

## Press Release



Date: 1 April 2019

### **Campaigning charity speaks out against closure of Clapham C of E Primary School**

Friends of the Dales, a registered charity, campaigns for the protection and enhancement of the Dales including promoting the social and economic well-being of the local communities in the Dales.

Mark Corner, Chair of the charity said: “We are very concerned that the closure of Clapham Primary School would further reduce the sustainability of its local community.

We recognise the challenge of low pupil numbers but to close the school at a time when significant efforts are being made to reverse the decline in the number of younger people living in the Yorkshire Dales National Park would, we suggest, be a regrettable decision.

Recently, the Leaders of the four constituent district councils and the National Park Authority have agreed an objective in the National Park Management Plan 2019-2024 to ‘Undertake a 5-year programme of measures to promote the National Park as a place to live for younger, working age households (18-44) to help halt the decline in their numbers.’

There are already positive developments in Clapham with the delivery of new housing. We suggest that NYCC needs to have confidence that this plan will deliver. There is a danger that if the potential number of school age children in the catchment grows as a result of these efforts and the school has closed then we will have a capacity problem and the ability to attract young families to the area will be damaged. We will be ‘shooting ourselves in the foot’.

We would strongly recommend that the decision on the future of the school is put on hold for at least 12 months to give time for this plan to start delivering.

We are also not clear why the previous arrangement of the confederation of the Clapham and Austwick schools cannot be re-established, with a shared Head etc.”

*Photo (if supplied) Caption: Clapham C of E Primary School photo Mark Corner, Friends of the Dales*

*For further information contact: Ann Shadrake, Executive Director, Friends of the Dales, on 01756 749400 or email [ann.shadrake@friendsofthedales.org.uk](mailto:ann.shadrake@friendsofthedales.org.uk)*

**Note to editors: Friends of the Dales is the working name of the Yorkshire Dales Society, a registered charity (515384) that works to campaign, protect and promote enjoyment of the national park and adjacent areas.** We offer a year round programme of events, walks and talks so everyone can enjoy and learn more about this beautiful area and why it needs protection. One of our key projects is the provision of the Sunday Dalesbus service, benefitting residents, businesses and visitors alike.

Registered office: Canal Wharf, Eshton Road, Gargrave, North Yorkshire BD23 3PN. Tel 01756749400

Web: [www.friendsofthedales.org.uk](http://www.friendsofthedales.org.uk) Facebook: [facebook.com/YorkshireDalesSociety](https://facebook.com/YorkshireDalesSociety)

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