective was to empower the Trustees to be able to manage the schools' land and buildings rather than this being performed by central and local authorities.

Recently, Fearnhill School approached The Highfield School to propose winding up the Partnership Trust. Both schools have agreed that, ten years on, the broader educational landscape has changed and the opportunities initially envisioned for the Partnership Trust have not been realised. It has also become an unnecessary administrative burden and barrier to allowing each school to make the right independent decisions that best serve the education of their students.

Independently of the Partnership Trust, the two schools have successfully established and continue to enjoy a very successful working partnership for the joint sixth form and share values that enable them to support the local community. These real benefits will continue independently of any decisions made on the Partnership Trust.

Winding up the Trust will have no impact on the high quality education offered at both schools; it will continue to be 'business as usual' for students and staff.

We are therefore consulting about a proposal to wind up the Partnership Trust. We are primarily doing this:

- to give greater autonomy to each of the Schools' Governing Bodies over the ownership and control of their school site and buildings. This will enable, for example, the consideration of schemes with other community organisations, exploring options to allow more significant investment in the education of the students through improved facilities. Many local schools' students have already benefited from doing this,
- to enable the Governing Bodies to consider independently the respective benefits of the new Government's White Paper: "Opportunity for all: Strong schools with great teachers for your child" (March 2022), so that they can properly evaluate, in the medium term, options to form or join a multi-academy trust,
- to reduce the administrative burden on the Governing Bodies and the Schools' leadership teams involved in maintaining the Partnership Trust company vehicle.

Further details are set out in the consultation document available here:

www.fearnhill.herts.sch.uk/consultation

Icknield Way, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 4BA

Telephone: 01462 621200 – Email: admin@fearnhill.herts.sch.uk – Website: www.fearnhill.herts.sch.uk

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The informal stage of the consultation will end at 5pm on 31st May, and we welcome your feedback.

Please respond to:

consultation@fearnhill.herts.sch.uk

Yours faithfully

Ms E Ellis
Headteacher

Mr N Hathway
Chair of Governors

Icknield Way, Letchworth Garden City, Hertfordshire SG6 4BA

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