

STANDING ADVISORY COUNCIL FOR RELIGIOUS EDUCATION 16 MARCH 2009 MINUTE EXTRACT

28/08 Open Centre

Laura Connelly - Open Centre presented SACRE with a statement on behalf of the Open Centre, which read as follows:

'The Methodist Church has informed the Open Centre that the building it occupies on Pear Tree Road will be sold at auction in July.

The Open Centre will therefore be without premises from the autumn term onwards though we are continuing to take bookings in the hope that something can be arranged.

The Open Centre is busier now than it has been – the diary is fully booked for March/April and is rapidly filling up for the summer term. We have already taken many repeat bookings for academic year 2009/10.

In the long term we have had support from council officers about the possibility of the needs of the Open Centre being included in the plans for developing the Normanton Mills site. We would welcome the support of the SACRE on this. However, it is a long way off and does not help with our immediate problem.

We would like to ask for the support of the SACRE in finding both sort term and long term premises for the Open Centre. If the SACRE agrees, we feel that a formal letter of support from the SACRE sent to the appropriate officers of the Council would be of great assistance. We would also welcome the assistance of Councillors on the SACRE in bringing this problem to the attention of the Council as a whole.'

Councillor Turner commented that the Open Centre provided a valuable service for the people of Derby and should be able to continue its operation without interruption.

Lucy Care asked for an idea of the minimum size of accommodation they would be looking for. Laura Connelly responded that information had already been provided to Council Officers and that the minimum requirement would be the equivalent of two primary school classrooms plus toilet and kitchen facilities.

Resolved to support the request made by the Open Centre and to ask Council Cabinet to investigate whether suitable accommodation is available for the Open Centre both short term and long term.