

## Chaddesley cares about Planet Earth

What excellent news that the new school looks likely to be built – and what a relief for those who have worked so long and hard to make this happen. And.....what an exciting environmental challenge too! It is not every day that a large school building is constructed from scratch.

This construction provides a unique opportunity to demonstrate how the latest technologies can reduce costs, deliver a truly 21<sup>st</sup> century showcase of best practice, and dramatically reduce running costs. However another challenge is to change thinking that says “spend the least we can now and the future will not be our problem”, to the alternative philosophy which says “a little more money spent now will produce greater benefits later on”. We need to take a truly long term perspective. The School needs to meet not only today’s standards, but also those we can anticipate coming in the future.

Best solutions need to be built into the plans at the design stage to avoid wasted time and money trying to change things later on. For example, if it affects the way the foundations are dug, it needs to be planned now: If it affects the shape of the building it needs to be planned now: If it affects the orientation of the building, it needs to be planned now.

What’s this to do with Chaddesley cares and the Environmental Working Group, you might ask? Well, we are as excited about this project as we believe that everyone in the Parish should be. We are sure the businessmen amongst us will all have seen too many projects fail to grasp all the opportunities. We see benefits not only to the pupils and staff, but also to our community, and we are a part of that. We want to help make this school a nationally recognised success. But above all, we have a vision and want to share it.

**Best location** – the location and orientation of the building needs to take advantage of – natural light and heat; shelter from the prevailing winds through tree planting and orientation; adequate traffic system to ensure no congestion within the site and no interruption on the main road, and optimise the environment for all types of wildlife.

**Best technologies** – insulation to the highest standards (the requirements seem to increase each year), underfloor heating, double/triple glazing; combined heat and power technology; ground source heat pumps; solar water heating; energy efficient lighting with sophisticated control systems; rainwater harvesting; recycling of water and heat; to name but a few! Also worth consideration would be wood pellet fuel burners; passive heat recovery and energy from asphalt. And whether any excess might be made available to the community.

**Educational benefits** – use of the site to demonstrate best practice, as an educational tool for pupils and also for local residents; pupils will become future ambassadors in environmental awareness; and an example of good school practice nationwide.

There could be some **other benefits** – the sports facilities might create a local amenity and be an income generator. A grey water lake from the recycling of water would encourage water dependent wildlife and flora. A large school hall could become a focal point for community activities.

A school is a unique environment where staff can use pupils as a resource, to ensure that best practice is adhered to all the time. Thus future generations can learn about the technologies and how best to exploit them. Chaddesley School already has Green Flag status for ECO schools. The staff and children should be involved in the evolution of the new school.

All eco stuff? No, not at all, there are **tangible benefits** for going down this route – automatic economies of scale from a larger school; provided that the correct capital investment decisions are made now, then on going expenses will be reduced over time; ground source heating will save money; combined heat and power will save money; harvesting of rainwater to flush toilets and irrigate will save money; insulation to the highest technical standards will save money. A flexible interior design will allow for school expansion without the upheaval and cost of new build or temporary buildings, thereby saving money. Benefits manifest themselves in hard cash, quite apart from the moral, educational, and environmental intangibles, which common sense tells us must be worthwhile