

STANHOPE UNITED COMMUNITY GROUP

DEPUTATION ON BEHALF OF THE STANHOPE DRIVE COMMUNITY CENTRE MADE TO LEEDS CITY COUNCIL 21ST FEBRUARY 2007

Good afternoon

My name is Louise Johnson and I am speaking on behalf of Stanhope United Community Group, of which some are in the public gallery. We are here today, due to the strong feeling of the Horsforth community, regarding the intended closure of the Stanhope Centre and the proposed sale and development of the site and surrounding land. We are also upset and angry about the way this has been done without any prior consultation with the surrounding residents and user groups of the centre.

The first people knew about this was when a 'FOR SALE' sign went up outside the centre on the 25th January 2007. A meeting was arranged for residents and user groups of the Centre on this date; about 8 houses received flyers about the meeting with just 24hours notice. So that as many people could be informed of the meeting, I went personally knocking on household doors to make residents aware of the meeting, I also put notices up in the area.

I myself heard about this in April 2006, I then asked Counsellor Andrew Barker about this proposal, I was told 'It was not true' and 'it was just a rumour'. I approached the Yorkshire Evening Post in May 2006 regarding this and they covered the story and were also told that 'no plans had been made at all'. However ~~wanted~~ *we have seen detailed plans dated from Feb 06*

At the meeting on 25th January 2007 we were told that the Council want to move all the user groups up to the old library site on Town Street in Horsforth. I run a youth club for children as young as 8years old, so to put a youth club onto a site which is surrounded by pubs and restaurants is totally out of the question, the library site is on what drinkers in Horsforth call the 'Horsforth

Mile; there are 8 pubs and bars within approximately 300 yards of the old library. Police were called on ^{WEDS} ~~7~~th February 2007?? to deal with aggressive drunks and this is just in the middle of the week. On weekends the amount of drunks, fighting etc is even worse. Also if the Centre is sold then other user groups including, the Stroke Group, The Link Fellowship, The Photography Club, Parent & Toddler etc will cease to exist.

The Stanhope site is surrounded by memorial trees and each one was planted in memory of someone from Horsforth who died in the great war; there is also a memorial stone The street was opened by Lady Harewood and the stone uncovered by the Earl of Harewood on Armistice Sunday, the commemoration was covered by the Wharfedale and Airedale Observer on Friday November 13th 1925. The Earl of Harewood was quoted as saying:

'That it now remained for the living to carry out their obligations to the dead, not to do as they wished and to follow out their own selfish desires, but to do their duty to their fellow country men and women. The men whom they now mourned had carried us through a successful war, they had turned disaster into victory'

The plans of the site for sale includes some of these memorial trees which are a huge part of Horsforth history, which we all feel very strongly about, because it is our history; our childrens and grandchildrens history.

We are here today to show how much this much used Centre means to us and that we will not let anything happen to ~~our~~^{the} memorial to our dead.

We would also like to know why it was kept a secret. Horsforth has its own town council and even they were not told about this. They are now behind us and so is the Paul Trussell MP.

The sales pack available on the Leeds City Council website clearly states that bats fly close to the site, which I can personally verify. I would not be surprised if the bats were also roosting in the Centre roof. Having been in

touch with a bat group it will be around April time before this can be confirmed, as they will be in hibernation until around this time.

We are also concerned that the expected proceeds of the sale £235,000 are not going back into youth work but are being used to pay for the new library

which was completed last year. WE KEEP getting told the centre isn't for sale its just a test market, so why is there a 'FOR SALE' sign up? and why are the developers looking at the site now. this

What we are asking you to do is to STOP the sale of the site, to protect the well being of our children, community, history and environment.

Thank you for listening.