

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

17 January 2012

Public Participation

Statement from Nicola Vesey Williams, Local Resident

Proposed Creation of Central Devizes Customer Access Point and the Closure of Browfort, Urchfont Manor and Bradley Road Buildings (Item 9)

Statement

I live in Upavon and my husband Peter is a parish councillor. I discovered yesterday that Wiltshire Council propose at committee on Tuesday 17th January to close and sell Urchfont Manor. I regularly attend Urchfont Manor as a student as it offers an excellent range of courses including City & Guilds there is only one other local authority I know of that offer a similar range of course in textiles and Art & Craft subjects and that is Great Missenden Abbey in Buckinghamshire that they come second to Urchfont Manor in my opinion.

It would be a terrible loss to adult education if it should close, textile artists and designers come from all over the country to attend courses there it is a centre of excellence which is reflected in its annual exhibition and open day and showcases a wide range of crafts and skills.

I feel the council has not given council taxes payers and residents the opportunity to voice their objection to this proposed closure. Since moving to Wiltshire two years ago I have attended over ten courses there as I find it harder and harder to find adult education courses as cutbacks have hit this type of education over recent years.

Urchfont has enabled me to meet like minded people who have had the opportunity to develop their skills and talents which is only a good thing for the community at large.

So as a councillor I urge you in the strongest possible terms to represent taxes payers and voters at this committee meeting to protect this outstanding centre of excellence for the residents of Wiltshire.

It would be a sad day if Urchfont should close and a stain on Wiltshire Councils reputation if this is allowed to close and would make me think again who I would vote for in local elections! As the agenda was only made public on Monday I feel the general public has very little time to make their views known which works to the councils advantage and not to those of us who feel strongly about this matter.