

SAVE THE YMCA EMERGENCY HOSTEL

This Christmas as you prepare to sit down and enjoy your turkey with the family, spare a thought for the many rough sleepers in Milton Keynes who have no immediate family at hand and a warm place to sleep. I have spent the night sleeping rough in Milton Keynes and experienced just how depressing and miserable it can be. These people deserve and need our support.

Thanks to the work of many charities and churches across MK, limited support has indeed been at hand. One such place is the YMCA emergency shelter which I have visited many times in recent years. Tragically though, as a result of an ill-conceived Milton Keynes Council budget this emergency hostel now faces closure.

As Ian Revell, the Chief Executive of the MK YMCA says in his emotional letter to our Labour run Council to change its mind, the closure of the emergency hostel will mean;

"Initially twenty more people per night will be sleeping on our streets. These are often vulnerable individuals who will have no choice but to bed down in shop doorways and bin stores (to the detriment of local business), in underpasses (to the dismay and concern of pedestrians and as a detraction from the night time economy) and around Christ the Cornerstone Church which already has an existing "outdoor congregation" of rough sleepers. Particularly in cold weather these people are likely to be driven to drink too much with all the obvious consequences for already overstretched A&E services and the police."

We have faced tough times in recent years, but the YMCA has been consistent in its delivery. Despite difficult economic circumstances our Council can still find thousands and thousands of pounds for 'motivational speakers' and flashy PR videos. Therefore, it is inconceivable and unacceptable that it should be letting down the YMCA and the most vulnerable in our society.

I do not however want to get into the blame game, I am simply asking for your support in trying to do something about it. So please join with me in trying to reverse this wrong and send a clear message to the Council that you, like me, are not prepared to balance the books on the backs of the most vulnerable in our society. Please sign the petition at the top of this page and do your bit to help save the emergency hostel at the YMCA this Christmas.