

Save St Guthlac's School - Press Article

St Guthlac School issues not been thought through

I WRITE with regard to the recent articles concerning the closure of St Guthlac School in Crowland.

I feel there are many issues that, in my opinion, have not been thought through.

What would happen should a pupil miss the school bus, or fall ill during the school day? How would he/she get to school, or home, from Holbeach?

There is no direct bus route, and a working parent (a lot of whom may be working in Peterborough) would have up to an hour's drive to collect their child. I work at one of the primary schools in Holbeach, and can get (door to door) in 20 minutes, on a good day!

Now, that's in a small, fast hatchback. In a school bus, I can imagine that journey taking at least 45 minutes, and that's without getting stuck behind a farm vehicle, or HGV, of which there are plenty! The road itself is very narrow and extremely bumpy, so passing oncoming vehicles can get a bit hairy at times, especially lorries, vans, etc.

However, St Guthlac is not just for the children of Crowland. In fact, I have been told, that fewer than ten children from South View Primary School will be going to St Guthlac in September this year. St Guthlac has a 'niche' within the district. Some children come from the surrounding villages, some come from Peterborough, and some from Spalding.

For some parents, it's the smaller class sizes, the fact that the children are 'known' to their teachers, not just a number. For others, it may be that

in Spalding there are only 'same sex' schools, and they have both sons, and daughters who wish to go to school together.

Notwithstanding that, let's look at the primary school. South View is a very popular and over-subscribed school. They have erected a number of mobile classrooms within their grounds during the past three to four years, gradually eating away at the KS1 playground.

They are desperate for new premises, as each year's increased intake impacts on the class sizes through into KS2 and the ability to fit all of the children into the school hall for assemblies, etc. But how do you fit a primary school into a secondary school premises? It surely doesn't work, unless a lot of money is spent on redesigning the school to reflect primary education needs?

I would like to think that we could keep St Guthlac as it is and find a new site to build the bigger, bespoke primary school that is required.

To this end, I have written to our local MP, John Hayes, to ask for his help in this matter, and eagerly await his reply.

In the meantime, the petition has gained over 1,000 signatures and will soon be taken to Lincolnshire County Council to be presented to the chairman. Many thanks to all that have signed it.

COUN ANGELA HARRISON
South Holland district
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Save St Guthlac's School
<http://www.save-stguthlacs.co.uk/>

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