

...the council for children's services at Lincolnshire County Council said she would be extremely disappointed if the schools were to lose out and the funding snatched

A question mark also hangs over the £18 million academy proposals for The Holbeach and Crowland Federation.

Academy status was approved "in

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Jim Astill, inset, is spearheading opposition to the plans to close St Guthlac School in Crowland.

Save St Guthlac

FIERCE opposition to plans to axe the St Guthlac School in Crowland is growing - with a petition put in prominent places in the town to show the strength of feeling.

Jim Astill, whose children would attend the secondary school, has co-ordinated reaction to the shock news by setting up a Facebook group - Proposed Closure of St Guthlac's (sic) School in Crowland - which now has more than 230 members.

The closure would be the result of an £18m revamp of the George Farmer Technology and Language College in Holbeach to transform the facility into an academy.

Residents can sign a petition against the move at Co-op, Spar, Crowland Service Station and China Palace with a view to presenting it to the governors of both schools, which are linked in a federation, and Lincolnshire County Council executive member for children's

services Coun Patricia Bradwell.

Speaking yesterday morning, Mr Astill said: "There does appear to be a growing amount of discontent amongst the community with these proposals.

"The Facebook group now has 232 members and a majority of the comments are against the proposals."

Mr Astill questions why Coun Bradwell and Holbeach headteacher Steve Baragwanath are talking about the "proposals" in definite language and feels they are wrong to suggest it will be good for the whole area, since Holbeach will benefit most from the academy.

He fears that the academy could become oversubscribed, forcing Crowland's youngsters to be spread across Holbeach, Deeping and Spalding.

Residents were upset with comments made by Coun Bradwell when the academy plans, spon-

sored by the University of Lincoln, were announced.

She said: "This is excellent news for children and young people in the area.

"It will provide them with enhanced education provision with top quality resources and modern buildings."

Mr Astill responded: "At this point, I will challenge Coun Bradwell to visit Crowland and speak to the community about the proposals.

"It's easy for her to sit in County Hall and say the proposals are OK. But what I really want is for her to look us in the eye and state that she's happy to rip the heart out of the community.

"Finally, if Coun Bradwell is reading this, Crowland is at the south of the county, about 55 miles from Lincoln, but also over 15 miles from Holbeach."