

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

17 January 2012

Public Participation

Statement from Dr Jennifer Johnson-Jones, Bedfordshire

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

Statement

I write to object to the selling off of Urchfont Manor by the council, because it is a very valuable leaning resource, enjoyed by many hundreds of adult learners over the years.

I discovered Urchfont Manor two years ago, through the art tutor Richard Box, and was overwhelmed by the excellent facilities and the staff there. A number of adult residential colleges have recently closed, such as Pendril Hall and Earnley Concourse, and it would be a great shame for another fine institution to meet the same fate.

I live in North Bedfordshire, near to the adult residential college Knuston Hall, owned by Northamptonshire County Council. That too was threatened with closure and sale three years ago. The centre manager, Eamonn Flanagan, supported by many users of the Hall, managed to keep this from happening by convincing the Council that it is a valuable asset for the council, and is now used by the council as a training and conference facility as well as an adult education facility.

Knuston Hall has gone from strength to strength since that threatened closure and sale, and I hope that the council will see a similar scenario applying to Urchfont Manor.

Yours faithfully