

Thank you for your letter dated 25 February, which concerns the proposed closure our centre at Northiam.

I hope you will accept my assurance that this is not a fait accompli. The consultation process is both real and meaningful and I can assure you that a final decision will only be made after we have concluded our staff consultation when we will take into account alternative proposals put forward by them, volunteers and the local community.

We have spent many months reviewing all our activities and we have considered a variety of factors, including the local animal welfare needs, the national animal welfare priority, location and demographics amongst a host of other things. This strategic review indicated The Blue Cross can have a greater impact on animal welfare needs if we focus our resources in certain other parts of the country which then led to the proposals to close our centres at Northiam and Felixstowe.

I am sure you will agree that it is incumbent upon every charity to ensure it spends its supporters' donations in the most effective way. For an animal welfare charity this means we have to ensure we utilise our resources to help the maximum number of animals in need. This is the only reasoning behind the proposed closures. The cost of modernising these centres will run into millions of pounds and we are simply asking the question: is this the best way to spend our supporters' money?

If the decision is made to close the centre, we will then explore the options for the site, however I can assure you that as a responsible Charity, we would comply with any restricted covenants applying to any land whether gifted or purchased.

Firstly, we have not yet decided whether the centre will close and, secondly, since the running costs of this centre are about £8,000 per week, this money was a valuable contribution to those running costs. I hope you agree.

Although I was not able to attend the public meeting on the 23 February, I did attend meetings at the centre on the previous day and talked to local representatives about their worries and concerns. I have visited Northiam and Felixstowe on several occasions in the past few weeks but unfortunately I cannot attend every meeting due to other commitments. This applies equally to my fellow directors. However as you will have noted at the meeting of the 23rd, I have offered to come back to the village to talk to the residents, Mervyn Hayes and I are in contact to establish a suitable date.

Kind regards  
Kim Hamilton