

Penkridge Parish Council

Haling Dene Centre

Cannock Road

Penkridge

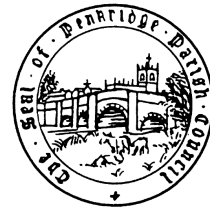
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Dear Mr. Hargreaves,

RE: Staffordshire County Council Consultation about Care Services.

At the request of the Penkridge Parish Councillors, I write to you to convey their thoughts as follows:

With reference to the County document "Consultation on Care Homes" we, the Parish Councillors of Penkridge request that you read and very carefully consider the following points with regard to the residents of Silverdene. Having scrutinised the contents of the report we quote from the summary of the County Document as follows:

"The future of each individual home or facility and the services offered there will be considered separately and the decisions will reflect the particular circumstances of that home or facility and its residents and users"

We note that in your document, although you have presented a limited number of benefits, there are many more benefits which have not been given due consideration, including the following:

Silverdene is situated in the centre of the community it serves; it is not located in an out of the way position miles from where the residents originally lived (as many private homes are) which means friends and relatives can visit much more easily. For some residents this may also mean that they can take advantage of the village facilities and social life. Because many of the potential residents live in houses and bungalows close to Silverdene, they often know residents and staff before the time comes when they need to move into the home. This considerably reduces the stress factor of making and implementing such a decision.

The home is easily accessible to visitors by public transport and on foot which encourages them to visit the residents on a regular basis. In addition, the location means that there is a greater number of volunteer helpers who can easily and quickly access the home. This help extends the care and the quality of life for the residents without costing the authority any money.

Silverdene is largely staffed by local Penkridge people who have a wealth of local knowledge and often have known some of the residents before they took up residence. Often the staff bring into the home local news and messages from friends, along with village gossip and snippets of local information, all of which maintain interest in village life and stimulates the minds of the residents.

Without doubt the current residents of Silverdene wish to remain in the place which they now consider to be their home.

The big question which remains is: "If Silverdene is closed, where will the residents go?" Please note that currently there are NO Private Care Home facilities in Penkridge. Therefore

“block booking” of beds as described in the document would be impossible and therefore of no value to the residents of Silverdene!

We are very disappointed that Staffordshire County Council have seen fit to reject the opportunity to consult with the wider population of Penkridge about their plans to close Silverdene. The fact that the rate payers who finance the County Council have not been given the opportunity to express their feelings about the type of care that they would want when they need it almost amounts to disenfranchisement. It certainly demonstrates an overwhelming lack of foresight and care for the communities with which it has dealings.

From a Council led survey of local people there has been an overwhelming response indicating that they wish Silverdene to remain open as a Care Home run by the County Council. This is an inescapable fact!

We accept that care homes need to meet the expectations of the residents and their relatives; however we do not believe that achieving this would necessarily be more expensive than option 3 in the document. As we have not been provided with costings of the three options, how can we compare or challenge them? We understand that an enquiry for figures under the Freedom of Information Act resulted in a rejection of the request because “the figures are not readily available”. This would seem to indicate that the sums have not been done!!

To summarise our position, the Councillors of Penkridge Parish Council wish Silverdene to remain open as a Care Home. We believe that it is a facility which should continue to be provided for the Community.

We feel we should stress that Penkridge Parish Council is a very important stake holder, representing as we do all the people resident in our parish and we have considerable responsibility for keeping and improving the social cohesion. Our survey suggests that the vast majority of Penkridge people, as well as the current residents, wish Silverdene to remain open. In addition, our survey suggests that the home should be extended to cater for the likely increased numbers who will require care in the future.

Stress and worry for the current and future residents is absolutely NOT acceptable. It is a proven fact that premature death is often triggered by changes in the care environment, particularly if those changes are carried out without great care and sensitivity.

As well as the residents of Silverdene, our MP, our County Councillor, our District Councillors and our local Doctors all agree that Silverdene should be kept open. So we ask the question “Who does wish to close Silverdene - and why?” The fact that we know of no one in the parish in favour of option 3 leads us to believe that this has been recommended purely based on short-term cost. That is not good enough, and our community objects to it.

Yours sincerely,



A. J. Geoghegan (Mrs)
Chair – Penkridge Parish Council

