

Dear Mr Rosen

The current discussion around the closure of Welney School offers a unique opportunity to offer a prototype of the highly successful Dutch education programme. In the past the Fens looked to Holland for knowledge and experience in land drainage in order to bring the area back to life and we should now be looking at the education system and use their knowledge and experience to preserve the Fenland Schools like the one in Welney which could become a rural education hub for the country and surrounding areas if managed in the correct way. The school has been lacking strong management and all that is needed is passionate leadership to recapture interest to breathe life back into the school the happiness and confidence of the pupils is already clearly apparent I hope you will find the time to read the attached letter and appendices and give due consideration to what is potentially a disaster in the village if the school is closed. The Ouse landscape Partnership is making great strides to encourage and underpin the preservation of the fenland rural culture and the closure of the school would be another negative nail in the coffin of the fens

Yours sincerely

14 October 2015

Dear Mr Rosen

Re: William Marshall School, Welney

This area of the Fens is a tribute to the legacy of Sir Peter Scott's vision promoting conservation alongside the guardianship of country crafts and techniques. Welney is a renowned centre for ice skating and provides the area with one of the best natural ice skating rinks in the country with the National Ice Skating Association linking into the knowledge and experience in the region to develop a state of the arts skating facility in the area. For more information please access this link <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DJiDWKZasiM>

Children who go to Welney School pick up on this culture in their formative years and grow into people who practise the art of the possible were anything is achievable..The school has produced a high number of national sports champions, entrepreneurs, inventors and high achievers who have translated the values learned at school into future successes within their own lives.

This unique village school could hold the key to a completely revolutionary learning conception in the U.K. Drawing on the expertise of the highly successful Dutch educational system Welney School can offer children an educational package that focuses not only on academic study but also encourages a focus on sport, leisure and environmental protection alongside good citizenship and guardianship. The school has a consistent track record of producing custodians of the culture and traditions of this important fenland area and legacies we have which are worldwide examples in sport and conservation.

<http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/world/europe/6360517.stm>

The Chairman of Fen centre / National Ice Skating Association wishes to visits the school and work with the pupils promoting their knowledge of Welney 's past achievements in the sporting arena as does the WWT. Surely this proves that the school still has potential and should be conserved within the village.

The lottery funded Ouse Wash Landscape Partnership has commissioned Cambridge Film works to produce a short documentary on fen skating that will be shown publicly. The wner of Cambridge Film Works was a Welney School pupil who won a T.V. scholarship to train in film production. His first project is still being shown daily at the Wetland and Wildfowl Centre in their Fenland Exhibition Centre and his company is now established locally producing documentaries promoting fenland sport etc.

It was only when I came to Welney that my true education began, my teachers being the fen skaters, wild fowlers, and wash shepherds whose unconventional thinking influenced me. I was inspired by local personalities such as James Smart and the inventiveness of families like the Lovedays who developed a machine that would revolutionise the farming industry. My own landscaping company evolved by using the local principals of tapping into education and innovation developing training packages through the European Social Funded Adapt Programme and winning awards in conservation plus medals at Chelsea and Sandringham for our landscaping day job drawing attention to the region with our medal winning Fenland Garden in 2009.

The closure of the school would be a disaster for the village. Refurbishment of social housing will inevitably mean more young people moving back into the village and the restoration of family homes will also inevitably attract younger families as rising prices in the Cambridge area push more people out to the "cheaper" villages. However, with no school this will inevitably influence the choices of potential home seekers. If this link is broken the supply of custodians to preserve the valuable assets we have been given in this village will dwindle and the burning enthusiasm for fenland life which is still passed down to the children through the school and its stakeholders will die.

Please think very seriously about the school's closure. Once the school has gone it will be lost forever but a bit of thinking outside the box now will save our educational gem for the future and for the benefit of the children of Welney and will enable the legacy of William Marshall & Sir Peter Scott to live on in Welney's future children.

Yours sincerely

Cc Cllr James Joyce Lead Member Children's Services