

Shelton with Hardwick Primary School (Community)

Statutory Proposal to close the school

1. Local Authority details

Norfolk County Council
County Hall
Martineau Lane
Norwich
Norfolk
NR1 2DL

2. School contact details

Shelton with Hardwick Primary
School
Low Road
Shelton
Norfolk
NR15 2SD

3. Implementation

The proposal is to close Shelton with Hardwick Primary School on 31 December 2019. This is a Community school. It does not have any provision reserved for children with special education needs. It is also proposed to extend the catchment area of Hempnall Primary School (Community) to accommodate the change.

The decision to consult on school closure was taken by the officers of the Council County on 24th May 2019, following a request from the Governing Board on 19th May 2019. A consultation proposal was published on 4th June 2019, for six weeks and sent to parents of pupils at Shelton with Hardwick and Hempnall schools, staff and governors at the schools as well as key stakeholders. A copy of the consultation proposal is attached as Appendix 1. A copy of the consultation report is attached at Appendix 2.

4. Reason for closure

The proposal to close Shelton with Hardwick Primary School is based on;

- There will not be any pupils at the school from 1 September 2019.

Therefore it is difficult to deliver and sustain quality education for children now and in the future.

5. Pupil numbers and admissions

The school's age range is 4 – 11 years and provision is available for boys and girls. Total pupil numbers have been significantly lower than the capacity of the school, which is designed to accommodate up to 49 pupils. In the past 10 years, the highest number of pupils on roll was 39 pupils (Sept 2010).

The school has only attracted 40% of the catchment pupils in the last 3 years, the level of local demand satisfied by this school is extremely low. Some parents in surrounding areas continue to choose Shelton and in the last 3 years, 75% of pupils taking places at the school have come from out of catchment.

Shelton with Hardwick Primary school had 29 children on their roll at the beginning of the 2018-19 Academic year of which 17% lived in Shelton catchment and 83% from outside catchment.

There are 0 pupils on roll as at 4th September 2019.

6. Displaced pupils

There will be no displaced pupils as there are no pupils at the school from 1 September 2019.

The majority of pupils have chosen to attend Hempnall Primary School which is federated with Shelton and shares the same governing board and headteacher. This school is approximately 3 miles from Hempnall Primary School.

There are 6 schools within 5 miles of Shelton with Hardwick Primary School.

Hempnall Primary School – 3 miles

Manor Field Infant School, Long Stratton – 3 miles

Preston CofE VC Primary School, Tasburgh – 5 miles

Pulham CofE Primary School – 4.9 miles

Saxlingham Nethergate CofE VC Primary School – 4.4 miles

St Mary's CofE Junior School, Long Stratton – 3.1 miles

The nearest primary school to Shelton with Hardwick Primary School is Hempnall Primary School.

It is proposed that the catchment area of Hempnall Primary School will be expanded with effect from 31 December 2019, to serve the area currently served by Shelton with Hardwick Primary School.

Please refer to Section 10; Special Education Needs provision

7. Impact on the community

It is clear from the informal consultation that Shelton with Hardwick Primary School is a much-loved school in the local community. We know that there will always be sadness when we propose the closure of a school. Our priority is to make a decision that is best for the children's education both now and in the future. However it is recognised that there are not the children in the catchment area now or likely to be in the future.

The closure of Shelton with Hardwick Primary school would remove primary education provision from the village. However, there are several other primary schools within a reasonable travelling distance of Shelton.

Built in 1851, the school site is 0.68 hectares, consisting of 3 classroom spaces.

The building and immediate surrounds are leased by Norfolk County Council from Diocese of Norwich. The lease for the field is from a local landowner. If the proposal for closure is agreed, negotiations will need to take place on the termination of the lease.

The school is not used by any community groups as the location is not in a central position in the village. The potential impact of the loss of the school as a community venue should be minimal.

8. Rural Primary Schools

As Shelton with Hardwick Primary School is designated as a rural school by the Department for Education, there are some particular considerations for the proposers of any closure. There is a presumption against the closure of rural schools. This does not mean rural schools should not close. It means that the 'case for closure should be strong and the proposal must be clearly in the best interests of educational provision in the area'.

Norfolk County Council in formulating these proposals has given consideration to the matters under Section 15 (4) of the Education and Inspections Act 2016, being;

- a) The likely effect of closure of the school on the local community
- b) The educational standards at the school and the likely effect on standards at neighbouring schools
- c) The availability and likely cost to the Local Authority of transport to other schools
- d) Any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from the closure of the school and the likely effects of any such increase
- e) Any alternatives to the closure of the school.

- a) The likely effect of closure of the school on the community
Please see the section 7: Impact on the Community

- b) Educational standards at the school and the likely effect on standards at neighbouring schools

The curriculum has been delivered via mixed age groups, although there have been opportunities to share some activities with children at their federated school in Hempnall.

The impact of low pupil numbers is a concern. The school has the capacity for 49 pupils. In the last 10 years, the highest number of pupils on roll was in September 2010, with 39 pupils. The steady low numbers over the past years make it challenging to ensure that pupils receive

teaching which is well matched to their age and abilities, have the necessary breadth of social experiences, sufficient peer interaction and the opportunity for children to work in groups.

It is not considered that the proposed closure of Shelton with Hardwick Primary School would have any detrimental effect on standards at neighbouring schools. All are either judged 'Good' or 'Outstanding' by Ofsted. They would therefore be able to adjust to additional pupils and provide them with a good education.

Hempnall Primary School – Good, October 2017

Manor Field Infant School – Good, November 2016

Preston CofE VC Primary School – Good, September 2018

Pulham CofE Primary School – Good, March 2017

Saxlingham Primary School – Good, January 2018

St Mary's CofE Junior School – Good, October 2016

c) The availability and likely cost to the Local Authority of transport to other schools

If the school closed, it is not anticipated that there will be an impact on Norfolk County Council's school transport budget as there are no pupils at the school from 1 September 2019 and numbers of children living in Shelton with Hardwick are low.

d) Any increase in the use of motor vehicles which is likely to result from closure of the school and the likely effects of any increase

Please refer to Section 11; Travel.

e) Any alternatives to the closure of the school

The federated governing body have regularly considered academisation, however as a very small school they are unlikely to meet the due diligence requirements of any Multi-Academy Trust as the finances are unsustainable in the short, medium and long term.

9. Balance of denominational provision

Shelton with Hardwick Primary School is not a school with a religious character and therefore this proposal has no effect on the balance of denominational provision in the local area.

10. Special Education Needs provision

Shelton with Hardwick Primary School does not include provision reserved for pupils with Special Education Needs. Norfolk County Council is committed to ensuring that the needs of all children and young people with special education needs will be met. If the closure of this school is approved, it will be essential to review the provision required for those pupils with a statement of SEN or Education Care Plan and following consultation with individual parents, an alternative school where provision would be made available for their child will be named. There are currently no such pupils at the school.

11. Travel

Norfolk County Council's policy is to provide school transport free of charge for those pupils who attend their catchment school or nearest available school, where this is beyond the qualifying distance (over 2 miles for under 8s and over 3 miles for older children), as set out in our School Transport Policy. As previously stated, there are no displaced pupils affected by the school closure proposal and numbers of children living in Shelton with Hardwick are low, so it is not anticipated that there will be an impact on Norfolk County Council's school transport budget.

12. Procedure for making representation

Within 4 weeks from the date of publication, any person may object to, express support for, or make comments on the proposals by;

- by emailing Norfolk County Council at schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk,
- by writing to Norfolk County Council at:
Shelton Consultation, Norfolk County Council, FREEPOST, 1H 2076,
Floor 8, Bay 34, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich, NR1 2BR.
You do not need a stamp.

The closing date for all comments is 10th October 2019

Appendix 1 – consultation proposal



Consultation on a proposal to close Shelton with Hardwick Community Primary School and extend the catchment area of Hempnall Primary School

What is the proposal?

The proposal is to close Shelton with Hardwick Community Primary School with effect from 31st December 2019 and to extend the catchment area of Hempnall Primary School (Community), to accommodate the change.

Shelton with Hardwick Community Primary school is a primary school taking pupils from the age of 4 years to 11 years and is designated as a rural school (rural hamlet with isolated dwellings) by the Department for Education, 2017.

Why is Norfolk County Council proposing closure?

The consultation on the proposed closure of Shelton with Hardwick Community Primary School was brought forward as a request from the Governing Board of the school on 19 May 2019. The governors reluctantly requested the Council to consult on closure of the school as;

- There will not be any pupils at the school from 1 September 2019

There are a number of aspects that the Norfolk County Council as the Decision-Maker must take into account when considering the organisation of schools to ensure it is in the best interest of children's education and achievement. These include school leadership, performance, impact on the community, diversity of provision, need for places, travel, early years provision and special education provision.

The proposal to close Shelton with Hardwick Community Primary School is based on;

- There will not be any pupils at the school from 1 September 2019.

Therefore it is difficult to deliver and sustain quality education for children now and in the future.

Low pupil numbers

The school has been a small rural school for many years. Recently pupil numbers have declined. Many pupils attend the school from out of the school catchment area. Forecasts for future children, show a continued trend of low numbers, within the Shelton with Hardwick catchment area. The School wrote to parents in April 2019, to outline changes to the staffing structure from September. As a result all the parents have requested to move their children to other schools from September 2019.

No sustainable budget

Pupil numbers determine the school budget. All schools receive a lump sum as part of their annual funding budget from the Department for Education, which is added to, with funding based on the number of pupils on roll. The predicted pupil numbers for the next few years are very low, making the school financially un-sustainable.

Why are we consulting on a change of catchment area?

The proposal to close Shelton with Hardwick Community Primary School has an impact on the catchment area for children from the area. Norfolk County Council is proposing to extend the Hempnall catchment area to include Shelton with Hardwick.

A catchment area is a defined geographical area that serves a particular school. In most cases, the area is used to provide priority for admission to a particular school. In planning the layout of a catchment area, the Admissions Authority, in this case, Norfolk County Council, should try to ensure that the parent would have reasonable expectation for priority to that school.

If this proposal goes ahead where will school places for children who currently attend Shelton with Hardwick Community Primary School be available?

Parents have indicated that all the children will have moved to a different school by 1 September 2019.

However, if this is not the case, Norfolk County Council's admission arrangements allow parents to state up to 3 preferences and parents are encouraged to include their catchment school as one of these preferences as most schools prioritise catchment children. As required by law, there can be no guarantee that a place will be offered at the catchment school. However there are sufficient places in neighbouring schools to accommodate children from Shelton with Hardwick, if the proposal was agreed.

For children with an Education, Health and Care (EHC) Plan or Statement of Special Educational Needs, Norfolk County Council will undertake a review to determine the appropriate new placement in conjunction with the family. Every child with an EHC Plan has an allocated EHC Plan Co-ordinator who is responsible for this.

Why is Norfolk County Council consulting on this proposal and not the Governing Body?

The Chair of Governors for the Shelton with Hardwick Community Primary & Hempnall Primary Schools contacted Norfolk County Council with the request to consult on closing Shelton with Hardwick school. The Department for Education guidance on opening and closing maintained schools, states that it is the responsibility of the local authority, (Norfolk County Council) under Section 15, Education & Inspection Act 2006, to propose the closure a community school.

Who will be consulted?

Under section 16 (1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, the Local Authority as the proposer of the closure of a rural primary school must consult;

- Parents of pupils at Shelton with Hardwick Community Primary & Hempnall Primary schools
- The local district or parish council, where the school is situated

- In addition, this document will be provided to people and organisations that may have an interest in this proposal including;
- Governing Body of Shelton with Hardwick Community Primary & Hempnall Primary schools
- All staff at Shelton with Hardwick Community Primary & Hempnall Primary schools
- Pupils at Shelton with Hardwick Community Primary & Hempnall Primary schools
- The governing bodies and staff of any other school in the Long Stratton Cluster
- Parents of any pupils at other schools who may be affected by the proposal
- Trade unions who represent staff at Shelton with Hardwick Community Primary & Hempnall Primary schools
- The Diocesan Boards of Education
- Local County Councillors and MP
- Early Years providers.

Who will make the final decision and when could the change happen?

After this consultation ends on 16th July, Norfolk County Council will review the results of the consultation and present the findings to the Executive Director of Children's Services who will decide whether to proceed with the proposal.

If they decide to go ahead, by law we have to publish a statutory notice to close Shelton with Hardwick Community Primary School and change the catchment area for Hempnall Primary School. People would then have 4 weeks to write to us either supporting or opposing the proposal. The final decision is made by the Executive Director of Children's Services, Norfolk County Council as the Decision-Maker.

If at the end of the consultation process, the proposal does not go forward, then the school would remain as it is.

How can I learn more about this proposal and have my say?

Come and talk to us - There will be a meeting for parents/carers and other interested members of the community:

- 6.30pm, Thursday 13 June, at Shelton with Hardwick Community Primary School
- 6.30pm, Friday 14 June, at Hempnall Primary School
- 6.30pm, Thursday 4 July, at Shelton with Hardwick Community Primary School

Tell us your views by;

- completing the online survey on <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/shelton-with-hardwick>
- completing the attached form and handing it into the school office
- Emailing us at schoolreview@norfolk.gov.uk
- [Write to School Organisation Team, FREEPOST IH 2076, Floor 8 Bay 29, County Hall, Martineau Lane, Norwich NR1 2DL](#)

We need all responses by 16th July 2019

Appendix 2 – Consultation report



SCHOOL ORGANISATION REPORT FOR EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

1. Consultation report on Norfolk County Council's proposal to;
 - Close Shelton with Hardwick Primary School on 31 December 2019
 - Extend the catchment area of Hempnall Primary School from 31 December 2019
2. Permission to publish a Public Notice to close Shelton with Hardwick Primary School on 31st December 2019.

ANALYSIS OF CONSULTATION RESPONSES

Norfolk County Council undertook a consultation between 4 June and 16 July 2019 on a proposal to close Shelton with Hardwick Primary School and change the catchment area of Hempnall Primary School. If this proceeds the change would be made from 31 December 2019. The consultation document is available on; <https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/shelton-with-hardwick/>

Purpose of report:

This report is in four parts:

Part 1: the consultation process

Part 2: analysis of consultation responses

Part 3: resource implications

Part 4: conclusion and recommendation

PART 1: The consultation process:

Over 200 consultation documents were distributed in accordance with the Department for Education guidance on statutory school organisation changes. Consultees included pupils, parents and carers, staff, governors, other schools in the local area, the local MP, the local District and County Councillors, Diocesan Bodies and early years providers.

Three stakeholder events were agreed with the Headteacher, Chair of Governors and the County Council prior to the start of the consultation and were held as follows:

13 June, 6.30 – 7.30pm at Shelton with Hardwick Primary School – 13 people attended

14 June, 6.30 – 7.30pm at Hempnall Primary School – 28 people attended

4 July, 6.30 – 7.30pm at Shelton with Hardwick Primary School – 0 people attended.

The notes from these meetings are available on;

<https://norfolk.citizenspace.com/childrens-services/shelton-with-hardwick>

The local county councillor was briefed on the proposal on 4 June 2019 and the Lead Member for Children's Services was briefed on the proposal on 4 June and 12 July 2019.

Part 2; analysis of consultation responses

A total of 30 people responded using the consultation feedback form. Please see summary analysis of consultation responses in Appendix A.

In response to the question how much do you agree or disagree with the proposal to close Shelton with Hardwick Primary School;

- 70% (21 people) agreed or strongly agreed
- 27% (8 people) neither agreed or disagreed
- 3% (1 person) strongly disagreed.

The main points raised in support of the proposal to close the school were:

- Feels inevitable given so few children and the school is not financially viable
- Better to have 1 school rather than stretch resources across 2 schools
- Combining children and resources is a great idea

The concerns about the proposal were:

- No evidence that Norfolk County Council has done anything to manage and secure the long term sustainability of Shelton
- Shelton with Hardwick School is a special place, with great staff, it will be sad to see it close
- Need for an additional classroom or funding for extra class at Hempnall to accommodate all the children
- Why delay the closure until December 2019, why not close in September 2019

In response to the question how much do you agree or disagree to extend the catchment area for Hempnall Primary School;

- 77% (23 people) agreed or strongly
- 17% (5 people) neither agreed or disagreed
- 6% (2 people) disagreed.

The main points raised in support of the proposal to extend the catchment area were:

- It makes logical sense, the most practical solution, no other reasonable option
- Hempnall has space to grow

The concerns about the proposal to extend the catchment area were:

- Extra accommodation is needed at Hempnall
- Concerns about car parking and roads around the school as very busy
- Has consideration being given to other options for the catchment area, as future children in Shelton may choose other local schools.

Part 3: Resource implications

There are no capital project costs associated with this project.

Shelton with Hardwick Primary School is federated with Hempnall Primary School and therefore has one budget for both schools. If Shelton with Hardwick school were to close on 31 December 2019, it is predicted there will be a surplus budget in 2019/2020 which will remain with the Federation.

The school building and immediate surrounds are leased from Norwich Diocese. The County Council would have to give six months notice to terminate the lease. The lease for the field from a local landowner expires in April 2020.

Hempnall Primary School has the space and capacity for the additional children, although we appreciate this may mean the re-allocation of rooms back into classrooms.

Part 4: Conclusion and Recommendation

Sadly there has been no change in the sustainability of Shelton with Hardwick Primary School, in that there remains;

- No pupils registered at the school from 1 September 2019.

Therefore it is difficult to deliver and sustain quality education for children now and in the future.

It is anticipated that there will be approximately 130 children on roll at Hempnall in September 2019. There are currently 5 good sized classrooms in operation at the school, plus a library room which was previously a classroom. The school therefore has sufficient space for the number of children attending the school.

Traffic and car parking issues are common issues for many schools and their governing body.

The school cannot close any earlier than 31 December 2019, as there is a legal process to undertake to close a school, which cannot be completed before September 2019.

Hempnall Primary School was selected as the catchment school for future children from Shelton as it is not only in the same Federation with Shelton, but also the closest primary school. In addition 50% of the children who attend Shelton live in the Hempnall catchment area already. Norfolk County Council is required to invite parents to state their preference of school.

Taking into account all statutory requirements in relation to the initial consultation have been complied with and the views of those who have expressed an interest in this proposal have been taken fully into account, it is recommended that this proposal proceeds to the next stage of formal Public Notice.

In pursuant of the delegated powers granted to me by Part 6.2 of the Council's constitution, together with the decision of the Children's Services Committee (10th July 2014) and in accordance with the School Organisation (Establishment and Discontinuance of Schools) Regulations 2013, I hereby determine a Public Notice should be issued on the proposal;

- To close Shelton with Hardwick Primary School on 31st December 2019
- To change the catchment area of Hempnall Primary School

The Public Notice will appear in the Eastern Daily Press at the start of the autumn term, on 12th September 2019.

Signed: _____

(Executive Director of Children's Services)

Date: _____

Appendix A

Shelton with Hardwick Primary School consultation - Summary analysis of responses									
Total number of responses = 30									
Method of response									
Online			Letter				Email		
27							3		
Respondent * please note respondents could tick all categories that apply									
Pupil	Parent/ Guardian	Member PTA	Staff	Governor	Local resident	Local business	Local sports group	Local community group	Other
0	25	3	4	1	0	0	0	0	3
Response Analysis – How far do you agree or disagree with our proposal to close Shelton with Hardwick Community Primary School, from 31st December 2019 *please note respondents could tick all categories that apply									
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know			
Total									
Pupil									
Parent/Guardian	9	8	7		1				
Member of the PTA		1	1						
Member of Staff	2	1	1						
Governor	1								
Local resident									
Local business									
Local sports group									
Local community group									
Other		2	1						
Response Analysis – how far do you agree or disagree with our proposal to extend the catchment area of Hempnall Primary School from 31 December 2019? (please note respondents could tick all categories that apply)									
	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree or disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree	Don't know			
Total									
Pupil									
Parent/Guardian	8	12	4	1					
Member of the PTA		1		1					
Member of Staff	1	2							
Governor	2								
Local resident									
Local business									
Local sports group									
Local community group									
Other		1	1	1					
Comment by key themes – 28 respondents									
Shelton is not financially viable/sustainable with low numbers of pupils								17 people	
Hempnall can grow, is a 'Good' school, this will be better for staff and pupils								10 people	
No other option, makes sense to extend Hempnall catchment								8 people	
Concerns about the class sizes at Hempnall								3 people	
Concerns about Hempnall accommodation with lack of budget support and increase in pupils								3 people	

Prescribed Information – 12 September 2019

Concerns about parking at Hempnall with increase in pupils	2 people
Better to concentrate staff and pupils in one school	2 people
Future Shelton children may want to go to other schools, closer to home	1 person
Norfolk County Council should be held accountable for management of small rural schools and there is no evidence of support to Shelton's sustainability	1 person
Happy memories at Shelton and three generations have attended, feel forced into changing school	1 person
Sad to see the school close, it is a special place	1 person
If Hempnall can extends its catchment, why can't Shelton	1 person
Is it possible to merge the two schools and use Shelton for either early years or Years 5+6, to avoid the loss of the site and save overcrowding at Hempnall	1 person
Why delay the closure until December 2019, why can't you close in September 2019	1 person