

Monks Eleigh: Push to keep school building as an ‘educational establishment’

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Monks Eleigh Primary School

Villagers who have been campaigning against the closure of their tiny primary school say they are determined to keep the building for educational use.

The number of students at Monks Eleigh Primary School plummeted from 37 to just nine after it was judged inadequate by Ofsted following an inspection last July.

Despite the appointment of an interim executive board and a new headteacher, the last pupils left the school at Easter and a consultation process over its future has just ended.

Members of the ‘SaveMe School’ group are resigned to the fact that the local education authority is unlikely to re-open the school because it is no longer considered viable.

But the group, including community members, ex-teachers and parents, is keen to ensure that the village retains an educational establishment of some sort and is pushing to keep the

school building in Church Field for that purpose. Group members have met informally with the county council's early years outreach officer to discuss the possibility setting up a pre-school at the site. However, they have been told they will have to carry out their own feasibility studies and fund the consultation work themselves.

Group member Barbara Syms said: "No-one has given us any information and we have had to do all of the digging. It is still up to us as a community to sort it out and it's a huge job for us to do it all ourselves.

"All we want is for Suffolk County Council to step up to the mark and help us to do something with that building so we can keep some sort of educational facility in Monks Eleigh. We are looking at the possibility of a pre-school and we would like to think that the county is on board with the idea of helping us to achieve that."

A county council spokesman said the group had been given informal advice and guidance on the options open to them. He added: "Once the school closes officially on October 24, the group will be in the position to carry out a feasibility study and consultation to find out whether there is need for an educational facility at the site. Any proposed educational use will of course need to be backed by evidence-based consultation and a sustainable business plan to ensure its use and longevity."