

Peter Hodkinson  
Westward Care  
Pennington Court  
Hunslet Hall Road  
Beeston  
Leeds  
LS11 6TT

Our Ref: GM/HG  
7 October 2008

Dear Mr Hodkinson,

I write in response to the letter to me from David Madden dated 30<sup>th</sup> September 2008 concerning your proposals to turn the Summercross pub into a care home.

You will be aware that I support the campaign to re-open the Summercross pub (not 'Summer Cross' as you have called it) that was closed by property developers against the wishes of local people and the landlord of the pub. I was therefore extremely disappointed and concerned to hear that you are now planning to open a care home on the pub site.

I am a big supporter of well run care and nursing homes that provide excellent care to older citizens and would welcome new ones opening in appropriate locations, where they are wanted. However, this is not an appropriate site. The local community wants to retain their historic community pub, after it was closed and taken from them by greedy property developers who were acting only in their own interest.

Knowing the campaign and the involvement of myself and local councillors, I would have thought it much more sensible for you to approach me before you committed yourself to trying to turn the Summercross into a care home. I am surprised and disappointed that you have only done so just a week before you attempt to sell your idea to people in Otley.

I have a number of questions to put to you and I would like an answer to them all before the exhibition on Thursday, so that local people have the complete picture of the current situation:

1. Knowing the history of the site, and the support for the re-opening of the Summercross pub, why have you decided to try to pursue these plans and get into a battle with me, the local MP, councillors and the local community?
2. Are you aware that the Summercross was closed against the wishes of the then landlord and locals?
3. Are you aware that Chartford Homes planning application was fundamentally flawed (including incorrect drawings) which led to many local people questioning their professionalism and integrity?
4. I note that the site (as of early October) is still owned by Chartford Homes. Is it your intention to purchase the site from them?
5. If you got approval to proceed at the site, would Chartford Homes retain any interest in the project e.g. would they be involved in any of the construction or finance?

6. What links are there between Westward Care and Chartford Homes (or any associated companies) including financial links, directors etc?
7. Were you aware that at least one company contacted Chartford Homes about the possibility of buying the Summercross and reopening it as a pub?

You say you want to engage in consultation with the community, so I take it you will be happy to answer all these questions.

I fear that you may have fallen for the misleading information put out by Chartford Homes about the viability of the Summercross pub and would ask that you look at the information that has been collated to disprove this. I feel I must also enlighten you as to the history of the way the pub has been sold on, against the wishes of the community and indeed the previous landlord.

On 4 September 2006 the Summercross was purchased for £495,000 by Phase 7 Properties. The latter are a low profile London-based company who appear to specialise in redeveloping pubs as housing. The landlord dealt with their agents, another low profile company called Country Estates Management, who started to make things increasingly difficult.

There was considerable procrastination about renewing the lease. Eventually the landlord was informed that the lease would not be renewed and given notice to quit. On 17 September 2007, with the landlord under notice, the pub was sold to Chartford Homes who are a Leeds-based property development company. This sale was made when the pub was doing well and against the wishes of the landlord, who wished to continue his viable business and the local community.

So the business, a profitable pub wanted by the local community, has been closed and sold against the wishes of the community, over their heads. Your involvement and plans are just another example of ignoring the well known views of the local community, which is a regrettable position for you to be in.

I would be appalled if someone bought a care home against the wishes of the residents and manager and turfed people out on to the street just so the owners could make more money from a more profitable business, such as executive flats. That is exactly what has happened with the Summercross pub and hope that as a company who cares about its reputation, you would not want to be associated with this.

I implore you to respect the wishes of the community in Otley, walk away from this and allow it to be bought by a pub company, who will reopen it as a pub serving the community. I wish you continued success with Headingley Hall and with any other care homes that you might wish to set up; where they are wanted and do not represent the loss of a wanted community facility and a part of local history and heritage.

Yours sincerely

Greg Mulholland MP  
MP for Leeds North West