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## **QUESTIONS AT ANY TIME TO CABINET PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

<b>Question From:</b>	County Councillor Iain McIntosh
<b>Subject:</b>	School Closure Proposals - Follow up
<b>Question To:</b>	County Councillor James Gibson-Watt, Leader and Cabinet Member for an Open and Transparent Powys and County Councillor Pete Roberts Cabinet Member for a Learning Powys

### **Question:**

I thank Cllr Pete Roberts for the response given today [12/0/22], to the question asked on behalf of myself, residents, teachers, parents and children within the Yscir and Honddu Isaf with Llanddew ward here - [Agenda item - Question from: County Councillor Iain McIntosh Subject: School Closure Proposals Cyngor Sir Powys County Council \(moderngov.co.uk\)](#), but I am disappointed it took five weeks to respond, and that neither Cllr Pete Roberts nor the Leader, Cllr James Gibson-Watt, have identified nor answered the very simple questions at the end of the agenda item.

The first part, or the preamble, within my question dated 7<sup>th</sup> July laid out the commitments made by the Liberal Democrats during the recent election campaign, to keep Powys primary schools **open**. It was very clear. These commitments have also been reported in the Brecon and Radnor Express over the last three weeks, as per the attached screenshots, and restated within the video I circulated here - [https://www.facebook.com/CllrIainMcIntosh/posts/pfbid02wJ4wTz15g6YmBX13MHB\\_Sj5fuCqYU2So8MvUP3XZvSb4cM9Yj3XSu9BPmGnEBG7x5l](https://www.facebook.com/CllrIainMcIntosh/posts/pfbid02wJ4wTz15g6YmBX13MHB_Sj5fuCqYU2So8MvUP3XZvSb4cM9Yj3XSu9BPmGnEBG7x5l).

Further to this, I attach photographs of Cllr Pete Roberts and other Liberal Democrats attending a protest walk objecting to the closure of Cradoc Primary School, and a copy of the petition signed by Cllr Pete Roberts against the school's closure. These actions enhanced public perception that Liberal Democrats were against the closure of Cradoc Primary school. It is therefore very clear the Liberal Democrats made commitments to keep primary schools open, and made members of the public believe they wanted to keep Cradoc and other primary schools open, and would do so if elected to Council. Therefore, can they please answer the simple question put at the end of the agenda item of 7<sup>th</sup> July:

**Can the Cabinet Member for Education and the Leader confirm whether the LibDem/Labour coalition intends to carry out their pre-election commitments to prevent the closure of all three schools, (Cradoc, Dolau and Llanbedr) or not?**

The second part of the question sent to you on 7<sup>th</sup> July referred in the preamble to misleading comments made during a Cabinet meeting and an Education Scrutiny meeting. Links to video recordings of both meetings, with the exact time during the

meetings when the claims were made have been provided. I therefore repeat the second question, made very clear at the bottom of the previous agenda item:

**Can they (Cllr James Gibson-Watt and Cllr Pete Roberts) also both apologise for misleading Cabinet, Council and the public please?**

**Finally, as Cllr Pete Roberts has tried to suggest no question was asked within my submission made on 7<sup>th</sup> July, when there were two very clear questions at the end, can he apologise to myself, residents, teachers, parents and children within the Yscir and Honddu Isaf with Llanddew ward, for what appears to be a very cavalier, antagonistic and quite frankly insulting response?**

**Can he also reply sooner than five weeks this time, please?**



# BETRAYAL?

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**"THIS IS ONE OF THE BIGGEST LOCAL ELECTION BETRAYALS IN RECENT HISTORY"** Cllr Iain McIntosh

A POWYS County councillor has described the decision to go ahead with closing three Brecon primary schools as "sticking two fingers up" to residents, teachers, parents and children.

Iain McIntosh, who represents Yscir with Honddu Isaf and Llanddew, slammed his Liberal Democrat and Labour colleagues who he claims have not stuck to their pre-election promises.

Last Friday, July 21, a motion put forward by Cllr McIntosh to save Cradoc Primary School was heavily defeated.

The motion put to the Welsh Liberal Democrat and Labour-led council would have kept the school open and ensured that there were no other

proposals to close it made during this council's five-year term.

Cllr McIntosh, who has campaigned tirelessly to save the primary school based inside his ward, said: "One of the reasons behind my motion was to try and get the newly elected Liberal Democrat and Labour Councillors to stand by the commitments they made during the recent elections to keep Cradoc School open.

"During the election campaign, unequivocal commitments were made by members of the new administration to keep Cradoc, Dolau and Llanbedr schools open".

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**Cllr Pete Roberts, Cllr Iain McIntosh and Cradoc Primary School (PCC and Google Street View).**

**By Ariane Brunwell & Elgan Hearn**

Staff Reporter & Local Democracy Reporter

[ariane@brecon-radnor.co.uk](mailto:ariane@brecon-radnor.co.uk)

Cllr McIntosh said after the meeting: “It is clear from the results that both parties voted against this motion, effectively sticking two fingers up to Powys residents, teachers, parents and children who believed their pre-election promises.

“As mentioned during last week’s Full Council meeting, I believe this to be one of the biggest local election betrayals in recent history.”

While Cllr McIntosh had hoped that the new Lib Dem/Labour administration would stop the closure, the recent cabinet meeting confirmed that the reorganisation of Brecon primary schools would still go ahead as planned.

Cradoc Primary School will close along with Mount Street Junior and Mount Street Infant and Nursery as they merge to become one school.

In his summing up at the meeting last Friday, Cllr McIntosh said: “Not one single parent has ever approached me and indicated any approval of the plans to close our school.

“Cradoc is an outstanding and very popular school with almost 100 pupils.

“It is the hub of our community.”

The vote saw 14 councillors in favour of the motion 41 against and 4 abstentions.

Following the meeting, Cllr McIntosh said that he

was “bitterly disappointed” with the result, but he was not giving up.

“I will continue to fight against this decision as hard as I can,” said Cllr McIntosh.

The previous cabinet’s decision made just before Christmas 2021 to close the three schools is not due to be implemented until the summer of 2023.

The first phase will see all three schools merged by August 31 – 2023 under one governing body and teaching management team.

The second phase is to have a new 360-place school built on the former Brecon High School site by 2025/26.

Cabinet member for a learning Powys, Cllr Pete Roberts: “The problem with this motion is it asks that the school is subject to any closure for five years.

“That means we can’t federate it or put it into a cluster arrangement.

“It places it in a unique position – what sensible organisation would fetter its hands in this way?

“It’s essential that we judge each individual school proposal and catchment review on its merits.”

He pointed out that the proposal had been through several cabinet and scrutiny meetings.

Cllr Roberts was approached for a comment on Cllr McIntosh’s comments following the meeting, however, he did not respond before *The Brecon and Radnor Express* went to print.



# School closures defended by councillor

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**“We gave clear commitments to Llanbedr and Dolau... we have delivered.” Cllr Pete Roberts**

A POWYS cabinet member has defended the council's decision to close three Brecon schools saying the cabinet has “delivered” on its election promises.

Cllr Pete Roberts, the cabinet member for a learning Powys, defended the decision to go ahead with closing Cradoc School along with Mount Street Infants and Juniors after the council came under fire last week from opposition councillor Iain McIntosh.

Cllr McIntosh accused the new Liberal Democrat and Labour run council of not sticking

to pre-election promises to save the schools.

However, Cllr Roberts said that the Welsh Lib Dems gave clear commitments to both Llanbedr Church in Wales School and Llanfihangel Rhydithon County Primary School, more commonly known as Dolau School.

Cllr Roberts said: “During the election campaign we gave clear commitments to Llanbedr and Dolau about how we would proceed if we were elected and we have delivered.”

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THE Powys cabinet member for learning has argued that the council has delivered on its pre-election promises after it came under fire last week for the closure of three Brecon schools.

Cllr Pete Roberts said: "We also committed to retaining smaller schools in cluster arrangements and phase 1 of the Cradoc - Mount Street proposals achieves that aim.

"What we were unaware of was that the Cabinet of which Cllr Iain was a member had not disclosed the minimum £76m backlog on schools maintenance which would take a council tax rise of at least 20 per cent to clear in the next five years.

"In this context and, given the significant hidden costs at the Cradoc site revealed by Cllr Iain's motion, and subject to business cases, the previous Conservative decisions leave no option other than to continue with their plans or risk this school and schools elsewhere having to close on health and safety grounds."

Last week, Cllr McIntosh hit out the cabinet after a motion to save Cradoc School was heavily defeated 41 to 14 earlier last month. There were also four abstentions.

The motion, which was defeated on Friday, July 21, would have kept the school open and ensured that there were no other proposals to close it made during this council's five-year term.

Cllr McIntosh, who has been a huge campaigner to keep the school open, said last week: "One of the reasons behind my motion was to try and get the newly elected Liberal Democrat and Labour Councillors to stand by the commitments they made during the recent elections to

## Continued from Front



**Cllr Iain McIntosh campaigning to save Cradoc School**

keep Cradoc School open.

"During the election campaign, unequivocal commitments were made by members of the new administration to keep Cradoc, Dolau and Llanbedr schools open.

"It is clear from the results that both parties voted against this motion, effectively sticking two fingers up to Powys residents, teachers, parents and children who believed their pre-election promises.

"As mentioned during last week's Full Council meeting, I believe this to be one of the biggest local election betrayals in recent history."

The previous cabinet's decision made just before Christmas 2021 to close the three schools is not due to be implemented until the summer of 2023.

The first phase will see all three schools merged by August 31, 2023, under one governing body and teaching management team.

The second phase is to have a new 360-place school built on the former Brecon High School site by 2025/26.

Before the election in May, schools were a large component of the discussion on what each

party would deliver for the county.

In the week before the election, Cllr Gibson-Watt spoke about saving schools when he put forward what the Welsh Liberal Democrats would offer Powys - although he did not mention any schools by name.

Speaking to LDRS reporter Elgan Hearn at the time, and as reported in *The Brecon & Radnor Express* on Wednesday, May 4, the now council leader said: "We need to re-focus the school's transformation programme, I'm very unhappy that some major decisions were taken right at the end of the last council which will, to a degree, bind the hands of the next council.

"For me, schools transformation should have been conducted on a cross-party basis,

"Our aim is to find a way to keep as many schools as possible by pursuing a clustering approach which other local authorities have successfully done. This means that several primary schools work together on some aspects such as the curriculum and economies of scale. Schools are the hearts of the communities and the impact on villages is very dramatic and negative when you close them."



# Furious councillor tells Lib Dems 'save school or resign'...

By Ariane Brunwell  
Reporter  
ariane@brecon-radnor.co.uk

A POWYS County Councillor has called for the Powys' Liberal Democrat councillors to resign if they cannot commit to saving and rebuilding Cradoc School.

Cllr Iain McIntosh has accused the Powys Lib Dem group of "pulling the wool" over people's eyes following the cabinet member for learning's attempt to defend the closure of Cradoc, Mount Street Juniors and Mountain Street Infants schools last week.

Cllr McIntosh, who has accused the party of breaking its pre-election promise to try to save rural schools, shared a video to his social media accounts following last week's edition of the Brecon & Radnor Express.

Cllr McIntosh said in the video, which can be watched in full on our website: "My message now to Pete Roberts, James Gibson-Watt, Jane Dodds and their Liberal Democrat



Cllr Iain McIntosh and Cllr Pete Roberts inset over a photo of Cradoc School from Google Street View. Bottom left is Raif Devlin as shown in the video.

like Cradoc, and believes in the future of rural communities and has the means to deliver it."

In the edition, which came out on Wednesday, August 3, cabinet member for learning Cllr Pete Roberts defended the school closures saying the party had given clear commitments to Llanbedr Church in Wales School and Llanfihangel Rhydithon County Primary School which they had delivered on.

Cllr Roberts said: "During the election campaign we gave clear commitments to Llanbedr and Dolau about how we would proceed if we were elected and we have delivered. We also committed to retaining smaller schools in cluster arrangements and phase 1 of the Cradoc - Mount

Street proposals achieves that aim.

"What we were unaware of was that the Cabinet of which Cllr Iain was a member had not disclosed the minimum £76m backlog on schools maintenance which would take a council tax rise of at least 20 per cent to clear in the next five years.

"In this context and, given the significant hidden costs at the Cradoc site revealed by Cllr Iain's motion, and subject to business cases, the previous Conservative decisions leave no option other than to continue with their plans or risk this school and schools elsewhere having to close on health and safety grounds."

Cllr Roberts was in response to an earlier statement by Cllr McIntosh when a motion to save Cradoc school was defeated.

Cllr McIntosh described the defeat as "the biggest betrayal in local election history" and as being like "sticking two fingers up" to parents, children, and school staff.

colleagues - you made very clear to all of Powys you would try unequivocally to save and rebuild Cradoc School.

"Can you please commit to that now. If you can't, I believe you and your fellow Liberal Democrat colleagues should all resign now forcing by-elections where the public can vote on your renewed commitment to close primary schools in Powys."

In the video, which was published on Wednesday, Cllr McIntosh highlights the promises of one of the Welsh Lib Dem candidates, Raif Devlin, who was not successful in his bid to join Powys County Council.

In the video, Mr Devlin said: "Under our strategy for education in Powys, schools like Cradoc will be brought back from the brink of closure, and their futures secured.

"To save and rebuild a school which matters so much to us all, vote for a political party that recognised the importance of rural schools just





We the undersigned, object to the decision made by the Cabinet at Powys County Council, on the 14<sup>th</sup> December 2021, to close Cradoc Primary School, for the reasons listed at the front of this petition.

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IAN MCMOSH	<i>Ian Mcintosh</i>	LD3 9BP
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James EVANS.	<i>James</i>	
Fay Jones	<i>Fay Jones</i>	
Pete Roberts	<i>Pete Roberts</i>	
Leon W D Evans	<i>Leon W D Evans</i>	
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Unffordd  
One way



# LibDems

