

The Willow School

A very small school, for very small people in a very large green space



Dear Neighbours,

I know that people may be worried about our proposed small 'special school' in the village. I hope to ease some of that fear & worry and dispel some myths about the planned school and about the children we hope to educate.

I feel a responsibility to ensure residents have good information about the project. I very much want Algarkirk to be proud of this school. In this regard, I would like to share the facts about the school with artists impressions plus an insight into the vision for the school.



The Vision

"Three things came together in my mind that led me to the place I am today, writing to my neighbours in Algarkirk about plans for a very special school..."

- *For years I wondered how to maintain my 8 acres of beautiful paddocks. I wanted that green space to always stay green, to be used and enjoyed - unspoiled forever.*
- *I have a grown-up son with severe autism and so have a real insight into the power a good and specially designed school and education has to change the lives of children with special needs for the better - enabling those children to live their best possible lives not just exist.*
- *South Lincolnshire has a desperate lack of quality education for children with special needs.*

These three things lead me to partner with the founder of a wonderful and very well regarded special school in London - The Chelsea Group of Children - to plan our own very special 'nature' school in Algarkirk. We decided a school for very young children with much less complex and severe needs than my own son was most feasible and would be of most value locally.

Children living locally, who require special skills and environment to learn, will have access to the very best education possible - an education not currently available to them. Pupils will benefit from the beautiful paddocks, at the same time, keeping the green space we love, green and useful for another generation."

From Darryll Loizou

The Facts

Size of School We will accommodate 20-25 pupils with an absolute max of 30 (min 15)
 - At capacity, smaller than the average play group. Max class size 5 pupils

The Children

- Age range 4 years to 11 years.
- This school is for children with mild to moderate special needs

School hours

- The school day will be from 9am until 3pm.
- The school will be closed at weekends and during school holidays

School Traffic

- A mini bus will bring many of the children to and from school. This will drop off and pick up within the school grounds.
- Those coming by car will be dropped off within the school grounds.
- Adequate parking for all staff and parents is available within the school grounds, including turning to ensure no parking, waiting or turning in the lane.

Development of site The school will be located within existing buildings which will be restored, adapted and maintained to accommodate the school.

Outdoor Space

'The paddock' The paddock is an 8 acre, green space with a timber building in the north west corner. It includes a small orchard and animal enclosure.

Safety & security

- One class of maximum 5 children will use the outside space in the paddocks at any one time in a normal school day.
- Children will NEVER be unsupervised while in the outdoor areas.
- The entire area is enclosed with hedging and will have purpose build 6ft security fencing within the trees. It does not encroach onto Church land.

How would the Outdoor space be used?

- The paddocks would be maintained intact as an open green space. Small areas will be used as garden spaces, edible forest, picnic area, vegetable patches and small-scale play, enabling children to learn in a safe, quiet, natural space to explore the outdoors and learn through nature. Opportunities for outdoor activities like water play, growing, picking and preparing fruit and vegetables, simple and safe 'camp cooking' and making wigwams will be the core activities of the school.
- The existing orchard, small animal enclosure and timber building will be the main focus of the school.



The Development

This development of the land and outbuildings is extremely low impact. Little will change in terms of how the land and existing outbuildings will look.

This ancient green space in the heart of the village will be preserved, maintained and protected for future generations. It will also bring back to life an historic coach house with a sympathetic restoration and re-purpose - primarily as my family residence, but also to be used to meet with parents and staff during the school day.

The Willow School In Algarkirk

A school for pupils with mild to moderate special needs. These are the children who will benefit most from having daily access to a calm, natural space where they learn through sensory play. The school has nature at its heart. It will reduce anxiety and feed the minds & souls of the children.

This low impact development, will have a profound impact of those children who benefit from it. While they are still small, vulnerable, impressionable and able to learn, they will have the space and calm they need, with well-staffed with professionals, to progress and grow as individuals.

