

Wiltshire Council

Annual Council

22 May 2018

Petition Received

SAVE BRAESIDE AND OXENWOOD: Wiltshire Council's 2 outdoor education centres.

To consider a petition with 15,823 signatories which states:

'On 29th March 2018, Wiltshire Council announced its decision to close Wiltshire's only two council run outdoor education centres at Braeside and Oxenwood.

Both centres have provided invaluable experiences for thousands of children over many years and closing them is very shortsighted.

Trips to centres like this give children from all backgrounds a taste of the countryside that they would not otherwise get. It nurtures a love of nature and creates lifelong memories and friendships. It provides a welcome break from classroom education and gives children practical skills to use in everyday life.

In a world increasingly dominated by technology, centres such as this create future ambassadors of conservation and wildlife preservation and closure of these two invaluable centres must be stopped.

There is a solution. The centres don't need to be Council run, but Wiltshire Council needs to hand over responsibility to interested parties e.g. via a free or low cost community asset transfer.

The perception now is that Wiltshire Council doesn't want to do this. We need this to change.

Help us us keep the pressure on. 15,000 people can't be wrong.'

The petition meets the threshold for a Council debate which operates in accordance with the Council's Petition Scheme as follows:

Petition Scheme – Council Debate

If the petition is of a sufficient size to trigger a debate at the full council the issue raised in the petition will be discussed at a meeting which all councillors can attend.

The council will endeavour to consider the petition at its next meeting, although on some occasions this may not be possible and consideration will then take place at the following meeting.

The petition organiser will be given five minutes to present the petition at the meeting and the petition will then be discussed by councillors for a maximum of 15 minutes. In addition to your petition the council may also consider the views of the cabinet or cabinet member. If you would like you may also have the opportunity to answer questions or clarify issues for the councillors.

The council will decide how to respond to the petition at this meeting. The council may decide to take the action the petition requests, not to take the action requested for reasons put forward in the debate, or to commission further investigation into the matter, for example by a relevant committee.

Where the issue is one on which the council's cabinet are required to make the final decision, the council will decide whether to make recommendations to inform that decision. The petition organiser will receive written confirmation of this decision. This confirmation will also be published on the council's website. Alternatively and if timing permits the petition may be referred to the cabinet for its views so that at the council meeting the views can be considered alongside the petition and a final decision made.

Will Oulton
Senior Democratic Services Officer