

Appendix F – Additional submissions



8 December 2014

Yvette Stanley
Director of Children, Schools and Families
Civic Centre
London Road
Morden
SM4 5DX

SPONSOR
Lord Harris of Peckham

CHIEF EXECUTIVE
Dr. Daniel Moynihan (C.O., M.A., & Sc. (Econ))

Dear Yvette

Harris Free School Wimbledon

I understand that you are consulting on the future of the adult education service and a proposal to move to a service that is commissioned from others to provide the courses. I also understand that if this policy is adopted the Adult Education Centre at Whatley Avenue will be surplus to requirements. I would like to confirm our very strong interest in using the site and building for the Free school we have applied to the DFE to open in Wimbledon. The geographical location works well providing good transport links from and to the area we seek to serve.

We will, if you are content with that, now begin work with the Education Funding Agency to establish the feasibility of opening the Free School at that site and the budget required to adapt the buildings to meet our brief.

Yours sincerely

Sir Dan Moynihan
Chief Executive

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
9th Jan 2015

Geed Curran
Chief Executive
LBM



Dear Mr. Curran,

I am one of the many people who attend the over 150 courses offered by Merton Adult Education, mainly at Whatley Avenue.

As a pensioner I love the opportunity of joining one of their excellent Adult Education Art classes which caters for all ages. You name a Creative Art and you will find a course and premises equipped for it at Whatley Avenue.

The thought of the young of working age and mature students in Merton being denied the opportunity to extend their education and gain qualifications and expertise to help their employment prospects is really depressing. The attendees with special needs or learning disabilities who feel so at home at Whatley Avenue would be devastated if it were to close.

Disrupting all these good things in favour of uncertain and possibly inferior alternatives is not worthy of Merton Council and I ask you to rethink your proposal to close Merton Adult Education.

Yours faithfully,
[REDACTED]

October 24, 2014.

[REDACTED] / CR69N

Stained + Fused Glass.

Although I was unable to attend the meetings this week, I have been informed of the details & would like my comments to be included in the concerns of many regarding the closure of Whalley Avenue College.

As a self-employed Mum, leisure time is scarce & my stained glass class provides a very important creative outlet for artistic productivity. I have always aspired to study stained glass but was unable to when in full time employment.

I have now enjoyed this unique course for 3 years, where all aspects of stained glass, fused glass, copper foiling & design can be explored + studied. Our teacher, Mona Fagan is supportive, outstanding & highly creative + the location is ideal with limited time to spend of travel.

Additionally, my fellow class-mates + working environment on the course provide an invaluable source of support, insight + inspiration. It is a community, enjoyed by a wide range of individuals with a common interest, unified by our tutor & a class that is truly edifying & enjoyable, promoting great personal achievement.

Please do not take this from us.

Yours faithfully, [REDACTED]



[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

28th October 2014

Mr G Curran,
Chief Executive,
London Borough of Merton,
Civic Centre,
London Road,
Morden,
Surrey SM4 5DX.

Dear Mr Curran,

Re Merton Adult Education

I understand that Merton Adult Education (MAE) is currently under review by Merton Council with the possibility of closure, or a significant reduction in the courses that it offers. I am writing to urge you to support MAE in maintaining its current service.

I have been a Merton resident for twenty five years and consider the MAE to be a key asset of the Borough. I have attended several courses with MAE in a variety of subjects. In particular, I learnt Spanish from beginners level and was proud eventually to be awarded a GCSE.

I have been struck by the number and variety of Merton residents who attend courses, including adults of all ages and backgrounds. In particular, I have been impressed by the MAE's support for those with disabilities.

The tutors I have had the privilege to be taught by have all been unfailing patient and supportive. They often go above and beyond what is expected to help their students succeed. One tutor was so keen that we do well in our course that she ran extra classes at weekends, without any extra remuneration.

I am currently attending a guitar class for beginners with other enthusiastic Merton residents ranging in age from those in their twenties to some long past retirement. It would be a great shame if, due to the possible closure of the MAE or a significant reduction in the classes it can offer, we were never to progress beyond the beginners level! More importantly, Merton residents generally would cease to have access to the opportunities that the MAE brings and I believe that the Borough would be educationally and culturally poorer for it.

I ask that you and your colleagues support the continuation of MAE in its provision of a wide range of courses for the residents of Merton.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

cc. Mr S Williams, Director of Community & Housing, London Borough of Merton.



[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Dear Mr. Curran

Merton Adult Education

I realize this will not be your first and doubt very much if will be the last regarding the M.A.E Centre.

What a shock our class received when we were told that the above centre in Whatley Avenue has been threatened with closure, where next.

As you are know doubt fully aware this facility caters for numerous adults from many walks of life, the under privileged, adults with disabilities, retarded, deaf to name but a few.

Many attend to gain qualifications to enable them to get employment, others are learning to cook plus being taught how to look after themselves. When I retired I started attending classes and it has given me a new lease of life, I'm certainly not the only one to have done this. These new interests keep me busy doing things that I never had time for when I was working full time, plus doing voluntary work in the community.

Recently there have been numerous reports in the press, on television and on the radio, encouraging the older members in our communities to get out and mix with others, so keeping themselves busy physically and mentally.

I really think that people in your position don't look ahead, especially as people are living longer. Put the boot on the other foot, think about the future when you and your nearest and dearest retire, where will they go. So if you close down M.A.E there will be no where for us to go and will have to stay at home twiddling our thumbs, watching TV and vegetating.

So why, why, why do you want to deprive adults from improving themselves by learning new skills and stop going gaga.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

[Redacted]

21st October 2014

Ged Curran
Chief Executive
London Borough of Merton
Civic Centre
London Road
Morden
SM4 5DX



Dear Sirs

Re: Merton Adult Education – Possible Closures.

I have just begun another term in Mrs J Hannah's pottery class, at the Whatley Avenue, SW20, Centre.

I do hope that this college will not be closed, and would highlight some reasons for not doing so.

1. The tuition is very good. Demonstrations are clear, and plenty of guidance and encouragement is given. Mrs Hannah loves her job, and endeavours to give as much individual attention as possible.
2. Although a beginners' class, many students return year after year, and their expertise is often shared, with a word here and there, with newcomers such as myself.
3. I am proud of the work that I have produced, which is partly because I am being well taught. We are encouraged to view the works of famous potters, and to incorporate our own ideas in new projects, and to explore and try new techniques, which have been demonstrated first.
4. Each session is a creative couple of hours. It is very satisfying to come home with something to show and hopefully please.
5. I believe my self-confidence has improved as a result.
6. The class is a happy class, bringing contentment to a number of people, which in turn can have a ripple effect. We may not all start our own businesses, but at least we can speak of the virtues of making pots, not least to the younger generation.
7. This course and other Adult Education courses which Merton provides, provide the seeds for many Cottage Industries, which could be a blueprint for teaching our children. They could well benefit, becoming more self-reliant, and, who knows, self-employed.

Yours Faithfully

[Redacted Signature]

cc Simon Williams, Director of Community & Housing



[Redacted]

Ged Curran,
Chief Executive,
London Boro of Merton,
Merton Civic Centre,
London, Rd. SM4 5DX
Morden, SM4 5DY

1st November, 2014

Re MERTON ADULT EDUCATION SERVICE REVIEW

Whatley Avenue London SW20 9NS

Dear sir/madam

We were shocked to discover that there is very good chance MAE will be closing and that our Adult Education Art class will cease.

All art classes at Whatley Avenue are well subscribed and cater for all sections of the community, including special needs, learning disabilities and rehabilitation, and age groups from 18 to 80 and beyond.

We are all devastated and disillusioned and think this is unfair and unnecessary.

This also goes against the principles of LEARNING FOR LIFE advocated by successive political parties.

Where are all these people to go?

The proposed alternatives are grossly unsuitable for MAE students for various reasons.

MY MAIN CONCERNS ARE

I am 83 years old and I have attended the Art classes at Whatley Avenue, London, S.W.20 9NS for 26 years. During my years of retirement I have enjoyed and learnt a lot from these classes. We have an excellent teacher, Mrs. Angela Lukaszewicz. I think it is important that the more mature students should have the use of local facilities to improve their skills and enjoy their hobbies, to keep their minds alert.

I would ask you please to use your influence to keep our College open for us and future students.
We ask you to reconsider this dreadful proposal.

Yours faithfully

[Redacted signature]

Mature Student.

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

January 15th 2015

Kris Witherington
London Borough of Merton
Council Offices
Morden SM4 5DX

Dear Mr Witherington,

Re Consultation on the future provision of Merton Adult Education

STROKE SURVIVOR GROUP MEMBER VIEWS

As I mentioned in my recent email, I am now enclosing communications from the Stroke Survivors Group that meets at MAE. This material (it includes a letter, signatures to the SaveMAE petition and art work created by group members) is submitted as part of the current public consultation on the future of Merton Adult Education.

You will see that the art work expresses the importance for the stroke survivors of the art class that they attend (some mention other classes they attend also). I would be very grateful if you would ensure that the art work is seen by the Cabinet members considering views expressed during the consultation. To help with this, I will also email PDFs of the art work to you.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

 Wimbledon WI

Simon Williams
Community and Housing Department
London Borough of Merton
Civic Centre
London Road
Morden SM4 5DX



20 December 2014

Dear Mr Williams

Merton Adult Education

I am writing to you because Wimbledon WI are very concerned about the threat to close Merton Adult Education. We would like you to make sure that our concerns are taken into account during consultations, discussions and decisions.

This service has been providing excellent courses across the borough for many years. The council's consultation paper states "The MAE college is a successful service delivering high quality education to the people of Merton and contributing to the council's economic development priorities." It has an OFSTED rating of 'Good' and "has delivered savings whilst improving outcomes for learners and broadening the learner base; including groups that were previously under-represented in adult learning."

It provides quality courses and services that are used by people of all ages, abilities, ethnicities and socioeconomic groups from across the borough.

Adult education reaches many people, enriching their lives and has a positive impact on many families and communities. As well as direct educational benefit to individual learners, adult education involves people in community activities, improves mental and physical health, raises aspirations within families and helps people to adapt better to economic and social change. Its role in society is particularly important at these times of recession and economic recovery. It is especially important to protect the strong community networks that exist around adult education. It would be very difficult to replace these practical and effective partnerships if they were broken down by the closure of Merton Adult Education Service.

I am the president of Wimbledon WI, which is part of the National Federation of Women's Institutes which is the largest women's organisation in England and Wales with some 215,000 members. It is an educational charity, committed to the wellbeing of women, their families and communities. The NFWI has been campaigning since 1922 for the continuance and development of adult education. The WI organisation has continually supported lifelong learning since its inception nearly 100 years ago.

Our members are concerned not just for the creative courses that many of us attend. Adult education is an important part of our lives and we feel that, against a challenging economic backdrop, the role of adult education in society will become increasingly important in helping people to develop new skills. The closure of Merton Adult Education will impact on the most disadvantaged learners. It is an important part of all our lives, either personally or as a means to improve the wellbeing and aspirations of the whole community and we hope that you will listen to our concerns. Please find enclosed a petition signed by many of our members.

Yours sincerely



COUNCILLOR JAMES HOLMES
(Conservative, Trinity Ward)



London Borough of Merton
Merton Civic Centre
London Road
Morden SM4 5DX

Tel: 020 8545 3396 (Civic Centre)
Email: james.holmes@merton.gov.uk

Date: 10 November 2014

Dear Cabinet Member

MERTON ADULT EDUCATION

I am writing to you and your colleagues in advance of the Cabinet meeting this evening to urge that further work is done by the Council on the Merton Adult Education (MAE) service proposals before they go to consultation.

I note that it is not proposed that the service be discontinued and this is welcome. The report sets out as the background a requirement by the Council to find £32million of savings over the next four years. Putting aside whether this figure is accurate, I am concerned that the wider issue is whether the whole premise of the proposed consultation is correct.

It appears that MAE not only breaks even but produces a surplus of up to £124,000 for the Council as set out in the service plan which is a public document. This document suggests that the service meets its own overheads and also makes a significant contribution to the central corporate overhead. I would urge that this matter is fully and properly investigated before instigating a consultation which will have cost implications and cause angst for both staff and students that could be avoided if the reasons for the proposed review are as set out in the report you will consider tonight.

Secondly, I am concerned that the consultation proposal gives a series of seemingly mutually exclusive options rather than allowing for consideration of a mixed approach whereby the core services continue to be delivered at Whatley Avenue whilst, for example, the merits of a back office merger with South Thames College are considered along with the option for some specialised or less popular courses to be commissioned rather than delivered. I believe this mixed solution should form part of the consultation.

Thirdly, I am concerned that it is only a relatively short time ago that the Cabinet endorsed the recommendations of the Adult Skills and Employability task group. The report makes reference to the implementation of the task group's recommendations but it seems that not enough time is being given to see whether these changes will indeed lead to additional sources of revenue for the MAE service to offset any further reductions in funding by the Skills Funding Agency.

In summary, I am asking you to consider a delay in commencing the consultation whilst its premise is established as being correct and until alternatives already endorsed by the Cabinet are allowed to be implemented.

Yours sincerely

Cllr James Holmes
Conservative Education Spokesman

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

October 14th 2014

Yvonne Tomlin
Principal, Merton Adult Education,
Whatley Centre,
Whatley Avenue
London SW20 9NS

Dear Ms Tomlin,

RE: MERTON ADULT EDUCATION and the WHATLEY CENTRE

I have learnt that Merton Council is considering proposals for changes to the provision of Merton Adult Education, or, indeed, for ceasing to provide adult education in the Borough for its residents. I understand that these proposals include the possible sale of the Whatley Avenue site and/or the provision of adult education in conjunction with SCOLA, Wandsworth Adult Education Service or South Thames College.

I would like to register my gravest concern about these. MAE in its present location provides a wealth of learning opportunities and social benefits to those who use its facilities. I am a student in a pottery class and am hoping also to study Italian at MAE. MAE is a central part of my life-long learning in retirement and is therefore beneficial to me as a resident. I stress that for me and for fellow learners, it is not just about learning a subject or some techniques, it is about the enrichment of human experience and quality of life.

I know that all those who attend classes at MAE benefit enormously.

- What they learn may have a direct, positive impact on their employment/employment prospects,
- or may provide challenges and stimulation in retirement,
- some students in 'mainstream' classes are adults with special needs and their MAE class is an important opportunity for them to go out and integrate with other people
- there is provision for classes of learners with special needs
- some students are carers who enjoy a few hours' respite when they attend their MAE class.

The Council is threatening to impose significant educational, creative and social losses on residents. Many of these people will not be able to write themselves to register their objections.

If Merton Council closes the Whatley Avenue centre, it will abandon a significant specialist resource:


- There are specialist creative arts facilities, provided as a result of significant investment by the Council itself;
- There is provision for access, made after the DDA was enacted, at significant expense;
- The Centre is a social hub for people, some of whom are disadvantaged, before and after class.

The Whatley Avenue centre is an asset, and it is one that should continue to be used to serve the community by providing education for adults and making beneficial provision for residents. It is not an asset that should be sold to a private developer so that the capital can contribute to the overall Council budget. I wonder also whether the amount a developer would pay for the site would make such an impact as to justify even in the crudest numerical terms the loss of the site.

I would be very grateful if you would let me know your position on the future of MAE, and any detailed information you are able to share about how SCOLA, LB Wandsworth or South Thames College would provide Merton-based adult education for the residents of Merton.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,

A large, solid black rectangular redaction covers the signature area of the letter.

[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]
[Redacted]

22 October, 2014

Dear Mr. Curran,

Re : Proposed closure of Merton Adult Education Centre in Whatley Road, Merton

I was shocked to hear that our college is under serious threat of closure at the end of 2014!!

I am a retired school teacher who has recently rejoined the college's pottery classes run by Karen Tooth and would like to express my dismay regarding the proposed closure of this college. I currently travel from my home to Rayne Park every Thursday to attend a mixed ability class which enables a wide range of people to share a morning of informative and creative dialogue and making in a purpose built specialist room with specific equipment and enthusiastic and experienced teacher.

The classes the college currently offers are excellent and varied and run by highly professional tutors who have dedicated their energy in delivering a lifeline to many different local people. The elderly, the disabled and mentally handicapped as well as young people who are retraining or gaining new qualifications for work are all benefitting hugely from attending these classes. If this college closes it will cause great distress to its current students as Merton will cease to deliver its current adult education classes returning the funding to the Skills Funding Agency or merging with South Thames College by becoming a commissioner of adult education services with Wandsworth.

I personally would like to express my surprise and disappointment if this college's services are curtailed or closed as it is currently delivering a very high standard of education to a cross sector of local people.

[Redacted]

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted]

20 OCT 2014

Merton Adult Education
Whateley Avenue
SW20 9NS

15/10/2014

Dear Sirs,

Having heard of the proposed changes to MAE, I would like to make the following comments.

There is a growing number of adults in the area who would like to continue making good use of their spare time and are willing to pay a significant fee for the opportunity. The feeling generally among the population is that people should be encouraged to continue learning throughout their life. There is also a growing need to provide for people who need to change their career.

The present staff at are consistently helpful and encouraging to people wishing to join classes or indeed just needing directions on the corridors and always offer greetings when they pass you about the building. The two classes I have joined have given exceptional teaching. It would be a tragedy to lose this place.

Therefore I am strongly in favour of MAE continuing as it is, making whatever changes are needed to fit in with immediate needs.

Yours faithfully,

Susan Flatau

[REDACTED]

Yvonne Tomlin,
Head of Community Education, MAE
Whatley Avenue
Morden
Surrey

With reference to: MAE Closure

Dear Yvonne Tomlin,

I am writing to you to express my concern about the MAEC closure and how it will affect me and my tutors.

I have studied at the college for the last thirteen years and during that time I have got eight NVQ's, this has made me more confident in myself and has helped me to act as a carer for my younger sister.

The college benefits me and my husband and sister in helping us to learn English, Math's and different skills. I would like it to stay open so I can learn more skills and pass my level 2 English course with the help of my tutor, Kathryn. I am also learning a lot and doing very well in pottery and stained glass.

I wouldn't want any of my tutors to lose their jobs because of the college closing and I would miss being here in the college and getting to know new students in my different classes from different countries. Coming to college helps me to keep busy and communicate with other people from different communities.

I hope you will stand by me and my college,

Yours Sincerely,

[REDACTED]

LOGGED
LETTER SENT

[REDACTED]

28.10.14

Re – Possible Closure of MAE

Dear Ged Curran

It is outrageous to even consider closing Whatley Avenue Adult Education facility!
I am struggling to find any justification that could be offered to support a plan to save money by cutting this vital service.

I have been using Whatley Avenue Centre for many years. I have learnt a great deal and continue to do so. The range and quality of courses there is excellent and I can think of a great number of friends and neighbours in the Borough over the years who have enjoyed the right to improve a skill needed for career purposes or to further an interest by learning more.

For many people attending MAE it is a lifeline and for others, their only outlet. There are older people who need to meet somewhere on a regular basis, socialise with others and spend some time for themselves. There are those who care for an elderly relative for whom it is their only social activity of the week. No price can be put on this – these are people who have worked and paid taxes over decades and who now, need to receive this service in return.

Similarly, there are the special needs students who rely on Whatley Avenue for classes, social interaction and a hot meal at lunchtime. I would welcome any councillor to witness these students at Whatley Avenue on any day of the week with their amazing, patient and skilled teachers and then say that this service should cease.

It is important that there is a college within the Borough where all kinds of people with different needs can meet and interact together.

How could saving money possibly compete with this vital service? It is **our** money from Council Tax and our taxes, which has been given to Merton to spend wisely. I would be surprised if any cuts to this service would meet many Merton Residents' approval.

We can only hope that Merton Council will be swamped with letters against this ludicrous proposal and that public opinion will persuade them to see sense.

Yours sincerely,

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Ms Yvonne Tomlin
Head of Community Education,
Merton Adult Education at Merton Council
Merton Civic Centre
London Road
London SM4 5DX

18 October 2014

Dear Ms Tomlin

THE FUTURE OF ADULT EDUCATION IN MERTON

I was appalled to hear at my regular painting lesson last Friday that Merton Adult Education and Whatley College are under serious threat of closure. Whatever has happened to the public declaration that learning should be for life?

I have been a student at Whatley College for the past 17 years, when I retired from full-time employment. I have studied a variety of different topics, sometimes two subjects per term, although now I can only afford to study one subject at time, as the costs have risen far beyond my pension capabilities.

I was under the impression that adult education, for ALL age groups, was a desirable thing, particularly for older people, who need to keep active and socially engaged for their own welfare and to lessen pressure on our increasingly beleaguered National Health Service. Everyone knows that modern health treatments and better living conditions mean that we all have a longer life expectancy: surely it is commonsense to ensure that those older people have facilities provided to keep them active and engaged, and able to play a part in the life of their community. And what about people with special needs and younger people who need to retrain for a new career?

I understand that some of the options under consideration include forming federations with outside adult learning facilities, and tendering the business to an external provider, or allowing another council to take over. All these options are bound to have financial implications, and those of us who are involved in any way with adult education need to be kept closely informed in order to make informed judgments about the best way to proceed – after all, the finances come from us, the council tax payers, and we should at least have a say in how our money is spent.

I think I am not alone in feeling this way. We need to retain a full adult education service in the borough. Please do not allow it to be removed, or curtailed.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Scanned + response sent 4/11/14.

[Redacted]

23rd October 2014

Chief Executive,
London Borough of Merton,
8th Floor Civic Centre,
London Road,
Morden,
SM4 5DX

Dear Mr Ged Curran,

I have been made aware that it is the council's intension to close the Merton Adult Education centre at Whatley Avenue, Morden.

I have been attending courses there since 2007, shortly after a relapse & diagnosis of Multiple Sclerosis. The various courses I have attended have helped me to recover both mentally & physically from these debilitating relapses & ultimately find employment. I now attend courses to maintain my health & for social & recreational purposes. This centre is local to where I live & if it closes the alternatives (ie Scola, South Thames College) would mean additional travelling & parking costs which I can ill afford as I am on a low income & ultimately would mean that I have to give up something that I feel is keeping me well & that I enjoy. Also, there is no guarantee that these alternative centres would run the courses I have enrolled on at an affordable cost & at a convenient time & venue; they may not run them at all. The possible loss of employment of talented personnel & the enrichment that this college gives me, others & the local area should not be ignored just for the short term profit the council would get from selling the property for re-development.

Yours sincerely,

[Redacted]

[Redacted]

CC: Simon Williams (Community & Housing Dept)
Edward Foley (Councillor-Merton Park)
John Sargeant (Councillor-Merton Park)
Peter Southgate (Councillor-Merton Park)
Siobhan McDonagh (MP Mitcham & Morden)
Yvonne Tomlin (Head of Community Education, MAE)

Scanned + response sent 4.11.14

YVONNE TOMLIN,
HEAD OF COMMUNITY EDUCATION
MAE
WHATLEY AVENUE
LONDON SW20 9NS

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

28th OCTOBER 2014

Dear Ms Tomlin,

Following a current Council review of Merton Adult Education I have been informed the college I attend is under serious threat of closure. I wholeheartedly support our student campaign to ensure the borough retains a full adult education service.

Since retiring I have been enrolling at MAE College in Whatley Avenue for seven years. I have learnt many new skills and been inspired by my tutors in the Creative Hand Embroidery and Drawing to Painting classes.

The tutors are excellent, highly qualified and experience in their subjects, Always encouraging, making lessons interesting and exciting, Giving students confidence and a sense of achievement. I would definitely recommend studying with MAE.

I have made friends and enjoy the companionship. It is very important to keep mind and body active keeping Alzheimers at bay. In some cases helping in the fight to combat isolation and loneliness.

2.

Many students enrol to acquire a qualification progressing to degree courses and employment. This is essential for the future of our society.

MAE is efficiently run and offers a wide range of courses encompassing a variety of subjects and a student support service. The college has a friendly atmosphere and is the perfect learning environment.

I trust the Council will consider their decision carefully and not close a much needed Adult Education College at Whatley Avenue. It would be a tragedy for all concerned. I do hope you will support our campaign.

Yours sincerely,

A large black rectangular redaction mark covering the signature of the sender.

Scanned and response sent 4/11/14

To ; Yvonne Tomlin, Head of Community Education.
[REDACTED]

31st October, 2014.

Dear Yvonne Tomlin,

As a retired person and as someone who has attended various art class at Merton Adult Education for many years, I would go for option 1. This is providing the changes are not too severe. I hope the changes do not include Art and Craft classes being cut or the prices being too exorbitant. As already stated I am a retired person so I am certainly not taking any courses that entail sitting an exam at the end. My days for taking exams are over. We are always being told that older people should keep their minds active. This is why, as well as younger people attending classes there is a large number of middle aged and older people. Most people who go to Art and Craft classes go for the pleasure of creating something.

What will happen to classes that have people with Special Needs? Also what about the tutors and administration staff. I hope we get some answers soon?

Yours sincerely, [REDACTED]

Copies sent to: Merton Council Members: Ged Curran, Chief Executive, Simon Williams, Head of Community and Housing Services, Paul Ballatt Head of Commissioning Services Merton Mayor, Agatha Akyigina, Councillors : Tobin Byers, Pauline Cowper, and Fidelis Gadzama

London Borough of Merton
Merton Civic Centre
London Road
Morden,
SM4 5DX



4th November, 2014

Dear Cllr Stephen Alambritis,

Re: changes to Merton Adult Education

I was highly disappointed to hear of the changes being considered in adult education provision in Merton. I am a tutor at the college and would like you to consider these issues.

It is evident there is a widening disparity in the local community and Merton Adult Education has always endeavoured to provide services to close the gap. As well as providing access to learning, MAE supports those seeking employment via training for work, careers advice, and by offering employment within the organisation. MAE has a history of providing education for the whole community ranging from family courses for the under fives through traditional adult education and on to leisure activities for the retired. In addition, MAE takes pride in the social benefits it offers, including crucial support for those with disabilities and informal monitoring of those facing social exclusion and mental health problems in the community.

At the least, the changes will result in diminished services, if not their complete cessation, and further impoverishment. A way to preserve the current institute must be found or jobs and services will be available only to those who can afford to access them privately, or can travel to find them.

MAE is a key provider for those seeking to improve their life chances, and for the most vulnerable in society who require a safe and supportive environment. Evidence of this is found in the number of students enrolled every year and the progress they make. The loss of MAE in its present form, in this vicinity, will be a devaluing of services and detrimental to the local community.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Yours sincerely,



Also emailed via Gael Curran

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
12.11.2014

Dear Ms. Tomlin,

The threatened closure of Merton Adult Education at Whatley Avenue

It will cause sadness to me if closure happens.

I attended the Joseph Hood primary school here during World War II and remember sheltering in the air-raid shelters which surrounded the sports ground during the blitz.

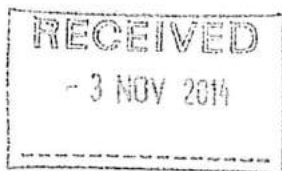
I have attended MAE regularly since retirement and since then have been awarded Celebration of Achievement certificates for stained glass in 2005 and water colours in 2013.

I find it convivial to share classes with other natives of this area, some of whom are pensioners like me, and it is stimulating for my mental activity. (I have sadly witnessed the decline of my deceased sister's mental capacity over 10 years. During that time, Sutton Social Services were deeply involved).

This term's fee for me was £100. There are about 20 students in my class, so I would have thought the total income for the class was sufficient to pay for the tuition.

I know, in my case, the courses I attended were not "vocational", but there are other functions performed by MAE which are beneficial to society.

Yours sincerely,
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]



[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

24 October 2014

Mr S Williams
Director of Community and Housing
London Borough of Merton
Civic Centre
London Road
Morden
SM4 5DX

Dear Mr Williams

Whatley Avenue Adult Education Centre

I recently enrolled at Whatley Avenue Adult Education Centre. I have been waiting to continue my arts and crafts education since I left school over forty years ago. I recently retired and was finally able to enrol in classes. You can imagine how disappointed I was to hear that Whatley Avenue is now under serious threat of closure in 2015. I am sure that Merton Council would agree that opportunities for learning are essential for all age groups and that the closure of this excellent centre would be a great loss to many people.

I have lived in Merton all my life and have seen many changes to the detriment of the community. Please do not add another one.

I hope that the Council are looking at creative ways to keep Whatley Avenue open. It really is a valuable asset.

Yours sincerely

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Geoff Cotton,
Chief Exec. L.B.M.

[Redacted]
[Redacted] Borough of [Redacted]
[Redacted] Chief Executive's Office

Dear Sir
Re: Merton Adult Education
Service Review.

I write on behalf of my son, [Redacted], who is very shocked and upset by the news that the M.A.E. at Whatley Avenue may be closing.

[Redacted] has learning disabilities and is also physically disabled but he very much enjoys his Monday afternoon MAIN STREAM ART CLASS, run by Angela Lukaszewicz. Angela accepted [Redacted] into her class some years ago and immediately gained my admiration and thanks. In addition to learning various painting techniques etc. [Redacted] has gained so much more. Firstly, because we live so near to the College, he is able to walk the short distance independently and he sometimes meets up with others from the class to chat before the lesson begins. As he is very sociable, he has made some good friends without any help from me, and at various events he has felt great pride in introducing them to my husband and myself.

[Redacted] physical problems are steadily becoming more troublesome and because I find it safer to drive him to most places, I feel he is slowly losing confidence in his abilities. These abilities

have always been his greatest assets and are: his sociability; his knowledge of his own self-worth; and a likeable personality. The M.A.E. has enabled [redacted] to display these characteristics admirably and grow further because of the opportunities that are provided there.

As [redacted] cannot read or write well, it is necessary for me to write on his behalf against the closure of Merton Adult Education but he very much wants to be involved and the following points ^{are comments} that [redacted] has made:

- 1/ I have made friends in the class as well as with many of the staff and I may not see them again if the college closes.
- 2/ I can walk to and back from the College on my own.
- 3/ I feel independent and I know a lot of the staff as well.
- 4/ Angela is a good Teacher and very kind.
- 5/ I want to be a good and better artist.

We ask that you reconsider the proposal of the closure of M.A.E. at Whiteley Avenue

Yours faithfully,

cc. Simon Williams,
Yvonne Tomlin,
Mr. Stephen Atamburic
Mr. Tobin Byers

[redacted]
[redacted]
[redacted]

Councillor Stephen Alambritis

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 10 November 2014 17:31
To: Councillor Stephen Alambritis
Cc: [REDACTED]
Subject: Re:- For consideration for your meeting regarding Merton Adult Education
Attachments: [REDACTED]

Importance: High

Dear Mr Alambritis,

I work for the Stroke Association in Merton and Sutton and manage a service which supports stroke survivors with aphasia via 5 groups in the community and 1:1 home visits.

We are all so sorry, shocked and saddened to hear about the possible threat of closure and ceasing of adult education services at the Whatley Centre.

One of our popular and loved groups is our monthly art class at Merton Adult Education. This group has 10 – 12 members and provides such a sense of success, peace, enjoyment and is a source of creative expression and communication. Some members who have severe expressive aphasia and are unable to verbally communicate thrive in having the space to feel confident in creating a piece of work that allows them to express themselves, their personality and creativity.

Our link with Merton adult education started in 2013 when head of art Jill Illife and I discussed having an art teacher to run some art sessions at one of our old group venues in Mitcham. This group was so well attended and popular and had such a therapeutic and positive effect that Jill and I forged a longer-term link and she supported my plan to have an ongoing art group by allowing us to use the art room at the College. It is such a perfect environment for my group members, accessible, safe, supportive and also allows group members to decide if they may like to join another class at the College independently – pottery for example. Group members all have a love of art, some may have lost confidence to try art after their stroke and after the loss of function of one side of their body, and one art group member was of professional artist standard and so was initially unsure about coming along to a group. However, once at the class everyone feel comfortable to try some art and express themselves, try new techniques and creating a picture of their interpretation and personality and often using modern and classic artists. It is also such a supportive and friendly group and everyone encourages each other and especially at the end of class when all can see what everyone else has created and in the interim weeks before a class everyone practices art at home to then bring along to show the group.

Enclosed(attachment above) is a photo of 2 art group members proudly standing by their art work which is still displayed currently in the College's main hall. Raquel was our teacher last year into this year July time, and from September we have had Kalvin as art tutor. Both art tutors have a real empathy and skill in how they run the art classes and every single person in the class is made to feel proud of their achievements at each session.

Please consider this email as an initial sign of how important it is for the College to continue offering art and classes to stroke survivors and other people with additional support needs. I will be getting my group members to express how much art group and the College means to them and also asking my volunteers.

Thanks very much for your time and please let me know if you need any further information,



RAYNES PARK AND WEST BARNES
RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION
SERVING THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1928

Ms. Yvette Stanley
Director of Education
London Borough of Merton
Civic Hall
London Road
Morden, Surrey SM4 5DX

2nd February 2015

Dear Ms Stanley,

Re: Whatley Avenue Adult Education Centre

I write to advise you that many of our Members have contacted us in dismay at the proposal to close the Whatley Avenue Adult Education Centre.

We are very concerned about this proposal and simply cannot understand the thinking behind it. Why close a popular Centre which is not losing money - and impel people to travel from this area to Merton College, which is vast and impersonal - and likely to intimidate the many special needs residents who are used to the current Centre and would much prefer to stay there. They feel much more comfortable in a smaller spaces that are familiar and make them feel safe.

Additionally Merton College is less well served by public transport.

We would urge you to advise against this proposal which is presumably financially lead, and for which any 'saving' will be non-existent.

Yours faithfully,



Co-Secretary, for and on behalf of the Raynes Park & West Barnes Residents' Association.

Please Reply to:



LOGGED
LETTER SENT

Sapphira van Assema

From: Chief Executive
Sent: 28 October 2014 15:15
To: [REDACTED]
Subject: FW: Save MAE

[REDACTED]
Executive Assistant to Ged Curran, Chief Executive
(Monday and Tuesday)
Merton Council
020 8545 3332
[REDACTED]
www.merton.gov.uk

From: [REDACTED]
Sent: 28 October 2014 14:22
To: Chief Executive
Subject: Save MAE

[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

28th October 2014

Dear Mr Curran,

I am writing to you to express my serious concern that MAE college will be closed down.

I have lived in Wimbledon for majority of the last ten years and have attended MAE Spanish courses since 2009. I have always felt privileged that such a range of courses were available to me that fitted round my working day. I was therefore saddened to hear that MAE college is under threat of closure. I personally feel this would be a great loss to our community.

I originally joined the college as I have an interest in foreign languages and wanted to learn a basic level of Spanish. However, I have continued as I found that not only did I enjoy the academic aspect and learning a subject that was not available to me when I was at school but I got to meet and spend time with people in my community that I would not necessarily have had the pleasure to meet otherwise. Furthermore, it has encouraged me to make better use of the fantastic libraries we have in Merton and I have a much better sense of what's going on in the wider community both from other students and just being involved with MAE.

I never under estimate the many benefits the availability of adult education offers to our community. A great example is my Grandfather. My Grandmother was terminally ill and in hospital then a hospice for the last 18 months of her life. My Grandfather, then in his late 70's, travelled to the hospital by bus everyday throughout this time to spend time with her and this left no time for anything else. After her passing he was left feeling a bit lost with lots of time on his hands that he wasn't used to. He enrolled for two classes at his local Adult education centre and it was a great way for him to reengage with his community by meeting new people and just having a focus away from a very difficult time in his life.

Another good example is my Mother in Law who has recently retired from a 40+ year career as a midwife. Having always wanted to develop her artist skill but never having had the time previously she has enrolled in a foundation class and is thoroughly enjoying the experience in a welcoming and age appropriate environment that wouldn't be available to her in any other guise.

I understand that there is a possibility that MAE maybe absorbed into South Thames College and I personally think this would be a bad move. As a further education college South Thames College focus, is quite rightly, on predominantly young adults and their academic needs aswell as preparing them for life after they finish compulsory education, eg. UCAS forms, vocational work experience. This focus is at odds with what the majority of people are looking for when signing up to adult education courses. Furthermore, vulnerable members of the community, such as people with learning difficulties or the elderly may find it intimidating attending courses in large college environments with teenagers and has the potential to exclude them from accessing such courses when these are the very people that benefit most.

I urge you to do all you can to keep MAE college in operation as this will be a massive loss to our community in the event a closure is agreed. I hope this letter has conveyed exactly why it is so important from an academic, personal and community that MAE college remains in operation.

Yours Sincerely



London 20/10/2014

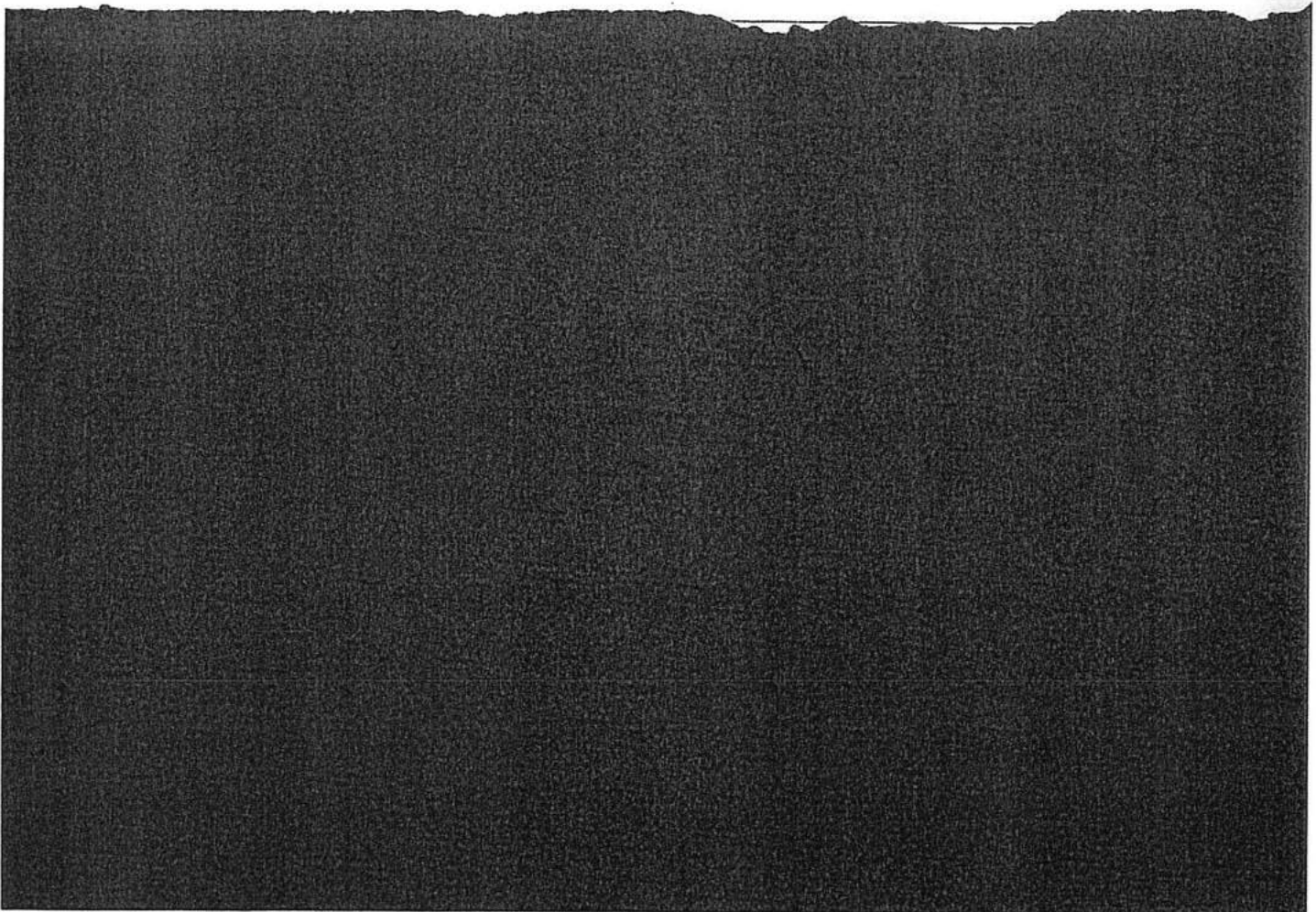
CLASS IS OFF

Dear Mr Williams,

Please don't close my school

Yours Sincerely

[Redacted signature]



Dear

Mr. Williams,

Please don't close
my school.

Yours sincerely, Simon
Moghman

20-10-2014

[Redacted signature]

[Redacted address]

[redacted] 20th October 2014

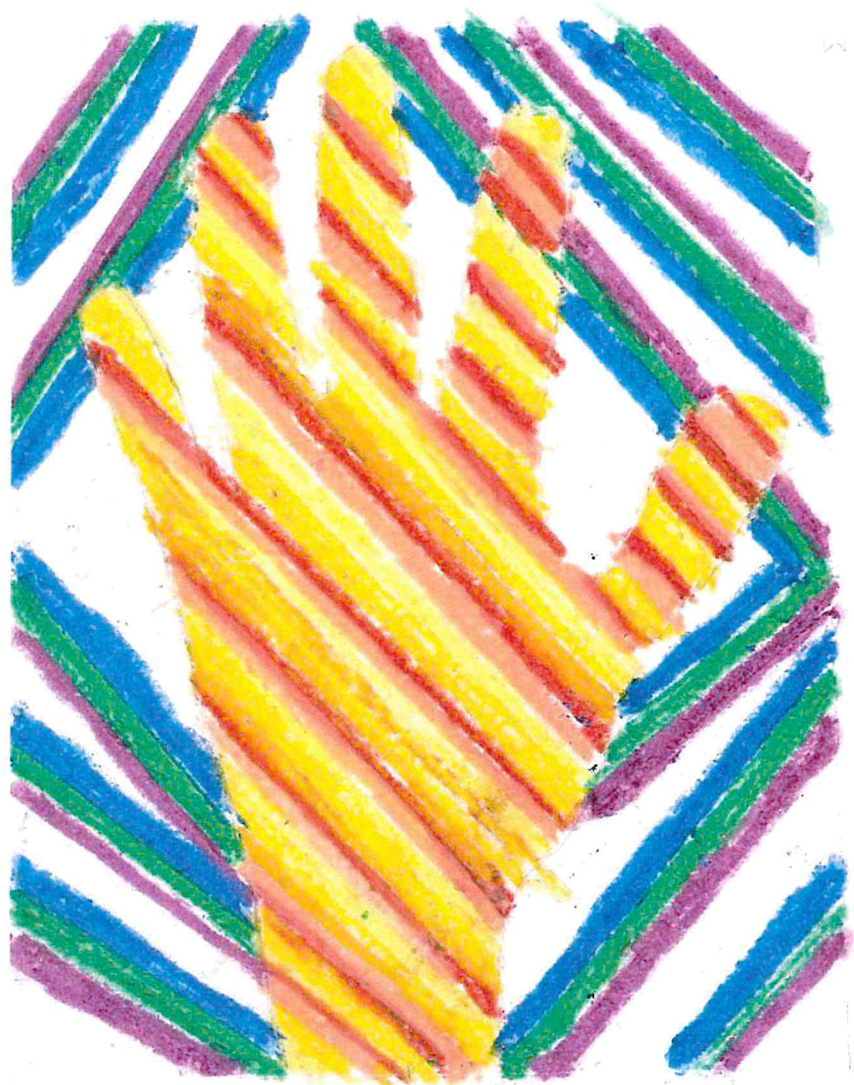
Dear

Mr Williams

Please don't close my school

Yours sincerely

[redacted]



Stop
closing
adult
education

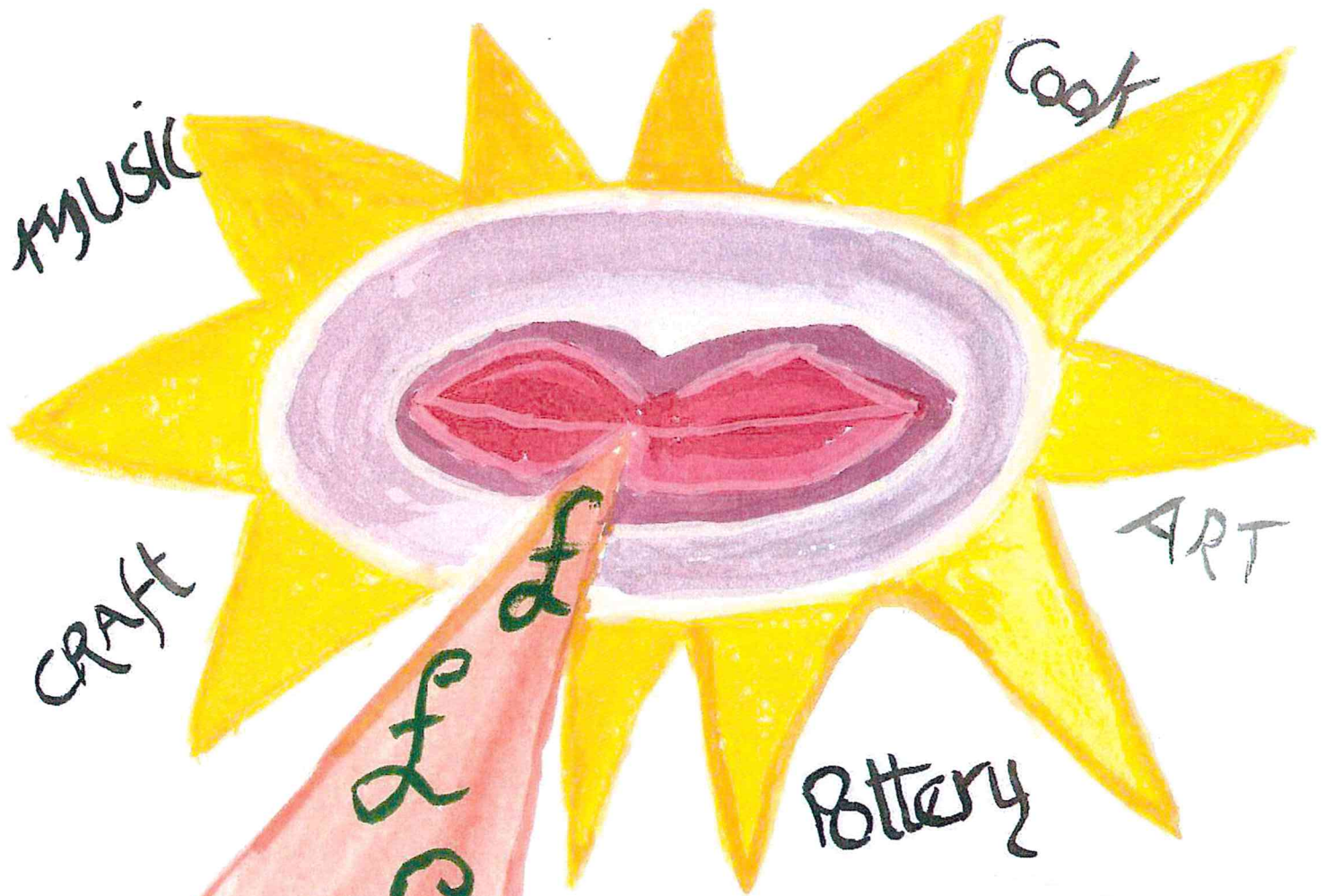
We have
strong feelings
for
adult education



P. Keef

Save our art group





Battery

Save

Education.



NOT WAR

MAKE ART



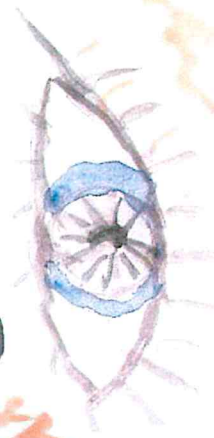
Art gives me peace

Art helps me

I need my chas

I love my chas





YES

WIMBLEDON



123

CAREERS

COLLEGE



SAVE

OUR

FUTURE

BRILLIANT



Work

COACENTRATE

Save the Students!

As you probably know Nation Adult Education (NAE) is Shutting down. This is because of reasons. Somehow more important than an individual's future. You may also know that this College has a mix of Students of all abilities. In my opinion this is lovely. I believe anyone has the freedom to communicate with others. However this soon may not happen. I am sure you are aware it is only up to you to decide what is best for **EVERYONE**.

Where are they going to go?

^{What} I ^{are} sure you are planning to do - the greater good?

I hope you will keep these important questions in mind as they will help change the lives of others. Please make the correct decision.

From



**Merton Home
Tutoring Service**

For adults who want to learn English
and tutors who want to teach it.
Reg: 1139126

Guild House, 30/32 Worple Road,
Wimbledon SW19 4EF
Mertonhometutoring@gmail.com Tel: 07855 163 498

12 December 2014

Councillor Alambritis,
Merton Council, Crown House,
London Road, Morden, SM4 5DX

Dear Mr. Alambritis,

We would like to bring to your attention the very cost effective service that we run for adults who cannot speak English and wish to do so, although unable to attend English classes at college.

For six years we have obtained grants to pay our modest costs. However, we are in a difficult position now as we have been unable to obtain funding to meet the salary costs of our Coordinators from April 2015, despite a number of applications to grant making bodies. In these austere times, our client group is not seen as being of high need, migrants are not popular and added to this, many funders will only consider new projects, and many will not meet core costs. Without this funding we are in grave danger of having to curtail or cease our service.

We provide English classes for about 125 adults annually. These consist of

- 8 ESOL Stepping Stone classes, about 50 students at Acacia Intergenerational Centre, St. Marks Family Centre and Hall Close Homeless families' hostel] and in 2015, a further class at Abbey Children's Centre [including a new one starting in January]
- 25-30 one to one tuition in the home and in the Asian Women's Refuges

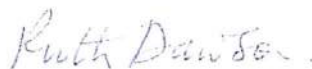
We are keen to meet with Merton Council to discuss ways in which you may be able to help us to continue to provide the service. In particular, we are anxious to find a stable way of paying for our part time Co-ordinators, who are key people in the service and ensure that volunteers are supported and retained. Our volunteers currently provide over 6,000 hours of service.

Our charity has been highly commended by Mayors of Merton who have attended our AGM; the manager was made Volunteer of the Year in 2013. A number of our learners have gone on to jobs and further education, and one is employed to carry out administrative duties in our office for a few hours.

We contribute to the Social Value Act duty on local councils, as well as the education offer, thereby increasing educational and employment potential of adults in addition to the health of their families.

I attach further details of our service.

Yours sincerely,



Dr. Ruth Dawson, MSc. P.D.E.S.L. [Dip.Ed] Trustee, Manager and Founder.



Details of our service.

How we do it

- We employ two very able and qualified teachers as Co-ordinators of the service. They provide assessment of learners in the home and in Stepping Stone classes, match volunteers to learners, monitor lessons, assess learner progress and analyse annual questionnaires by participants
- We provide a resource library and write Information readers in simplified English on topics relevant to adults with families
- We recruit volunteers, almost all with degrees, and then provide initial volunteer tutor training [18 hours], & ongoing training as well as weekly advisory sessions.

Costs

The teaching is free of charge, achieved through trained volunteers [home tuition] & qualified teachers [Stepping Stone classes] who provide 6000 hours to the charity. We are supported through grant giving bodies, donations, through donations in kind from the Wimbledon Guild and Merton Children's Centres, and through our own fundraising via events and the marketing of the information readers.

The two Co-ordinators receive a modest salary, term time only, part-time; the Manager is unpaid.

The people we teach

The Merton residents we teach [adults 20 – 60 years] come from Africa, Eastern Europe, the Indian subcontinent, and a few from the Middle East and South America, many of them women with young families from 'hard to reach' communities. These adults cannot attend formal classes for a variety of reasons: e.g. because no crèche is available, they cannot afford course fees, travel with small children makes it very difficult, they may be disabled, very under-confident and families may disapprove of mixed classes. In addition, we have a number of people who have never had the chance of education, and consequently need assistance with literacy and study skills.

We teach everyday English, to enable people to participate as parents in providing for their children. Beginners' English is virtually unavailable in Merton, and we are able to provide this. We enable people to function independently, no longer needing interpreters in visiting the doctor, the clinic, teachers, council officers and Job Centres. We have a number of people now who have progressed from home tuition to Stepping Stones and thence to further education and jobs.

Trustees & Tutors

As a Registered charity, we have a lively Board of Trustees, chaired by a lawyer, a business woman as Secretary, a chartered accountant as Treasurer and a qualified teacher specialising in evaluation as manager, an entrepreneur, a retired high level civil servant and current tutors. The Trustees come from Ghana, Australia, Scotland and England all of whom have experienced living in other countries. Our tutors are from a greater range of countries, with overseas experience.

Subject: 5. Response by Merton Home Tutoring Service
Response by Merton Home Tutoring Service

From: mertonhometutoring@gmail.com [mailto:mertonhometutoring@gmail.com] On
Behalf Of Merton
Home Tutoring Service
Sent: 15 January 2015 16:49
To: Simon Williams (Director)
Subject: Response by Merton Home Tutoring Service

Dear Mr Williams,
Thank you for your letter of 19th December 2014, which I received today, 15th
January, at the
Wimbledon Guild, where Merton Home Tutoring Service has its resource room. I
was there at
the Guild last week also, and so I am puzzled why I have received it so long
after you wrote the
letter.

You ask whether I have any objections to our letter being included as part of
the responses
received during consultation. I can see no objection. Please use it.
I do hope it won't be used to argue for the closure of the Merton Adult
Education service,
because that service is so very valuable for our clients. The South Thames
College has a long
waiting list, and the fees are costly for our clients. It has a stern attitude
towards those who
cannot pass exams in the required time.

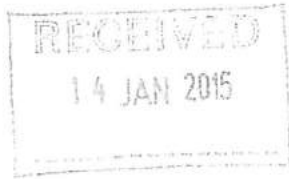
Many of our clients, with family responsibilities, and sometimes limited
education find it
impossible to achieve exam success in that timescale. Beginners' classes are
very limited in
number, so our clients value MAE classes very much, and it is the next step up
for many of our
clients. There are going to be a lot more isolated families, excluded from
participation, with all
the health and community safety consequences that also entails.

MAE also makes a considerable difference to the retired people in the borough,
keeping them
alert and lively. There is nothing of this range, cost and quality available
elsewhere. U3A is a
useful organisation, but does not have qualified teachers, and these are key to
learning new skills
.

Times change, and unless we can somehow find a way of enabling this organisation
to survive,
until we do have more money to run it at a higher level, the teachers, structure
and goodwill will
all have vanished. It is easy enough to destroy gems like this, and much harder
to set them up
again, involving the purchase of costly buildings etc.,
Ruth Dawson,
Dr. Ruth Dawson, Manager, Merton Home Tutoring Service

--
Dr. Ruth Dawson, B.A. MSc, P.D.E.S.L.

Manager, Merton Home Tutoring Service,
30/32 Worple Road,
Wimbledon SE19 4EF.



[REDACTED]

12TH JANUARY 2015

**MR SIMON WILLIAMS
DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY & HOUSING
LONDON BOROUGH OF MERTON
CIVIC CENTRE
LONDON ROAD
MORDEN
SM4 5DX**

SIR,

MAE—LIFE OR DEATH

I am a ratepayer of the Borough. I have attended for some 12 years the adult education French courses and also I did attend for some years the Italian courses. I have benefitted greatly from the opportunity to participate and especially from the high level of tutorship.

I am horrified that the Council (or certain elements in it) should see fit to destroy adult education in Merton. I have submitted responses to the consultation document, but as it appears not to be independently structured, I would wish to add my dissatisfaction with the actions being pursued by the Council (or elements).

1. On 3 October 2014 I received an email from MAE that there was be a Learner Consultation Week to seek views on a range of topics and what was wanted of MAE. No mention of cuts or cessation of adult education.
2. Barely 3 days later you make your appearance with a brief email indicating cutting of costs² and services is planned with options being explored, but with no details being provided. You would welcome "ideas for reducing costs". How trite! What are you paid to do?
3. Fortunately, the truth emerged that the Council (or elements) were actively looking at 6 options, including the cessation of the provision of adult education.
4. Only then, with the ensuing outcry, did the Council accept, no doubt very reluctantly, that there needed to be consultation and it withdrew the 6th option.
5. At a Council meeting on 2 December, I am told, the Council said there was no detailed analysis of the 5 options. Totally incredible and scandalous. The shareholder of a public company would not tolerate this, so why should ratepayers.
6. Clearly there has been a total lack of transparency and one is left to believe there might be a hidden agenda.
7. The results of the responses to the consultation document need to be independently analysed and a detailed cost analysis of the options properly prepared, with both to be published so there is complete transparency.

Yours faithfully

[REDACTED]

CC. Mr Stephen Hammond M P
Cllr David Williams
Shas Sheehan

Adult Education complaints

Complainant	[REDACTED]
Reference	[REDACTED]
Date received	22 December 2014
Deadline	23 January 2015
Complaint	<p>I am writing to raise my concerns over the review of the provision of adult education here in Merton and to formally complain about the process that has been followed by the Council.</p> <p>Lack of Robust Information As residents of the borough and users of the adult education service, we are being asked to give opinions and views without sufficient information. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • there have been several figures circulating regarding the actual cost to the borough of adult education. Every time a figure is requested, it seems to change; • how can anyone respond to the statement "There should be more courses that help people to get a job", without knowing how many courses there are at present that support job seekers, or how successful they are. <p>It is apparent that the whole process is being very rushed, even though the Council has been aware of the need to cut spending for several years. It seems the decision has already been made to out-source courses to other providers (the Councils preferred option), but there appears to be no robust comparative costings or indeed scrutiny of the quality of provision in councils where this has happened. There is no guarantee that whoever ends up providing the services will offer the same courses and there may be increased fees once the private sector becomes involved.</p> <p>Lack of Thorough Preparation</p> <p>There are many questions that have to be answered before councillors can make well-considered decisions about the future of adult education in Merton These include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What would be the cost of regulating and monitoring the cost of out-sourcing courses? 2. Who will oversee issues and monitoring related to equality and human rights? 3. What monies will be set aside to support learners from lower incomes who will be unable to afford courses run by private providers? Merton will lose any flexibility it has in supporting more expensive or less popular courses through funding from full classes. 4. How will the council ensure that the needs of all learners are catered for, including the growing number of healthy,

	<p>motivated, retired people?</p> <p>5. What reliable evidence have councilors used to support their claims that provision is in the wrong part of the borough, which is the main rationale for selling the Whatley Avenue site?</p> <p>The process of consultation has been very flawed; the council appears to be unprepared for such radical change and for making a decision that will be impossible to reverse.</p> <p>I look forward to receiving a considered and substantive reply from you within 15 days, after which time I will consider making a complaint to the Ombudsman for local authority misadministration.</p>
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Complainant	[REDACTED]
Reference	[REDACTED]
Date received	30 December 2014
Deadline	28 January 2015
Complaint	<p>I am writing to you both to express my strong reservations and doubts about the conduct of the council in looking at alternative financial methods of providing adult education in Merton to all age groups and learning aptitudes.</p> <p>Partial or absent Financial information</p> <p>In my opinion, we have been given varying figures relating to the SFA allocation. The Actual Income of all fee-paying students has been either hidden in text or absent in council documents. Have the Council's auditors scrutinized and verified the so-called ongoing maintenance cost?</p> <p>The Actual HR Cost to LBM of Whateley Avenue College in relation to the fee income of the student body has not been presented against fee income.</p> <p>I am no accountant and unable to understand the exact significance of all the figures that the council has offered in the open democracy meeting in November and the scrutiny meeting in early December.</p> <p>But figures do not add up nor make sense as a basis for rushing to a commissioning model.</p> <p>You have not indicated which courses will remain, at what cost, and where. It's simply not a fair basis upon which the students, staff and local residents can possibly make an informed decision to support the council.</p> <p>Of course the council needs to make significant cuts, but to present a pre-chosen form of AE to 'shift financial risk' (Cllr Williams's</p>

	<p>phrase, scrutiny meeting, 2nd Dec), with the real prospect of the Whateley Ave site being sold off because the building is under-occupied and under-resourced for £X million to reduce the £32m target would be shameful.</p> <p>Outsourcing itself carries a significant cost and level of expertise. Has this been properly costed and the provider(s) scrutinised for quality delivery equal to MAE?</p> <p>Will outsourcers offer the same degree of quality we receive at Whatley Ave College? Which courses will be cut?</p> <p>Further questions regarding due diligence in selecting the commissioning model as choice of Council.</p> <p>Your own councillors, if they are acting on behalf of residents' needs and not voting practices, must surely have more answers to the questions above, and those that follow:</p> <p>What independent evidence is to hand to suggest that the Whatley Avenue site contributes to an 'impoverished east and affluent west' when the council has itself closed AE sites in the east?</p> <p>Who has undertaken a costing of the commissioning model, its regulation and oversight, and the courses themselves, if not the council?</p> <p>Are there guarantees in place relating to learner income support and special-learning students?</p> <p>What guarantees are in place that the cost of courses will not escalate if the commissioning model is run by private enterprises?</p> <p>What guarantees are in place to maintain Whatley Avenue College as a prime AE site in the borough?</p> <p>Finally, why has the student paper and internet consultation been undertaken in the last two weeks of term before the council decides in early January?</p> <p>Regarding the last point, I know that the decision has been delayed until February. This in no way invalidates any of the questions above.</p> <p>I will look forward to receiving a detailed and full response from you within 15 days, and if that is not forthcoming, I shall be writing to the Ombudsman for local government.</p>
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Complainant	[REDACTED]
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Reference	[REDACTED]
Date received	22 December 2014
Deadline	22 January 2015
Complaint	<p>I write to complain formally about the conduct of the review and consultation on the future provision of Merton Adult Education.</p> <p>Firstly, I submit that the consultation is fundamentally flawed because there is insufficient information about current costs to Merton Council and insufficient information about the costs and savings possible if any of the other options were to be selected. This was observed at the Scrutiny Call-In meeting of December 4th, and disregarded by the Labour members on the panel.</p> <p>Throughout the consultation, the Council has been unwilling to publicise the true net cost to it of MAE provision and has thus deliberately mis-led residents.</p> <p>When the Cabinet meets to decide on the option it will use, it will be unable to make an informed decision. This does not represent responsible local government.</p> <p>Secondly, the Council selected a 'preferred option' before opening the public consultation, and the wording of parts of the consultation documents steered respondents towards certain answers.</p> <p>Thirdly, the consultation questionnaire provided for LDD learners (who are important, but vulnerable users of MAE provision) is inappropriately worded and is therefore inaccessible to some. The higher order questions are conceptually inaccessible to some.</p> <p>I look forward to your response to this complaint, each element of which, I believe, can be addressed by the Council and Cabinet, if only they were willing to take the time necessary to communicate clearly and respectfully with residents and to provide clear information about costs and the future of Joseph Hood School.</p> <p>If I do not receive a constructive response from you within 15 working days, I shall consider taking my complaint to the Local Government Ombudsman</p>

Complainant	[REDACTED]
Reference	[REDACTED]
Date received	15 December 2014
Deadline	15 January 2015
Complaint	<p>I have just completed and returned the consultation form regarding this issue.</p> <p>I feel I have to complain about the consultation, both with regard to</p>

the content of the consultation form and the manner in which the consultation process is being managed. The following are my personal comments but are, I believe, shared by many of the students and staff involved in adult education in Merton, especially at the Whatley Avenue site.

Regarding the consultation form itself:

(i) The form has no return address. Unless a return envelope was collected with the form (the form I collected at the public meeting on 2 December did not include a return envelope), an onus is put upon the person completing the form to make investigations as to where the completed form should be returned. The failure to include a return address on the form raises questions as to the legal legitimacy of the consultation.

(ii) The consultation form includes questions which are impossible to answer. For example, one is asked if the Council should give priority to adult education over other services. Clearly there are some council services which will have a higher priority than adult education, but there will also be some services which have a lower priority. How then is one expected to answer this question?

Regarding the consultation process:

(i) The Council have identified a preferred option for adult education in the borough without having carried out a financial analysis of the options. How then can one option be said to be preferred over another? Will the preferred option result in any savings? How can the Council answer this without having carried out a financial analysis?

(ii) The identification of a preferred option before consulting students, staff and other interested parties is illogical. How can the Council form a view on what nature of service needs to be provided without first consulting those involved in delivering and receiving that service?

(iii) The consultation is being rushed and its timing is inappropriate. The College is largely closed for the Christmas period. Students and staff are no longer in regular contact with each other. The Council intend to make a final decision on the future of adult education in the borough on 19 January 2015, very close to the beginning of the spring term. Have the Council chosen this timing in order to reduce the number of received objections? Will the Council point to the low number of objections as evidence that their plans are generally supported?






I would ask:







(i) That the Council respond to the questions raised above and to do so in time to allow a complaint to be filed with the Local Authority Ombudsman before 19 January, should such action appear to be appropriate.






(ii) That the Council agree not to make a final decision on the future of adult education in Merton until a financial analysis of the options has been carried out.







(iii) That the Council delay its final decision on the future of adult education, planned for 19 January, until at least well into the Spring Term, to allow sufficient time for students, staff and others to make representations on the issue.






I look forward to the receipt of your early reply.

	<p>Consultation</p> <p>We talked to 8 students in the Monday Pottery Class about possible changes to Merton Adult Education</p>
	<p>What do the students think about their pottery class?</p> <p>They said:</p>
	<p>"10 out of 10"</p> <p>"I do like college, it is nice"</p> <p>"I like it so much"</p>
	<p>"I like achieving things and getting certificates"</p>
	<p>"I like mixing with other people"</p> <p>"I have good friends here"</p>

	<p>"It is very hard to find educational centres like this"</p>
	<p>"I make things" "I like using my hands"</p>
	<p>What other classes do the students do at Merton Adult Education?</p>
	<p>"I like cooking too" "I made a Shepherd's Pie and had it for lunch"</p>
	<p>"I do photography"</p>
	<p>"I exercise"</p>

	<p>"I have a computer class"</p>
	<p>"Maths and money!"</p>
	<p>How would students feel if classes were in a different building?</p>
	<p>"I hate the idea"</p> <p>"I don't want to go somewhere else"</p> <p>"No, no, no"</p>
	<p>"I would get lost"</p> <p>"It is hard to find my way round SCOLA"</p> <p>"It is easier to find my way round here [at Whatley Avenue]"</p> <p>"I would have to start all over again and learn different rules and routes"</p>

	<p>"What about my friends?"</p> <p>"I would want to have the same teacher and friends"</p> <p>"I have lots of friends here [at Whatley Avenue]"</p> <p>"The teachers are kind here [at Whatley Avenue]"</p>
	<p>"My driver can't take me to another college"</p>
	<p>"It would be boring if I have to stay at home"</p>
	<p>What if classes moved to a day centre?</p>
	<p>"Day centre is like a prison"</p>
	<p>"At the Day Centre you sit around for a long time with nothing to do. I want to do things"</p>

	<p>"You just sit around like old people"</p>
	<p>"There are no certificates in Day Centres"</p>
	<p>"There are no kilns in Day Centres"</p>
	<p>Recommendations</p>
	<p>Listen to the students and keep classes at Whatley Avenue</p>

Learner Consultation Feedback Log

20 October 2014

Topic – MAE Review	Learner Name
Learner Comment	
<p>What will happen to the 5000+ learners if they lose their classes? Adult education – life long learning is a basic right of us all.</p>	
<p>Who's going to look after the LLD and ESOL learners? Our classes help us to get employment – so less money paid out in benefits.</p>	
<p>Short term view not economic in the long run will have to pay more on services stopped.</p>	
<p>MAE is an invaluable resource for adults who wish to learn new skills & also a place where learning disabled people can be together and learn new life skills. Where will they go if it closes down? I'm taught by an incredibly well qualified professional teacher. I wouldn't get this level of tuition anywhere else. Please don't close us down.</p>	<p>[REDACTED] Upholstery Class</p>
<p>So many needs of the mature students who are facing more and more restrictions in their income and working choices. Educational facilities like these help students to develop skills they perhaps didn't feel confident in and open working . In view of the current economic issues we are all facing. Although I appreciate the financial restrictions the college needs to address. My personal opinion is that more of these educational facilities are needed not less. They address opportunities making income for themselves and helping the economy & also helping to keep active and healthy as we are living longer. Less of a burden on the state.</p>	<p>[REDACTED] Upholstery & woodwork classes</p>
<p>Short term savings = long term losses eg social exclusion, mental health issues, NHS costs.</p>	<p>[REDACTED] Woodwork classe</p>
<p>I hope MAE is not going to close. So many people benefit from its classes. What about young people who need a second chance. Another go at getting an education - leads to employability</p>	<p>[REDACTED] French Advanced</p>
<p>PLD services provided by MAE are vital for maintaining and increasing independence & life skills in the community. It would be short sighted to remove these as it will lead to demand in other areas e.g health, care at home etc. Better to consider other efficiency savings e.g in HR / back office functions by combining these with other sites.</p>	<p>[REDACTED] Upholstery</p>

Topic – MAE Review	
Learner Comment	Learner Name
Outsourcing of services does not necessarily bring savings. Private companies must make profits somehow! Suggest outsourcing of facilities may offer more long term savings. Private companies may be able to offer cheaper more efficient premises. Courses on offer are invaluable to students like me seeking new skills for a second career.	[REDACTED] Upholstery class
LDD students will have nowhere to go.	
I am currently taking part in the upholstery class. I thoroughly enjoy it. I have been taking classes for a number of years such as French, Pottery, Pilates, Upholstery. I have really enjoyed every single minute of it and I will be devastated if these opportunity of classes and activities disappear. Please take this into consideration and how important this is for the community.	[REDACTED] Upholstery class
Cost / benefit analysis. How much council saves by enabling over 60's persons coming to classes. If not for these classes council will need to spend on alternative home based care. Young persons activities, disabled student, ESOL – who is going to look after them?	[REDACTED] Upholstery

Topic – Curriculum Development	
Learner Comment	Learner Name
Vegetarian cooking with a healthy food focus	

Topic – Use of ILT in classrooms	
Learner Comment	Learner Name
Our French tutor recently used the whiteboard to show us information as part of Black History month. I think the interaction on the use of the whiteboard to show us clips, ask us to write things and so on is really good.	[REDACTED]

21 October 2014

Topic – MAE Review	Learner Name
Learner Comment	Pottery student
Selling the Whatley Rd premises is a short term measure. What happens next to get finances?	
We need financial information re viability of MAE	
Is there any consideration given to students who have learning difficulties and their educational needs.	Pottery
Value of MAE – promotes employability, creativity, integration of those with special needs, life long learning.	
Information on potential savings would be helpful but can savings really be so significant. MAE not a big spender	
This college is local to me. It fits in with school hours to suit my needs as I wouldn't be able to go to another main stream college. I'm a single mum and this college is very helpful to me as an adult learner. I have never found another college to suit these needs in Merton	Beauty
Do not close the college. MAE is the best, we love to learn.	
MAE here is very important as locally provided and LA is accountable for it.	
Value of MAE for learners cannot be exaggerated. Carers get a break, special needs students get out and learn and gain independence. People get qualifications, employability and more.	
MAE we need you. Don't close down the college. For me as a foreign student is a good college and it has a lot of courses and good prices. I will like in future to study more and more in this college.	Beauty

Topic – MAE Review	Learner Name
Learner Comment	
MAE is a local and convenient learning resource, recommended highly and should not close down.	[Redacted] Beauty
Very helpful to learn and work around my children.	
This college has offered 100% support to me. It has great hours that fit into my life as being a lone parent, and it has given me a future to look forward to. No other college do such hours like these.	
This is perfect for people who want to get back into education as adults with people of all age and disability.	
Adult education is valuable even if not accredited.	[Redacted] Woodwork & upholstery
Adult education needs to be kept local.	
Adult education promotes mental wellbeing, return to work, confidence and gaining skills.	
Ideal for adult learners who do not have time for mainstream colleges.	[Redacted] Beauty
Adult education is vital.	
MAE has wide range of courses at realistic prices accessible to all. Don't jeopardise this.	
I am concerned as to where people in this local community will be able to go for adult education without having to travel too far. Learning at this college is inclusive and welcoming. Will a different venue be able to offer this. Special needs should be considered as should individual needs. Time, travel & cost.	[Redacted] Early Years
Being able to attend for courses as well as part time working is essential and sometimes only opportunity to create new role for you. I am very grateful for what MAE is doing here for me and others.	

Topic – MAE Review	Learner Name
<p>Learner Comment</p> <p>People find employment via these courses. These courses give you confidence to tackle jobs in their own home. This college is the 'jewel in the crown' of merton. Not only does it educate people for work, disabled and learning difficulty persons have education and a place to go. Many people come from the other side of the borough to attend classes so there is no other adult college like this Whatley Avenue college.</p>	<p>Woodwork</p>
<p>More courses and dates wanted. Currently I'm attending this course in this centre which is convenient for me. I would like to do my advanced courses here soon.</p>	<p>[Redacted]</p>
<p>The college has helped me progress rapidly for the first time I have confidence and knowledge to do the work I am applying for. I have been able to find a placement who will give me a good reference based on my work. I would not have had the opportunity because no other college near me was running the course.</p> <p>MAE is the only place that offers adult education which really delivers quality teaching, quality tracking and advice.</p> <p>Mixing with younger teenagers makes it very uncomfortable.</p>	<p>[Redacted] Early Years</p>
<p>I want the college same as now please. The adult education system is really nice and very supportive to me in person. I don't want to go with younger students.</p>	<p>[Redacted]</p>
<p>I love the college. I did intro to teaching assistant course here. I really love the college environment, tutors and everything. I want the college forever to continue to support the community to develop in education for the adults.</p>	<p>[Redacted] Early Years</p>
<p>Whatley Avenue is a wonderful facility that will hopefully enable me to find a job when I finish the course.</p>	<p>[Redacted] Early Years</p>
<p>Adult education is important to give us a better career later in life. Gives adults a chance to succeed in life.</p>	<p>[Redacted] Early Years</p>

Topic – MAE Review	
Learner Comment	Learner Name
We need adult education. It is important to have adult education because lots of people are gaining importance towards it. As an individual I gain more benefit from adult education. Teach adults, they teach their children.	[REDACTED] Early Years
All learners appreciate the hard work everyone puts in. If the college closes people will not be able to train and get a job / career. It will lead to the benefit system being abused! It is important for people to learn for people who can't speak English. It gives them a chance.	[REDACTED] Early Years
New exciting equal opportunities for adults.	
We are learning new things every time we are in college. We gain new experience.	
MAE is for adults not children. We feel more comfy with adults not teenagers.	
Has given me another chance to get back on my feet and make something of my life.	
A great place for learning. Please do not make it disappear. Please. We love MAE.	[REDACTED]
Topic – Use of ILT in classrooms	
Learner Comment	Learner Name
Pottery equipment needs updating. IT not really relevant in class. We can use IT at home for research.	Pottery student

Topic – Equality & Diversity	
Learner Comment	Learner Name [REDACTED]
As a disabled learner I am offered extra assistance to ensure I can attend college.	Early Years
Good equality in my class. Students of all abilities & needs well taught & integrated. A strength to protect.	

Topic – Progression	
Learner Comment	Learner Name [REDACTED]
I don't take my course for a qualification or employment but I benefit enormously. I'm retired & it enriches my life.	Early Years
This centre is really very helpful when I came here I had nothing and in 8 months I have finished 4 courses.	[REDACTED] Early Years
Easy progression & great support. Would have been lost without it.	

Topic – Curriculum Development	
Learner Comment	Learner Name [REDACTED]
Barbers courses	Early Years
Spray tanning.	

22 October 2014

Topic – MAE Review	Learner Name
<p>I've been coming here for 21 years. This is what keeps me sane. Pottery for the last 18 years. I've spent hundreds of pounds over the years coming to college, I've done pottery, art, dance, English, maths, lip reading, music, tai chi.</p> <p>Why are you thinking of closing it, is it all about money?</p> <p>I can walk here anywhere else you would need to drive where is there to park for the old? Buses are not good for disabled to use.</p> <p>What are you going to do for the likes of my son who has a disability. I hope he would be able to come to learn living skills.</p> <p>We the carers of merton save the council lots of money each year. You need somewhere for us to go and have time out.</p> <p>Where are you going to send us all or do you <u>not</u> care for people who are disabled?</p> <p>Why are you thinking of closing something that works? Why fix something that's not broken?</p> <p>It's the only time carers have time to do what they want for themselves.</p> <p>I would not meet people with the same disabilities as me elsewhere.</p> <p>I am against closure, only local place to get to that does lip reading, can't travel to Richmond for it. I've been coming here for 10 years. Done my NVQ2 course here, makaton. The tutors are great, helpful to people with learning difficulties and hard of hearing. They cater for all needs.</p> <p>Great place for learning and socialising. Fantastic for people with diversity needs.</p> <p>No-one here takes the mickey out of you or people that are different like other places. Also other colleges during the day are more 16+ not mature like people at Whatley.</p> <p>I have learnt more here than anywhere.</p> <p>Where are all the people with diversity needs and learning difficulties going to go?</p> <p>If MAE closes my entire life would be totally devastated. As a carer for my disabled mother for 20 years my only highlight of the week is my stained glass class. Being creative in a safe environment brings me so much joy in an otherwise stressful life. Many other students also find MAE a life line especially those with special needs and are trying to live independently. This college is so important to so many I cannot overstate the devastation it would cause in so many peoples lives. Please, please think again.</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Pottery & Lipreading</p>
<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Lipreading</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Lipreading</p>
<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Stained Glass</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Stained Glass</p>

Topic – MAE Review	Learner Name
Learner Comment	Learner Name
<p>This college has been very beneficial to many people with learning difficulties and handicapped people. A way of keeping in touch with the outside</p> <p>This college has given me a skill for life that enables me to stay sane. A way of getting out of the house to see a way of being independent.</p> <p>What will happen to older people that use the college as a way to meet people and keep active?</p>	<p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p>
<p>Against closure of Whatley Avenue college.</p> <p>Whatley college also involves students and their families in fun days which would be lost.</p> <p>Only local college for people with learning disabilities.</p> <p>Has a good variety of courses for disabled people to do.</p> <p>Would be hard for people who have trouble travelling and are used to one place.</p> <p>Find it a disgrace the way people with learning disabilities are treated if the college is closed.</p>	<p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p>
<p>This site not only provides important recreational activities for an increasingly elderly population but also is a means for people to further their careers and gain necessary life skills. I cannot think how any alternative can provide the same facilities.</p>	<p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p>
<p>I attend lip reading and art. Without these classes I would be lost. I am not confident to travel far due to dizzy spells (meniere's) and suffer from depression.</p> <p>Why are Merton closing Whatley when L/B Richmond can offer so many courses for its learners. I believe from the papers that Merton has lots of taxpayers money in the bank.</p> <p>Lip reading is essential for us who are hard of hearing to be able to communicate and not become isolated. It is also sociable and an opportunity to get out. Whatley is so convenient and friendly.</p> <p>Knuston Hall Wellingborough was threatened with closure but was saved by offering rooms for conferences, one day courses with meals etc. Now the college is doing very well.</p> <p>Benefits to keep the college – disabilities - much better to keep people in the borough. Need courses for older people to avoid depression & isolation.</p> <p>What about all the people with carers & wheelchair users. At the moment they have good access to courses on the ground floor. They all appear to enjoy being at Whatley.</p>	<p>[REDACTED] Lip reading</p>

Topic – MAE Review	Learner Name
<p>Learner Comment</p> <p>This college has been a sanity saver for me. It has helped me overcome debilitating panic attacks for several years and enabled me to develop a love of my craft which has had a huge effect on my confidence and allowed me to feel a worthwhile member of society. Earning a small amount of money to continue my passion and donate to charity. What will happen to others who have diversity needs who feel safe and loved here. Change is not good for them either. Please, please re-consider.</p>	<p>[Redacted] Stained Glass</p>
<p>Merton Adult Education is an important part in my life. Getting out, meeting people, improving skills in upholstery & stained glass, gaining in confidence. Learning to live independently is an important part of college life. The impact of losing this facility will increase costs in other help with community. This is an extremely important function and outlet, respite etc. The college is funded by the Skills Funding Agency not the council. Classes like stained glass, upholstery, pottery, woodwork bring in an extremely important revenue which allows college to support these less fortunate. Important to learn new skills to gain employment in a challenging world e.g. childcare, literacy, English as a second language.</p>	<p>[Redacted] Upholstery & Stained Glass</p>
<p>I have been coming here for over 25 years. I have learned counselling, psychology, keep fit, singing, pottery, lip reading – please don't close the college. This school is one of the most useful places in the community. It's close by and does not need long bus or train to get here. It becomes a socially & learning essential, specially in the young & older generation.</p>	<p>[Redacted] Lip reading</p>
<p>I have been coming to adult education Whatley Avenue, Merton now for the past 6 ½ years since I've retired. I've been having cookery, pottery, computer, photography courses etc and I find all the staff concerned very kind and helpful and it's a very relaxed atmosphere and it's close to home and within walking distance. Your idea to close this place down is disgusting. Can't you people whoever responsible just leave things as is. I feel it's a cheek. You think more of lining your pockets than you do of peoples lively hoods. I'm a student and I'm very close with all the co students and tutors and I enjoy coming here. I don't want the likes of you people blighting our lives in that regard. If you have to make savings financially make them elsewhere, but please don't cut back on our services.</p>	<p>[Redacted]</p>

Topic – MAE Review		Learner Name
Learner Comment		
<p>I have only started back at adult education classes since I lost my employment and became a full time carer to my paralysed husband.</p> <p>My life has taken a total turnaround and my health & wellbeing has suffered. I was encouraged to enhance my life by finding 'me' time and turned to MAE to support me in this. I enrolled in this class as it was at a convenient time to suit my caring commitments and I have benefited from finding time for myself in a very busy & stressful daily routine.</p> <p>Whatley Avenue is near enough to my home for me to return in an emergency.</p> <p>The college has a calming and inspiring atmosphere that lends itself to the focus of the courses.</p> <p>Most participants are here for a reason not just for pleasure.</p> <p>Attending has restored some of my self esteem and beneficial to meet like minded students. I understand most classes are full so there is a 'need' for the college in this location.</p> <p>Amalgamating the adult college with a student college will be intimidating.</p> <p>The council should continue to support the attendees of the college.</p> <p>If the college were to close it would be detrimental to the borough.</p>		<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>Stained Glass</p>
<p>I retired earlier this year and find the level of teaching provided at the art class I attend at MAE is excellent. The tutor has given me great encouragement and I would greatly miss the classes if MAE closes.</p> <p>I have attended MAE for a variety of classes including Italian, German, photography and cooking over the years and feel that MAE is a fine provider of life long learning.</p> <p>I think that MAE provides a valuable community resource reaching people with disabilities and other special needs including ESOL. It makes a huge difference to peoples lives.</p> <p>The photography classes at MAE enabled me to gain a City & Guilds qualification. I am sure that many other students have achieved a wide range of qualifications through MAE.</p> <p>I cannot envisage that any transfer to 'alternative suppliers' as part of a cost cutting exercise would result in the high standard and wide range of courses provided by MAE.</p> <p>Since when has a reduction of educational provision for adults been Labour Party policy? Merton council, why threaten a well established provider that always delivers high quality courses.</p>		<p>[REDACTED]</p>

23 October 2014

Topic – MAE Review	Learner Name
<p>Learner Comment</p> <p>How much do students fees add up to per annum? What is the funding of Merton Council to Whatley Avenue? Why has there been no consultation with a) students & b) residents? Why are no council leaders present at this review? Why is there no transparency at decision level? Who will make the final decision: the council cabinet or the politicians in the borough? Has the decision to close the college actually been taken because there is no time before mid Jan decision! Explain! Leaders must surely talk to the student body to remain credible. Have you considered the hidden costs to the community (abled and disabled)</p> <p>What the closure means to me:- Prevent my skills base in becoming commercially viable Loss of incredibly scarce facilities in SW London Throw a spanner in my career development Force me to go outside the borough for learning Lose contact with a highly skilled tutor & colleagues who like me appreciate what Whatley Avenue represents in the community</p> <p>MAE Maintains levels of craftsmanship Bringing the community together Community cohesion Wellbeing Hobbies Personal development Health – improvements, mental health, confidence</p>	<p>██████████ Potter</p>

Topic – MAE Review	Learner Name
<p>Learner Comment</p> <p>Please would it be possible for us all to have a meeting with the 'decision makers' before January. January will be too late.</p> <p>The school that surrounds the building needs to be informed – maybe they would like the opportunity to come to the next meeting.</p> <p>The local residents need the chance to be able to attend a meeting too. They have the right to know what will be happening to this building if it closes.</p> <p>I think we should have been informed, as students, a lot earlier in the day rather than leaving it this late.</p> <p>If this college was to close, will all courses run somewhere else? If so, this will still cost money so nothing will be saved if they have to run somewhere else and if the courses here are then crammed into another college, either more classes will have to be run to accommodate the people here to somewhere else or somewhere else will have to open to accommodate. This seems a waste of time & effort.</p> <p>What happens to all of the special needs / learning difficulties adults if this centre closes? Coming from someone who has special needs adults in their family, I would like to think that there are centres like this to help our family and give the special needs adults somewhere to learn and socialise.</p> <p>I have been coming here for many years, to varied courses. I gained 2 signing exams and now attend a lip reading course. There are not many other places that run these courses and I don't have a car and would find it hard to go anywhere else.</p> <p>I think it was unfair that not one 'decision maker' attended the meeting today which left the poor staff in the firing line – this seems wrong. They should have more support.</p> <p>After losing confidence in the workplace from being made redundant, the courses here have given me the confidence back and has given me the confidence to work again.</p> <p>As an over 60 yoga has helped me enormously with mobility. Cannot praise what is taught at Whatley enough.</p> <p>The commitment of the teachers is amazing, professional.</p> <p>Closure would leave a massive hole in my life.</p> <p>The class is close by and affordable.</p>	<p>██████████</p> <p>Lip reading & employability</p> <p>██████████</p> <p>Yoga</p>

Topic – MAE Review		Learner Name
Learner Comment		[REDACTED]
The vocational courses are very accessible for people changing careers and therefore would be best to maintain this eg. Cache		Early years
The college is very well located, accessible and I am considering to take more classes as the quality of teaching and other support is very good.		
Has the council commissioned a recent valuation of this site?	Why has news of the MAE review only just broken when a decision is to be reached as early as January 2015.	
Does the council have any regard at all to the views of the student body or is this last minute consultation simply a cosmetic exercise?	What will happen to the Towards Independence students, the most vulnerable of the whole student body and the ones least able to mount a protest?	
Have the local residents been consulted?	January – can this be changed? Students want to speak to decision makers!	[REDACTED]
It's important that adults can learn with other adults – learning alongside young people could put older learners off.	Wanted to enrol on a course locally to juggle childcare.	Early Years
Joined college to continue to next level currently offered here. So after completing TA level 2 could do next years level 3.		
As a mature student and a mother, MAE has offered me support and convenience on getting back onto a course and back to work in a career path I have chosen. MAE should re-locate if need be.	I have been attending classes at MAE for over 25 years. It has greatly enhanced my life and wellbeing. I hope to be able to continue coming here for a long time to come. IT MUST NOT CLOSE.	[REDACTED]
How are the council going to save money on this when they only provide a small subsidy to Skills Funding agency? Very short-sighted as other budgets will have to increase e.g. social services, mental health, facilities for disabled.		Early Years Pottery
If the council's financial responsibility is minimal for the MAE centre. Is the need for closure related to what they will gain from selling the site? I have just started attending a class and feel very sad at prospect of this being short lived.		

Topic – MAE Review	
Learner Comment	Learner Name
<p>After retirement I was depressed until I started a glass class. I was given confidence and made to feel worthwhile. I then took up pottery and had the same experience.</p> <p>Not only is MAE important to people with learning disabilities and physical disabilities, it covers a whole spectrum of people that could only be catered for at a site in Merton. For many travel to Sutton or South Thames colleges would be impossible for a variety of reasons. Whatley Avenue college provides a safe, nurturing environment. The tutors are committed, dedicated, passionate and caring people who are exceptional examples of their profession. If I had encountered such tutors at school my life may well have taken a better course.</p> <p>What about courses that require specialist equipment to run, such as stained and fused glass, pottery, woodwork – how could these be re-sited?</p> <p>The building & staff provide an invaluable resource for supporting vulnerable students.</p> <p>Moving the adult education facilities outside the borough would mean many Merton residents would no longer be able to use them.</p> <p>Merton is a relatively well off borough. It would be an admission of failure to not continue to provide adult education in the borough.</p> <p>We hear the college is substantially self funded. The courses are often oversubscribed, why not increase the charges to increase the revenue stream?</p> <p>Selling off the building may raise funds this year, but what happens in following years when that resource has gone?</p>	<p>[REDACTED] Glass & Pottery</p>
<p>I cannot believe that this vital local college that supports so many residents through a wonderful range of vocational, practical, technical courses is under threat of closure. This is the only college in our borough offering adult education, helping people on jobseekers to gain skills & get back to work – helping many people with learning disabilities, giving carers a break – courses for the elderly, such as silver surfer computer courses.</p> <p>There is nothing else in our area. Where all these poor people going to end up?</p> <p>Surely the benefits that MAE offers far out weigh the closure of MAE.</p> <p>I have been coming to these classes for the past 3 years. Merton Adult Education is one of the few colleges to offer this class across South London. I've found both the evening classes and the summer school very rewarding. Classes such as this enable adults to explore their creative side, & enables them to meet like minded individuals. It's a welcome relieve from the working week! Myself and I know many other students will be very sad if MAE has to shut.</p>	<p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p>
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Topic – MAE Review Learner Comment	Learner Name
<p>The withdrawal of funding & the proposed closure of Merton Adult college will be a huge loss, educationally and socially to the community.</p> <p>I have been a student at various times at the college since 1992 and during that time, I have taken a diversity of courses. I have learnt new skills and have also enjoyed the social advantages.</p>	<p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p>
<p>I have attended this course for 14 years and am still learning a lot from it. Closing MAE Whatley Avenue would be a real shame. An awful lot of people enjoy the facility whether they attend in order to obtain formal qualifications or just to enjoy an evening learning with others.</p>	<p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p>
<p>Happiness is leaving the stress of work behind and being creative.</p> <p>Happiness is making Halloween decorations and crafts with my son.</p> <p>Happiness is making something. Developing a skill. Admiring others creativity.</p> <p>Happiness is watching a challenged learner develop her literacy and numeracy.</p> <p>Happiness is watching her thrive and be happy having a break away from her caring duties.</p> <p>Happiness is being inspired by the enthusiasm of a talented tutor.</p> <p>Happiness is cups of tea. Building friendships. Being part of a community.</p> <p>Happiness cannot be measured in pounds.</p> <p>Happiness is about community</p> <p>Happiness is MAE</p> <p>Please save our college</p>	<p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p>
<p>I am greatly disturbed to hear of plans to close Merton College. This isn't purely for selfish reasons as I'm really enjoying my class working with glass but it will be almost impossible to find another, at a reasonable price, near me as most places only do stained glass while I'm principally interested in slumping & fusing.</p> <p>Putting my personal life to one side, Merton college has a fine reputation for pastoral care and enabling young people to gain confidence to go out into the world.</p> <p>Its work in the arts is of great importance for those who aren't interested or able to study academic subjects, allowing us to find hidden talents or just enjoying the company of others with similar interests.</p> <p>I sincerely hope you will consider closing the college as an absolute last resort.</p>	<p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p>
<p>It would be a great loss to the community if MAE were to close. It is an excellent facility, offering a wide range of courses. A broad section of the community use the college for learning and pleasure.</p>	<p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p>

Topic – MAE Review	
Learner Comment	Learner Name
<p>I am currently a student at MAE Whatley Avenue. I enjoy one class a week (in the evening) where I work on projects in glass.</p> <p>If this facility were to close the leaded glass students may possibly be accommodated elsewhere but my interest is in fused glass. This requires firing in a kiln. I wonder if any of the suggested alternative sites will be willing to take on a kiln & provide the conditions for me and my fellow fused glass students to continue with this type of work?</p> <p>I have attended courses at MAE over a number of years and have gained a number of new skills, including learning a new language.</p> <p>I have always felt that MAE provides a safe, friendly and supportive atmosphere in which to learn.</p> <p>I am currently attending stained & fused glass and have recently started beginners Spanish. I would be immensely disappointed if it was not possible to continue due to the closure of the college.</p> <p>I have only just started my second term of fusion glass course at MAE and have become slightly addicted. The mixture of local people from various walks of life and the friendly accepting nature of this local creative outlet has been a joy so far. The course and the location is brilliant. As a single lady and someone who uses public transport getting to MAE feels safe and easy. There is so much more I want to learn and develop that I'm already thinking of the follow on courses after this. What a unique place this is.</p>	<p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p> <p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p> <p>[REDACTED] Stained Glass</p>

Topic – Curriculum Development	
Learner Comment	Learner Name
<p>Family Tree courses</p> <p>Alternative therapies, NLP, Reike, Iyengar Yoga</p> <p>Taster courses or introductory in care worker</p>	<p>[REDACTED]</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p>