

4th July 2007

Dear Mr Pell,

Thank you for sending us a copy of your 'Critique' re: the proposed Rehabilitation project. I would like to respond briefly to two points.

Firstly, having lived at the Abbey for 32 years and been involved with hospitality for 30 of those years, I would like to say that never have I heard a comment from our guests and visitors, which would suggest that the non-resident felt alien. Our friends reflect a wide spectrum of society, coming from all over the world, as do indeed our own sisters. Whether arriving on private helicopter at Manston airport or having walked in the rain from Ramsgate- for a cuppa and meal- seems to make no difference. Any comments made are always about our friendly and welcoming Villagers.

Secondly, my experience of services available for those in addiction differ vastly from your own. Over the years, I have had personal contact with local experts, for example:

District Nurses and medical Staff
Police, Drug liaison and Safety Officers
Substance Misuse Team
Solicitors, Probation Officers
AA and NA members
Specialists from Mount Zeehan in Canterbury
Kent Counsellors for Addiction KCA

They have all convinced me that our services are far from adequate. I only wish that last year my friend with an addiction was able to pay £4,000 a week to go to Promis or had been able to secure funding for Rehabilitation. If so by now, he would surely be well. I was told by a very senior Social Worker that in our area only one quarter of the money needed for Rehabilitation was available. In Thanet, we have the highest death rate as a result of Alcohol abuse among women for the whole of Kent. We have a disproportionately high number of admittances to hospital in Thanet due to drug abuse. In Thanet, an estimated 30% of the population take illegal drugs. It might be worth talking to our local PC's about drug taking in Minster they have a very good finger on the pulse. We are not without this problem.

Yours sincerely

Sister Benedict Gaughan OSB Trustee of Minster Abbey

Sister Benedict Gaughan
Minster Abbey
Minster-in-Thamet
Kent CT12 4HF

6.7.07

Dear Miss Gaughan,

Thank you for your letter of 4th July, responding to the 'Critique'.

You say that you have never previously heard a comment from your guests and visitors to the effect that '*..the non-resident felt alien.*'

Indeed one would hope that was always the case.

On re-reading paragraph three of page 4 of the 'Critique' you will find that it is not the notion of past guests that is referred to nor is it the perception of such guests that is referred to.

What is referred to, is an evident here and now groundswell reaction of the 'man on the Minster omnibus' towards the putative Attenders/Clients-to-be at the Proposed Centre. Whether such feeling is justifiable or to be condoned is another matter.

With respect, your position on this issue appears as reflective of an introspective and discounting attitude to the Village Community.

While you refer to your personal contact with local experts over the years, you do not indicate whether or not you have any professional qualifications outside your calling.

You say you are convinced by the 'local experts' but you make no reference to any formal reports to this effect from such experts.

You enclosed a leaflet describing your Benedictine Community at Minster in which it is written concerning the Pathways Project:

'...We have been deeply impressed by Kenny Milne and his passion to pass on the new life he as received.....'

By your own hand you accept that:

'People have real anxieties about the project ... a lease would include clauses requiring stringent safety measures'

Given the clearly very necessary need to include such clauses then it is hardly surprising that the average Minster Villager is indeed coming to regard these proposed clients as alien to the Village Community.

With respect, what you say at paragraph 2 of your letter is wholly inconsistent with paragraph 5 on page 2 of the unsigned Leaflet, but which no doubt issues from the Trustees. One may reasonably ask if this indicates simple naïvity or even duplicity? Either way this is an open invitation for comments such as arise at page 7 of the 'Critique'.

Reference is made to one Kenny Milne in the context of:

'Kenny Milne and his team.' 'His passion' and 'his safety strategies'

You might explain precisely who this Kenny Milne is. What are his qualifications? Clearly if Mr Milne is embarking on the sort of project now at issue, those who admit to being '*deeply impressed*' by his persuasions will no doubt have obtained his verifiable curriculum vitae and backed up by verifiable references. You might confirm that this has been done and since this matter falls under regulation of charities it follows that it is of public concern and such material should be disclosed.

This is not a game. You mention sums of £4000 a week in relation to an addict friend. If house space, material support, transport and 'safety strategies' are to be effected, then this will require substantial funding and professional supervision.

If as you say, existing services are 'far from adequate', then would it not be far more sensible and practical to encourage work toward raising support for existing and established services? Rather than diverting monies and efforts towards another and rather contentious project.

You write:

'We believe that the proposed project can operate safely in our village'

Can you therefore also say what measures you propose as a fall back contingency if/when these so called '*safety strategies*' should fail?

Yours sincerely,

Rodney Pell