



4 January 2019

Re: Saving Marble Hill Playcentres

Dear Neighbours

Funding crisis

As you probably know, our much loved Playcentres very nearly closed in September 2017 due to lack of funding. There were fears that we would lose this resource as a community facility and it would instead be run commercially or returned to English Heritage. The then trustees lent the charity £25k of their own money to prevent closure, a scenario which cannot be repeated. It is a reality of austerity that we can no longer rely on the public and private funding which has subsidised and sustained the Playcentre for the past 40 years and we must find a new way forwards.

Strategic review

Following a call for help, a group of local parents came forward to form a new voluntary Board of Trustees to seek to save the Playcentres. We know how much our community values the unique play space the Playcentre provides for all local children, but also the need that exists for the free access for low income families and the importance of the special support for families with children with additional needs.

One year into our new roles as trustees, we have completed a strategic review and it is clear that we must make some changes to the Playcentres in order to be sustainable. After assessing the state of the current buildings and considering the options, we strongly believe that the best solution is to take this opportunity to reimagine the Playcentres and start afresh with a new building and new equipment. (Please note that we are working collaboratively with the Mandarin Ducklings Nursery to ensure operational continuity.)

Community views

All of the trustees are also local residents and so we are of course very conscious of your views and experience of the Playcentres as our neighbours. We will shortly be launching an online questionnaire to the wider community on our website (MarbleHillPlaycentres.com) asking for views on the future Playcentres, but as our immediate neighbours, we would like to work closely with you from the outset. Do you have a residents' association I could liaise with?

Yours faithfully

Katy Grieves
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