

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

17 January 2012 (morning meeting)

Public Participation

Statement from Students and Tutors at Urchfont Manor (details at end of document)

Proposed Creation of Central Devizes Customer Access Point and the Closure of Browfort, Urchfont Manor and Bradley Road Buildings

Statement

My name is Wendy Trinder and I am a tutor for painting and drawing courses at Urchfont Manor throughout the year. I live in Market Lavington and I am very aware of local feelings for this Adult Education Centre as well as those of students and tutors.

The building is listed Grade II and so development and change of use one would assume is limited. Within the estate attached to the building are some areas leased for farming, Oakfrith Wood and the paths leading to it, the school playing field, the cricket pitch, pavilion and the two croquet pitches.

People from the village also use the grounds for walking and the flower gardens were once maintained by some local volunteers. The grounds and gardens of the Manor are all well used on a regular basis.

Staff within the house tends to be from the local area, even though tutors for the adult education courses come from a wider area.

Students on the courses come from all over England and Wales, not just locally as they are able to stay overnight if they wish, even if they are on single day courses. Some even stay on afterwards for a holiday in our beautiful quite countryside.

Bookings with deposits paid, come in as soon as the brochure is printed. Some are so popular that they are booked from year to year, example: Botanical Painting with Valerie Oxley.

Out of county participators also use village facilities, example: the village pub, shop and post office.

Open University courses are expanding and need residential meeting places which make Urchfont Manor the perfect place, while conferences, meetings and classes for e.g. poetry reading and discussion groups could be moved to other buildings - where could the various exercise classes, embroidery classes, woodcraft classes and my painting classes be held? These courses would certainly not be able to be held in a

library. How can they be advertised and bookings made centrally? Where is there sufficient parking and overnight accommodation?

The Manor gives a central participation area for all these classes and conferences, with well trained staff for bookings, room services and meals, as well as advertising via the brochure and telephone and good off road parking.

There are very few of these Adult Education colleges left now and in rural areas like ours, with well dispersed villages, encouragement for local students and visitors from out-of-country to participate in courses is much needed.

There are already many bookings for courses advertised in the brochure for dates in September, October and November of this year. Deposits are taken when booking and these will have been paid and the dates sorted for both students and tutors. Students will have booked their time if working in readiness for their course.

My life has revolved around my courses for the last 10 years, both in teaching and preparation. Many students are now good friends with me and other students and will be very upset if the Manor closes.

Wendy Trinder BSc.FSBA.SWA & Others (student now tutor)

Jane Lemon MBE (tutor now student) –
(<http://www.salisburycathedral.org.uk/news.php?id=333>)

Hazel Credland (Tutor City&Guilds)

Valerie Oxley (Art Tutor) (sending statement)

Arnold Lowrey (Art Tutor) (<http://www.lowrey.co.uk/>) (sending statement)