



Sent by email  
Janet Finch-Saunders MS

**Warwickshire County Council**  
Councillor Izzi Seccombe  
PO Box 9, Shire Hall  
Warwick, CV34 4RR

5<sup>th</sup> August 2021

Dear Ms Finch-Saunders

I'm writing to let you know that Warwickshire County Council's Cabinet has taken the decision that Marle Hall, the County Council's residential facility for outdoor education activities located just outside Llandudno Junction near Conwy, will close on a permanent basis on Friday 22 October 2021.

This is not a decision that was taken lightly. As evidenced by the petition of over 7,000 signatures that was presented to us earlier this year, we know that Marle Hall has been a much-loved and valued facility over the last 50 years. This fact that it has offered a fantastic experience to our children and young people is not in doubt and we are also conscious of the contribution it will have made to the local community and economy over this time.

What we couldn't share more widely at the end of last year was that Marle Hall has not covered its costs of operation for some time. The Grade II listed building is not configured to allow for increased capacity, and it is operating in a very competitive market. Schools are not required to use Marle Hall for their residential trips, but can instead choose from around 50 other providers, all within a similar radius of Warwickshire. Indeed, just 12% of Warwickshire schools used Marle Hall in the last 3 years before March 2020.

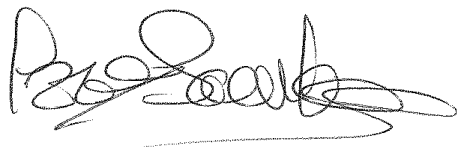
Furthermore, to bring the building up to required standards, including making it accessible for those with physical disabilities, along with general maintenance, would cost us around £400,000 over the next 5 years alone. Detailed financial analysis has therefore concluded that if Marle Hall continued to operate, it would need significant investment. As a result, the costs to the Council, both revenue losses and capital maintenance, would be likely to reach more than £850,000 over the next 10 years. This is not sustainable, as I'm sure you can appreciate, especially when we are under no legal duty to offer such a facility of our own to schools, and we have a responsibility to make sure we are spending public money wisely.

Meetings with the Marle Hall staff are taking place and they are being offered appropriate support.

All schools with existing bookings at Marle Hall are being contacted this week. Whilst we had hoped to be able to accommodate the bookings planned to take place before the end of October, a shortage of staff at the venue means that we are not able to do this safely. As such, we are reluctantly having to cancel all future bookings. Those schools with a cancelled booking are being offered practical support to find an alternative venue as a matter of priority.

If I can help further with questions or feedback, please let me know.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Izzi Seccombe', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Cllr Izzi Seccombe  
Leader, Warwickshire County Council

*Working for  
Warwickshire*