Dear Mr Morgan,

Thanks for your letter dated 27th March (which I attach for the benefit of the other addressees) responding to my 25th March email below.

You summary paragraph appears to assume that my main issue with the closure of the Martingate Centre is the impact on my studies. My last two paragraphs in the 25th March email evidence nothing of the sort - it is the consequences of the closure of Corsham and the lack of study possibilities now at Chippenham on the opportunities for study in (west) Wiltshire.

In the 25th March email, I cited the lack of vision and of marketing. If we move into the neighbouring county, Berkshire, and a town of similar in size to Chippenham, Newbury, we find that Newbury College remains open on five evenings a week. What would you say is so different about Newbury? Certainly not the local populace, who I would imagine are as keen to study as are the people of west Wiltshire. I have tried to enrol on a number of courses at Chippenham in recent years but all were dropped, apparently through lack of numbers.

Newbury's courses remain at the traditional two-hours length and are more expensive at £170 than the (former) Chippenham courses but Newbury manages to continue to offer courses on every weekday evening giving, inter alia, the possibility to study more than one course. Its satellite college at Calcot, which at 9,000 has a smaller population than Corsham, offers 25 courses, including 13 computing courses - the dedicated ICT room at Corsham would be (and indeed has been) ideal for such courses. My better-half, who hasn't been to college for decades, would happily enrol on 'Getting to grips with your iPad' if such a course were offered at Corsham.

What courses, of a similar nature to the Calcot computing courses (Adobe Photoshop, iPad Basics, Computing Confidence for Beginners, Digital Picture Enhancement, Getting to Grips with your iPad, IT Computer and Online Basics, ITQ Certificate levels 1 & 2 & 3, Microsoft Access, Microsoft Excel (2 courses) and Web Design), have been offered at Corsham? As I indicate in the summary paragraph below, I believe it is a lack of vision, not the lack of take-up, that has precipitated the proposed closure of Corsham.

You point out that the college continues to offer a "wide range" of courses at the Methuen Centre. This statement is rather disingenuous - all 13 courses offered at the Methuen Centre are, and have traditionally been, arts courses. This, along with your recent slogan: "There has never been a better time to study at Wiltshire College" rankles - Chippenham College is now a shadow of its former, bustling, self and Corsham Martingate is scheduled for closure.

I continue to advance the proposition that the difference between Newbury (and other colleges) and Wiltshire College is management including vision and marketing and reaffirm that to lose the Corsham Martingate centre would be a tragedy for the town and the people of Corsham.

Sincerely

Paul Turner

From: wirepuller@hotmail.com  
To: duncan@duncanhames.org.uk; towncouncil@corsham.gov.uk; lynne.horwitz@wiltshire.ac.uk; jamesgraymp@parliament.uk  
CC: alison@corshammatters.co.uk  
Subject: Wiltshire College - Corsham Enterprise Centre  
Date: Tue, 25 Mar 2014 15:48:43 +0000

Dear Ms Dale, Mr Hames, Corsham Town Council & Mr Gray,

I 'paste' below text from Wiltshire College's Corsham Enterprise Centre webpage which 'link' is here:

<http://www.wiltshire.ac.uk/corsham/>

*Wiltshire College has two centres in the ancient town of Corsham, both delivering quality tuition to the people of the town. Our bright and airy premises in The Martingate Precinct have become more accessible than ever. A lift is available for those that cannot manage the stairs to the first floor. We offer a variety of courses suitable for beginners and experts alike and you will have the services of our staff who are always on hand to help you.*

*Our social area is very comfortable and you can take a well-earned break from your studies to relax with a cup of tea. coffee or hot chocolate. Why not pop in and have a look around the next time you are in town, we'll be happy to see you.  
  
Two minutes walk from the Martingate is the Methuen Centre, a converted schoolhouse originally built in 1816, but now equipped to the highest modern standards.*

*Both Corsham centres offer a restful environment within which quality courses in a wide range of subjects are delivered.*

This sounds idyllic and ideal and indeed it is. I have been attending the Martingate Precinct Centre, studying Italian, on Monday mornings for the last two years. There are two back-to-back Italian classes on Monday mornings. Indeed, these are the only classes now held at this centre. For the rest of Monday and indeed the remainder of the week, the centre lies idle.

This centre is a state-of-the-art education establishment right in the heart of Corsham with an 18-computer (or thereabouts) dedicated ICT room and three other 'bright and airy' (to quote the College) classrooms.

And the way ahead for this fine establishment? **Closure**. From next academic year, our Italian class will have to switch to Chippenham.

From my viewpoint this state of affairs represents a management failure including a failure of of vision and of marketing.  Hardly a class goes by without a passer-by making enquiries about college courses as there is little or no information at the entrance. Personally, I have had to switch to other establishments (Bath College for example) for other courses as Wiltshire College's strictures on class sizes are overly prohibitive. Indeed the College's recent assertion: "there has never been a better time to study at Wiltshire College" is lamentable in the light of this proposed closure and the reduction of evening classes at Chippenham to one night a week. Want to study two evening courses at Chippenham? Hard luck.

To lose this superb centre would be a tragedy for the town and the people of Corsham.

Sincerely

Paul Turner