House of Commons January 2019

London

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To

**Gosling Sports Park North Hall, Stanborough Road, Welwyn Garden City, Herts**

I am writing to you as your constituent and asking for your help and assistance in preventing the closure of the Gosling Sports Centre North Hall.

As a user of the facility, Better (who run the facility) informed all users at the close of business for Christmas and then formally announced on the 24th December 2018 that the North Sports Hall will be closing on the 31st March 2019.

This has come as a huge shock to all of us and the timing of the announcement has left us over the Christmas period with no-one to speak to or ask any questions which has caused a great deal of upset and confusion and even anger.

This Sports Hall is home to many clubs at present who will find themselves without a sports facility to re-house them. This will impact hundreds of children and adults of all ages from 0-99 years and beyond. No provision is being offered by the centre for the majority of clubs/groups, and those that have been offered alternatives find that these aren’t suitable for their needs whatsoever. This is used by at least 20 primary schools(3-11 years) and 2 secondary schools(11-18 years) during the day as it is essential for curriculum and after school activities.

Hertfordshire has a real need for additional sports facilities in the area and closing a sports hall will have a real impact on this need and will negatively impact many different demographics from children, teens, adults, elderly and disabled users. There are 4 public sports halls in Hatfield but only one in WGC and that is Gosling. It is the only facility that is open to the public during the day. This Hall is unique and indispensable to WGC and to Hertfordshire.

We have many users that can bring evidence to the fact that Better have been running down this facility for several months:

1. No staff on reception to take entrance fees for those attending arranged sports by Better, (No-Strings approx. 30-40 players, squash court bookings)
2. Staff that are on reception (on very rare occasions) don’t have the log in details for the computer to enable the taking of money (the whole site is a cash free business) or booking of courts.
3. No cleaning of toilets on a regular basis or cleaning of the whole facility.
4. No maintenance carried out despite repeated requests for the minimum of standards increase (Badminton nets that have huge holes in and no replacements have not been forthcoming despite a minimal charge of £10 per net and multiple requests).

These are just a few of the concerns that users have raised.

There are a number of clubs and schools that regularly use this facility, and some are listed here:

1. TheDKWay Badminton Academy – Elite Badminton junior players
2. Knebworth Inclusive Badminton Club
3. Monday Junior session - for U10s
4. No Strings Badminton
5. Advanced No Strings Badminton
6. 21 Primary Schools
7. 2 Secondary Schools
8. Gosling Squash Support Group
9. Gymnastics

Plus many other sports and social groups.

Will you please come to our assistance and help us to find a way to keep this facility open and functioning for the 50,000 plus residents of Welwyn Garden City and the wider usage of the residents of Hertfordshire.

Yours sincerely