

# Queen Victoria not amused by school demolition

**QUEEN Victoria was 'not amused' by the proposals to demolish Stockton Heath Primary School.**

Royal look-alike June Lornie (pictured right) joined protestors representing the Victorian Society who are adding their support to the campaign to save the school.

June, who has been making appearances as Queen Victoria for more than 20 years, said: "Victorian buildings have much more character than modern ones – and once they are gone they are gone forever.

"Far too many Victorian buildings have been demolished. They form an important part of local history and everything should be done to try and preserve them.

Meanwhile a war of words has broken out over the controversial plans to demolish the school and replace it with a completely new building. On the one side are the parish council, borough councillors, school governors and some staff and parents.

Ranged against them are SHARCS – the Stockton Heath Alternative Residents Council – a new group of local people who say they are to contest seats at next year's council elections, an action group set up to preserve the existing school building and some staff and parents.

Borough councillor Celia Jordan, who is currently chairman of the parish council and deputy Mayor of Warrington, has distributed a letter to constituents to explain her position on the school plan. She says she has been misunderstood because she has, ever since the proposals for the school were first announced, had an open mind.

But, having studied all the information available, she is now convinced that new build will result in a better school at less cost. Her letter, distributed with the Liberal Democrat Focus newsletter, has drawn a sharp

response from Steven Taylor, spokesman for SHARCS, who accuses Coun Jordan of being 'out of touch'.

Mr Taylor said: "I remain unconvinced that she ever had an open mind on this one. Only the head teacher, governors, some of the staff and a minority of parents support the new build option.

"The cost exercises undertaken were inadequate to resolve the real differences and the schemes evaluated were also restricted in terms of design brief.

"No one has ever provided a sufficiently robust costed version of a refurbishment scheme, so how do they know what it would really cost



extra. Smart money believes that refurbishment is cheaper – it is just a bit harder to conceive and achieve."

Stockton Heath Parish Council has voted 9-3 to support a new demolition and re-build plan.

The proposals - which replace earlier ones rejected by the borough council earlier this year, will come before the development control committee early in the New Year.