

January 14, 2025

Ian Whiteley
Chair, Herstmonceux Observatory Campaign Group

Dear Mr. Whiteley,

Thank you for your letter and for sharing the concerns of the Herstmonceux Observatory Campaign Group and the wider community regarding the future of the Observatory Science Centre (OSC) site. I appreciate the time and effort that has gone into the change.org petition, the open letter initiative led by Dr. Ryan French, and the thoughtful contributions from teachers, local residents, parents, and others who value the OSC's role in the community.

Queen's University and Bader College are deeply committed to the principles of scientific literacy, STEM education, public outreach, and community engagement. We recognize the unique heritage and educational value of the Herstmonceux Observatory site and its importance to the local community and beyond.

As we move forward with plans for the site, I want to assure you that any decisions we make will be guided by the following principles:

1. **Promote Scientific Literacy:** We will ensure the site continues to inspire curiosity and understanding of science, particularly astronomy and space science, for people of all ages and backgrounds.
2. **Support STEM Education for Adults and Children:** We are committed to maintaining and enhancing the site's role as a resource for STEM education, including tailored programs for schools, families, and lifelong learners.
3. **Engage in Public Outreach and Community Engagement:** We will actively seek input from the local community and other stakeholders to ensure the site remains a vibrant and inclusive space for learning and discovery.



4. Advance Scientific Research and Collaboration: We aim to foster research opportunities and partnerships that leverage the site's unique facilities and heritage.
5. Expand Access to Astronomy and Space Science: We will work to make the site more accessible to a broader audience, ensuring that everyone can benefit from its educational and cultural offerings.
6. Encourage Innovation and Creativity: We will explore new ways to use the site to inspire innovation and creativity in science education and public engagement.
7. Celebrate Cultural Connections to Science: We will honour the site's rich history and its role in the cultural and scientific heritage of the UK and beyond.

We understand the concerns raised about the transition of the site's management and the potential impact on the community. Please rest assured that we are actively working on plans to ensure a smooth transition and to maintain the site's valued role in STEM education and public engagement.

We are committed to transparency and collaboration throughout this process. In the coming months, Dean Pascall, The Director of the Estate will share more detailed plans for the site and will actively seek opportunities to engage with the Herstmonceux Observatory Campaign Group and other stakeholders to ensure their voices are heard and their concerns addressed.

Thank you again for your letter and for your dedication to the future of the Herstmonceux Observatory site. We look forward to working with you and the wider community to ensure the site continues to inspire and educate for generations to come.

Sincerely,

Matthew R. Evans, PhD (Cantab), FRSB, SFHEA
Provost and Vice-Principal (Academic)

Cc Dean Pascall, Director of the Estate, Bader College