

Mr RODNEY PELL
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Dr Alun Jones MB, ChB, FRCS, FFAEM .

13.7.07

Dear Alun,

**Re - The Proposed Drugs & Alcohol Rehabilitation Centre at
Minster Abbey**

I was pleased to see you last Saturday at the quite extraordinary meeting at the Minster Village Hall, which was packed and with people overflowing into the street. A number of very concerned residents spoke, in my view, sensible, informed and mostly eloquent. I quite agreed with what you had to say.

After a two hour meeting there was a total show of hands in informed protest against the proposed D & A Rehab Centre.

From a purely personal perspective I am greatly concerned that those who appear to be pressing forward the proposals for such a Centre have utterly failed to show any evidence as to their bona fide. I am also concerned that the location of Minster Abbey is for many reasons inappropriate, for instance it being within some hundreds of yards of a Nursery School, in respect of which much disquiet was voiced.

From a professional medical perspective I am concerned in that I have not been able to uncover any trace of credible curriculum vitae for this Mr Kenny Milne who proposes that through his private company he would run such a Centre. Disturbingly Mr Milne's self declared patron Miss Gaughan, who signs herself

Sister Benedict of Minster Abbey, has disturbingly also singularly failed to produce such information.

In the U.K. there is as yet no statutory legislation regarding Counselling and Psychotherapy, however it is our experience and accepted practice that all bona fide Counsellors and Psychotherapists, such as would be recognised by medical practitioners, see to it that they are registered with the British Association of Counsellors and Psychotherapists.

From my own experience of psycho-analytic training I can say that the BACP will only accept as members those who are properly trained by supervised and recognised trainers and who can produce evidence that in training they have been through at least 40 hours of intensive personal analysis with an accredited analyst. Further all BACP members have to produce confirmation of Professional Indemnity insurance.

We can agree that it is our experience that any individual or group offering counselling or therapy sessions would as a priority be proud to confirm membership of the BACP or N R H & Psych (National Register of Hypnotists & Psychotherapists) or be recognised by the RELATE marriage guidance counsel and would also carry professional indemnity insurance.

It is of great concern that a private company such as Pathways, which seems to be touting for business while proposing to set up this controversial Counselling and Rehabilitation service, should be unable to show recognition by the BACP and be unable to produce proof of professional indemnity.

We were doubtful as to the value of the proclaimed 'Twelve Steps' of rehabilitation.

I have therefore looked at some figures.

I can say that Professor George Valentine has published widely and on the web. Prof Valentine writes that studies involving Alcoholics Anonymous and the Twelve Step Rehab Program

showed ‘.. the program did not help the alcoholics at all ... it was even worse than no help’.

That although only 10% of alcoholics ever come into treatment, 50% of alcoholics free themselves without rehabilitation anyway. Furthermore, regardless of treatment, the average cocaine addict breaks the habit by about 11 years.¹

Dr Gurion² writes that ‘.... people are ten times more likely to change on their own as with help of doctors, therapists or self-help groups...’

What Prof Valentine and Dr Gurion write is consistent with my perception over the years, namely that ‘therapy’ groups tend to be self-selecting and with the members tending to vicariously reinforce and ‘feed on’ each others shortcomings.

In a prospective study of patients with addiction problems at the Maudsely Hospital, patients were divided into three groups. One group had no treatment, one group had one initial session of authoritative advice and the other group underwent a year of therapy. After 12 months there was no difference between the three groups!³

There are serious doubts as to objective benefit through this allegedly popular Twelve Step Rehabilitation program.

I think we agree that critical issues need to be considered:

- 1/ Given that there are already properly run facilities available in Thanet, then whether there is any need for yet another Centre?
- 2/ Given the high profile location of Minster Abbey in relation to the Village of Minster and the now very strongly demonstrated opposition of the villagers, then would Minster be a sensible location?

¹ Treatment of Drug Abuse & Addiction Part iii The Harvard Medical Health Letter Vol. 12. No 4 1995 p3

² J Gurion Amer. Health Mag. March 1990.

³ Prof H Valentine ‘The Doctor’s Dilemma’ 1980. 18.

3/ Setting aside the self-proclamations issuing from Mr Milne, urgent questions inevitably arise as to whether Mr Milne can produce a credible and verifiable curriculum vitae.

As to whether his Pathways Company can produce any objective credibility such as recognition by respected authority figures in this field and recognition by the BACP.

As to what control, if any, that Mr Milne would have over his 'Clients'.

4/ Given A) - That Mr Milne has talked about bussing these 'clients' in and out and that the 'Clients' will be chaperoned.

And

B) - That Sister Benedict has issued a leaflet referring to 'safety strategies' being necessary.

Then issues as to Indemnity Insurance will be critical.

As I understand matters, despite Sister Benedict having stated in her published leaflet that - **'We believe that the proposed project can operate safely in our village..'** there will in fact be no legal restraints or policing and the 'clients' would be free to leave the Abbey premises at any time they might choose and to wander where they wish.

I expressed to you my concern that basing on what has so far been revealed to the Residents of Minster, there is increasing concern of the man in the street that the well-intentioned Sisters of Minster Abbey may have been misled and with worrying consequences.

Yours sincerely,

Rodney Pell

Cc Dr Stephen Ladyman. Chairman Minster Parish Council. Leader Thanet District Council. Chairman Planning Dept Thanet District Council. Clr Mike Roberts.