

CLOSURE OF DAY CENTRE IN KINGSTON SURREY – Email trail with RBK councillors

**From:** Teresa Hunt [mailto:teresahunt@btinternet.com]

**Sent:** 07 March 2007 11:05

**To:** 'derek.osbourne@councillors.kingston.gov.uk'; 'don.jordan@councillors.kingston.gov.uk'; 'simon.james@councillors.kingston.gov.uk'; 'david.cunningham@councillors.kingston.gov.uk'; 'Dennis.Doe@councillors.kingston.gov.uk'; 'frank.thompson@councillors.kingston.gov.uk'; 'Frances.Moseley@councillors.kingston.gov.uk'; 'Bob.Steed@councillors.kingston.gov.uk'; 'Rohan.Yoganathan@councillors.kingston.gov.uk'

**cc:** 'cj.hunt@btinternet.com'; 'info@susankramer.org.uk'; 'pcahalan@london.newsquest.co.uk'

**Subject:** PROSPECTIVE CLOSURE OF DAY CENTRE

**TUDOR WARD COUNCILLORS:** David Cunningham, Dennis Doe, Frank Thompson **Party:** Conservative

**BEVERLY WARD (Hobkirk) COUNCILLORS:** Simon James, Don Jordan, Derek Osbourne (Council Leader) **Party:** Liberal Democrat

**BERRYLANDS WARD (Newent) COUNCILLORS:** Frances Moseley, Bob Steed, Rohan Yoganathan **Party:** Liberal Democrat

Dear Councillors

We are writing to you on behalf of our mother, Mrs Ellen Hunt (Tudor Ward) who has dementia and who attends Newent House.

It is extremely inappropriate to try to pit Newent and Hobkirk against one another in this 'consolidation' which is really no more than a scramble to save money.

The government continues to express concerns about the care and safety of the elderly recently. This cramming will not help. There are many clients in each care home due to previous 'consolidations'; and there are limited staff and facilities; especially as some of the severely disabled and will need 2 people to 'toilet' them. This will only get worse.

We received extremely short notice {days} about this situation (a phone call regarding a meeting to be held on 1/2 which as a consequence we were not able to attend. This was followed by a copy of a letter giving dates of meetings - most held within the working day! My sister attended the first of the user meetings yesterday 6/3 and was extremely disappointed to find there were no councillors present. Her notes from that meeting follow:

"Notes by Christina Hunt on Meeting of 6/3/07 at Newent House; regarding closure of Day Care Centre in Kingston.

All Service users who were present on 6/3 attended; and we all sat on a large circle (of course most of the users didn't know what was going on so were not responding to anything and were just falling asleep).

RBK were represented by Simon Pierce (SP =Head of Community Care Services) and Fiona Connolly (FC=Principal Manager Resource Centres for Older People), there was also a note taker. They told us that all questions, answers and letters written would be recorded and then put on the RBK website where Simon Pierce said he HOPED the councillors would look.

It is my opinion that most of the questions asked should have been put to the Councillors not RBK employees. Most of the questions were political and SP/FC couldn't reliably answer them. These were questions on finance and the probable redundancies that will occur i.e.: Drivers, Carers and on the future Carer-Service user Ratio. We gained the impressions that the decision has probably already been made even though the "consultation process" will carry on till June (3 months)

I gave out some of the leaflets asking other Newent relatives if they would be interested in forming a support group."

I shall be attending the Newent user/carer meeting on 26/3 and would hope to meet some of you there.

I look forward to your thoughts on the above

Sincerely,

Dr Teresa Hunt  
For Ellen, Christina, Teresa Hunt

**From:** Frances Moseley [mailto:frances@mosx.fsnet.co.uk]  
**Sent:** 07 March 2007 11:44  
**To:** 'Teresa Hunt'  
**cc:** 'Rolson Davies'; Penny Shelton; 'Bob Steed'; 'Rohan Yoganathan (Cllr)'; 'ash stanbrook'  
**Subject:** RE: **PROSPECTIVE CLOSURE OF DAY CENTRE**

Thank you for your email and I appreciate your concern over day care services for your mother.

Firstly, let me assure you that, whatever happens, existing users will not be left high and dry. They will still be offered day care services and whichever day care centre closes, staff and users will transfer to another centre.

Unfortunately, we have had to make the decision to close one centre in order to achieve savings over a two-year period, so the political decision is already made. The consultation is specifically for users and carers, not councillors, but I can assure you that the consultation is real and no decision has yet been made. We are seeking to establish how best to meet the users' needs, with the least disruption, but in the context of having to make the necessary savings. Any redundancy costs have already been factored in, although we will minimize the redundancies by the two year plan. Initially, of course, the staff will be needed to care for the users, wherever the services are provided.

The executive members responsible are exploring a number of options, and working with our partner organizations, to ensure that we can continue to offer quality services even though day care is not a statutory obligation.

Please continue to feed into the consultation process.

Regards  
Frances Moseley  
Liberal Democrat Councillor for Berrylands Ward

**From:** Teresa Hunt [mailto:teresahunt@btinternet.com]

**Sent:** 07 March 2007 14:09

**To:** 'derek.osbourne@councillors.kingston.gov.uk'; 'don.jordan@councillors.kingston.gov.uk'; 'simon.james@councillors.kingston.gov.uk'; 'david.cunningham@councillors.kingston.gov.uk'; 'Dennis.Doe@councillors.kingston.gov.uk'; 'frank.thompson@councillors.kingston.gov.uk'; 'Frances.Moseley@councillors.kingston.gov.uk'; 'Bob.Steed@councillors.kingston.gov.uk'; 'Rohan.Yoganathan@councillors.kingston.gov.uk'

**cc:** 'cj.hunt@btinternet.com'; 'info@susankramer.org.uk'; 'pcahalan@london.newsquest.co.uk'; 'Frances Moseley'

**Subject:** RE: **PROSPECTIVE CLOSURE OF DAY CENTRE**

Importance: High

Dear Ms Moseley

I thank you for taking the time to respond to my email. Please note that I am copying this email exchange to the local press as I believe this debate should be in the public domain.

Kingston council has already made the decision to close one of its resource centres for the elderly, this has led to a great deal of distress as users/carers from each centre try to keep their own centre open.

Whilst we are of course concerned about our mother's needs, our concerns are not simply confined to her as was made plain in our email to councillors. It is heartless to pit the elderly and their carers against each other and worse it is extremely short sighted. There will be an increasing need for resource centres (homes, day centres and so on) for an aging population. Experience shows that once lost resources are hard to recover.

There have already been closures in the borough (Murray House comes to mind) and putting everybody in one place is not the answer. There needs to be sufficient staff to meet the needs of an increasingly disabled intake ('toileting' alone can take out 2 staff members for some time). Losing trained staff through redundancy is wasteful at best.

Informing carers and users very late in the day with a fait accompli (that is to say, that RBK will close one of the centres, just need to decide which one); making a show of 'consultation' by holding meetings largely during the working day - none of this inspires confidence.

The council accounts while available do not cover detail and it would be extremely helpful to have a detailed spreadsheet so we can see why these highly necessary resources are being lost, and what is being kept in their place.

Sincerely,

Dr Teresa Hunt

Email: teresahunt@btinternet.com

**From:** Cllr Dennis Doe [mailto:dennis.doe@councillors.kingston.gov.uk]

**Sent:** 07 March 2007 21:52

**To:** Teresa Hunt

**cc:** Howard Jones (Intranet); Frank Thompson (E-mail); David Cunningham

**Subject:** Re: **PROSPECTIVE CLOSURE OF DAY CENTRE**

Dear Dr. Hunt,

I am replying as one of your own ward councillors.

I am not copying to the other Councillors other than Howard Jones, the Leader of my Group on the Council. We have debated this at the Budget Council and in other places, but the Liberal Democrat Councillors who have the majority all voted in favour of the proposed cuts of the Executive of the Council. You'll appreciate that the Executive is made up entirely of Liberal Democrat Councillors. We as Conservatives and the Labour Councillors opposed the budget and, if one or two of the Liberal Democrat Councillors had voted with us, or even abstained, the proposals would have been voted down. We would then have worked with officers to propose a fairer budget in time for Council Tax demands to be sent out on time. In the meantime a huge petition is being collected opposing the closure of the day care at Hopkirk as well as Newent House.

Your argument contained in the following words of your email gets to the heart of the matter: -

"Informing carers and users very late in the day with a fait accompli (that is to say, that RBK will close one of the centres, just need to decide which one); making a show of 'consultation' by holding meetings largely during the working day - none of this inspires confidence."

The difficulties facing the Council in this area can be found in the Executive Agenda of 5th December 2006, Appx H. (Website = [www.kingston.gov.uk/](http://www.kingston.gov.uk/) - then click on "your council/", then "browse committees", then "Executive", then "5 December 2006", then "Agenda Report Packs", then "Annex 1". The key question is - why has nothing been done over the last four years when the financial situation WAS known for 2007 plus? - why nothing done when the Liberal Democrats had a huge majority?

Why spend the last four years increasing the Council's financial commitments by funding the theatre when their manifesto said they wouldn't? (plus other luxury expenditure), - why increase staff by 40 % since 2000?

The information on the poor consulting method is helpful. We shall continue the fight; thank you for your support.

You ask about the financial situation of the Council. Tudor Drive Library will have copies of the papers on the Budget proposals, though, unless you are familiar with Council Finance they are not user-friendly!

Councillor Dennis Doe,  
Tudor Ward

**From:** Teresa Hunt [mailto:teresahunt@btinternet.com]

**Sent:** 07 March 2007 22:37

**To:** 'Cllr Dennis Doe'

**Cc:** 'Howard Jones (Intranet)'; 'Frank Thompson (E-mail)'; 'David Cunningham'; 'cj.hunt@btinternet.com'; 'jhenderson\_arguello@yahoo.co.uk'

**Subject:** RE: **PROSPECTIVE CLOSURE OF DAY CENTRE**

Dear Mr Doe

Thank you for this full and frank reply. I have been talking to a local journalist and am trying to get a national interested – will keep you informed.

I am sure I would find the finances opaque – just as I have found it impossible to get a FULL organizational tree. What I have been able to obtain shows that there is a vast upside-down pyramid of 'management' above the hands-on carers and would be very interesting to have that fully costed. Not to mention what each manager is supposed to be doing, when hands on carers are thin on the ground.

Best wishes

Dr Teresa Hunt

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Email: teresahunt@btinternet.com