

PET(4)-04-12 p3a

P-04-366 Closure of Aberystwyth Day Centre

Petition wording:

We the undersigned call on the Welsh Government to consider if proposals for day care for the vulnerable elderly, to be moved from a purpose built, thirty year old Day Centre, to an unsuitable basement in an old building, previously used as the Town Hall Aberystwyth, are compliant with statutory requirements, and any relevant guidance. The County Council are planning to demolish the Centre as part of a development to build a car park, a supermarket and a retail outlet.

Petition raised by: Pamela Ellis

Date petition first considered by Committee: 28 February 2012

Number of signatures: 10 (An associated petition collected approximately 6,000 signatures)

Supporting information: The present Day Centre is a purpose built facility, about thirty years old. It is in a convenient situation in the town centre, with easy access, a large drop off point and is near a road safety crossing. It is light and sunny, and can accommodate about 90 clients of mixed dependency, in several spacious rooms. The envisaged centre is not quite half the size and will only be able to cater for 32 clients in one main room. At present those carers of disabled clients or those caring for victims of a stroke, can have access to respite care on 2 or 3 days of the week. We feel the move will discriminate against this group as already fewer people are being assessed and referred by Social Services for this respite care. The council have admitted there will be rationing. Because of difficulties of access to the basement area, an outdoor, steep ramp with a 180 degree turning point half way down has been built. We feel strongly that carers or mobile chair users will have huge problems, particularly in stormy or icy weather. The ceilings in the basement are low; there is a large pillar in the centre of the room making it difficult to move wheelchairs or trolleys, natural light levels are low as it is partially below ground and several doors have to be navigated to access toilets. The old centre has a superb new kitchen providing good meals, the weekly luncheon club, a valuable socially inclusive option, has been closed already. In future, meals will be prepared elsewhere and brought in. There will only be one area available for meals and all other activities; thus space will be extremely limited. The local WVS presently provides drinks and snacks; that will no longer exist. The present centre has a large bathroom with a hoist, also laundry facilities, which were invaluable.

The new centre will have a shower built into a toilet for assisted bathing, which opens directly onto a communal area. As this is the only disabled toilet, it will be difficult for a disabled client to access a toilet if another client is having a shower. If the only new facility will only be able to cater for 32 clients, these will almost certainly have to be those needing respite cares, so those older citizens who value the opportunity to enjoy time at the centre to socialise, take part in activities, have a bath and enjoy a good meal will not be able to do so. The present centre has a very pleasant garden with seats, ample parking, a bay for dropping off people and is completely accessible to all. The present centre is made available in the evenings to groups of elderly, for example the Arthritis Care group fear that they will not be able to cope with the rain, in the dark, for their evening meetings. The new centre is on a dangerous main road turning, with heavy traffic use. Former users of the basement when it was the Town Hall have complained that it is too hot in the summer and cold and damp in the winter. The heating system has been improved, but the present sash windows are not being replaced and there will be no air-conditioning installed. Whilst the County Council have made efforts to meet our concerns, we strongly believe that the proposed new centre is absolutely unsuitable and is vastly inferior in the present centre. We would add that the Council have admitted that they did not carry out a proper consultation. Hence the formation of this pressure group.