PRESS RELEASE

A unique opportunity has arisen in Cornhill-on-Tweed village.

The once thriving Cornhill First School was built in 1993 to replace the old school building in Knowe Head.   It was open as a school for just 19 years and closed in 2012 due to the dwindling number of pupils.   During the last seven years it has stood empty.   Several planning applications, including a proposal to build 24 houses on the site, have been refused due to their unsuitability for the rural nature and population profile of the village.

Northumberland County Council has now given Cornhill Parish Council the opportunity to formulate a plan, via a Community Asset Transfer, for using the premises for the benefit of the community.   This includes the grass play area, which has been available to the public for recreation since the opening of the school.   In order to protect this green space for posterity, there is a firm proposal to upgrade this to Village Green status, thus giving the residents an open space away from the main road.

Plans and discussions are still at a very early stage.   A public meeting was held in the village on 4th July 2019 for the purpose of consulting with the local and wider community, and to invite suggestions as to the future use of the building. A number of these have already come forward.

Initially the Parish Council is taking the lead on this, and it was made clear that the Parish Council must be in partnership with a company or organisation which will take over the maintenance and running of the project.   It is envisaged that a Village Trust will need to be formed to manage an agreed use of the premises, and the Parish Council is keen to hear from anyone who might be interested in using the school building.   Since the building has been empty for some years, it will be necessary to expedite the project to avoid deterioration.

The Parish Council and wider local community are working towards enabling the school building to gain a new life as once again a working and valued community asset.

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