

# Community Letter to Queen's University, Canada

To: Dr Matthew Evans, Provost and Vice-Principle, Queen's University

Cc:

Dr.Sandra den Otter, Vice-Provost, Global Engagement, Queen's University

Dean Pascall, Estate Director, Bader College

Dr Jennifer Medves. Advisor to the Chair of the Board of Bader College

(and public via social media streams and campaign website)

10 January 2025

Dear Dr Evans,

As I hope you are already aware, local communities in the UK have considerable concerns over Queen's decision last year not to extend the lease to the Observatory Science Centre (OSC) beyond 2026. The OSC are the current custodians of the heritage observatory site at Herstmonceux, East Sussex, which is part of the Herstmonceux Castle estate currently managed by Bader College.

Your decision spurred a change.org petition asking for the lease to be extended, which now has over 11,000 signatures. It also led to an initiative for a community-led open letter to you demonstrating the immense public support for keeping the OSC at Herstmonceux. This was organised by Dr Ryan French, a solar astrophysicist, author and communicator for whom the OSC kickstarted a childhood passion for space and helped him decide to make it his career.

Ryan's initiative garnered over 300 contributions from a wide range of contributors. In the local community, these include teachers and scout/guide leaders, concerned over the loss of a unique STEM and SEN education resource. They also include local residents, whose businesses have benefited from the visitors the OSC has brought into the area. Most touchingly, they include comments from parents and grandparents of children whose imaginations have been fired by the unique combination of the telescopes and domes alongside hands-on science exhibits, where children learn by 'just having fun'.

The messages received in this initiative are in the attached PDF. I strongly urge you to read them and consider the effect your decision not to extend the lease will have on these important community stakeholders.

You have made no major statement on the lease since your announcement last summer, nor on what will happen when the lease ends in December 2026. So, as you will see, people are understandably concerned about how the site's hugely valued STEM education role and the public access to the historic domes and telescopes the OSC currently provides will be maintained.

Ryan asked the Herstmonceux Observatory Campaign Group, a community group I chair responsible for the change.org petition and a community Facebook group of nearly 2,000

members, to curate and deliver this public letter to you as landowners. We hope it may persuade you to reconsider, or at least to engage with us to better understand the public's concerns and clarify your aims for the site.

Your strategic plan commits Queen's to a "principled approach to global engagement" that prioritizes "mutually beneficial partnerships". You say, "Rather than beginning with questions and approaches built at Queen's, we seek to co-operate and co-design solutions that are rooted in local contexts with partners in a spirit of respect and humility".

That is a laudable commitment to local engagement. We respectfully suggest you demonstrate that commitment by urgently acknowledging and addressing community concerns over the future of this site.

Sincerely,

Ian Whiteley  
Chair, Herstmonceux Observatory Campaign Group

[www.herstmonceuxobservatory.com](http://www.herstmonceuxobservatory.com)

## Community Responses to Queen's University Canada's Decision Not to Renew the Observatory Science Centre Lease

The following are verbatim responses, corrected only for spelling and punctuation, to a Google form set up by Dr Ryan French following Queen's University Canada's decision not to renew the lease to the Observatory Science Centre, part of Science Projects Limited, an educational charity, which has been running the historic observatory site at Herstmonceux, East Sussex, UK, for almost 30 years. The opinions are solely of those to whom they are individually attributed.

Dr French introduced the form as follows:

This form is to collect community contributions in a letter for the estate landlords, collecting anecdotes from the public and astronomy professionals to advocate for the importance of the Observatory Science Centre at its current location as a key asset to our community and vouch for the excellent job of the OSC in being custodians of the historic site.

This document includes all the responses to the requests in the form to:

Comment on the importance of/ Message in support of the Observatory Science Centre (OSC) remaining at their current location.

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It is a very valuable and used educational resource that's natural home is at the observatory.  
*Mr B P Latter, Manager, East Sussex*

My autistic 8 year old loves this place. He wants to pursue a career in this field later in life, it would be a great loss to the future generations that learn and enjoy this charity.  
*Mrs Monica Coldwell, Housewife, East Sussex*

I've lived in East Sussex for over 50 years & am honoured to represent the nearby town of Hailsham on East Sussex County Council. Visits to Herstmonceux were an inspiration to me as a teenager with a passion for amateur Astronomy - an interest which has lasted to this day. The OSC offers tremendous support for local children and people to develop their interest in science and attracts visitors from all over the world. The site is of historic national significance to Astronomy and offers considerable convening power for those seeking to develop an interest in STEM subjects. It remains a good dark sky site in the south east of England for amateur Astronomers & those seeking to learn more about the subject to meet.  
*Gerard Fox, Hailsham County Councillor, East Sussex*

The Observatory Science Centre has been an integral part of our region, inspiring countless individuals, young and old, to look up at the stars and wonder about the universe. Moreover, the center's location at Herstmonceux holds historical significance. It has been a part of our community's fabric for years, creating memories and fostering a love for science in generations of residents. Moving it would not only disrupt these established traditions but also undermine the hard work and dedication that countless volunteers and staff have poured into making the center a renowned institution.

The Observatory Science Centre also plays a crucial role in local education. Schools rely on it for field trips and extracurricular activities, providing students with hands-on learning opportunities that are crucial for sparking interest in STEM fields. The unique environment of the center, with its specialized equipment and knowledgeable staff, offers educational benefits that cannot be replicated elsewhere.

Relocating the center could lead to a significant loss of community engagement and educational opportunities. It could also impact local businesses that benefit from the visitors the center attracts, contributing to our local economy.

*Mr Alexander Wheatley, Aircraft engineer, West Sussex*

The centre is an invaluable educational & tourist resource for the area. Children absolutely love the centre for its hands on & interactive teaching of science. The long & fascinating astronomical history of the site provides a unique & powerful demonstration of science in action that kids can get up close and personal with. The telescope's literally provide a lens on the universe & inspire the imaginations of both kids & adults. It would be devastating to lose such a wonderful institution that is integral to the local community.

*Geoff Whitaker, Campsite Owner, Big Sky Tipi Holidays, East Sussex*

I organised a special event for the staff of John Lewis plc in 2018. I was overwhelmed by the response of 400 staff members (Partners) and their families applying for a ticket to attend the event. The draw of this event was the scientific day that Science Projects had so meticulously planned, which included guided tours of the domes, use of the telescopes, live radio contact with the International Space Station as it orbited above us, group science experiments and use of the fantastic science apparatus. A unique and iconic experience that

attendees had travelled from as far as 300 miles to be a part of. Feedback after the event was outstanding, with many comments referring to how they were introduced to astronomy for the first time and how wonderful it was to be able to view through the telescopes. The impact of the event was immense.

My plea to Queens University is to not close this fantastic facility to the public, but to work and support its growth as an outstanding education facility of excellence for all.

To negotiate with and keep the existing Science Projects team managing the education facility, as they do so efficiently & enthusiastically. With passion for their subject. The team are a very valuable asset to the wellbeing and success of this facility.

*Kay Ruby, Kent*

As a research scientist, science communicator, parent and resident in the Weald I am shocked that the fabulous work of the Observatory Science Centre is under threat and utterly appalled that this should be through the action of a reputable university. The Herstmonceux [site is of] massive historic, cultural and scientific importance and the OSC has preserved and enhanced this value whilst providing an inspirational centre for young people to discover science. Anyone associated with Queen's University should be deeply ashamed of this action.

*Dr. Jeremy Young, Palaeontologist, Kent*

The Observatory Science Centre is an excellent custodian of the Herstmonceux site, which is itself a key part of our scientific history in the UK. The OSC provides an excellent link between the spectacular telescopes at the site and modern astronomy, astrophysics, space science and engineering, and a brilliant springboard for engaging with audiences of all ages on these subjects.

In particular, STEM engagement with younger audiences is still very much a critical activity for our scientific and technological futures. Evidence still points to difficulties in getting children to engage with STEM subjects. Losing the OSC would, in my opinion, be a backwards step in STEM engagement in the south east of England as well as removing the links between STEM and historical heritage.

*Anonymous, Surrey*

Having lived and worked in the Herstmonceux area for over 40 years, I have been so pleased to use the Observatory as a resource to take my own grandchildren and other children to. I understand the buildings may not be perfect but they are part of the experience. The science centre is run by wonderful scientists, many of whom are young and starting out. They show our children how wonderful science can be, in a way that empowers and thrills. The observatory itself was run down and in disrepair before the Science centre took it on. Now it is a vibrant place where we can go on special nights to view the solar system with the remaining telescopes.

I feel that Queens University is distancing itself from the Bader's wonderful legacy. Please consider how much your students have benefitted from Herstmonceux and of course vice versa.

*Anonymous, Retired, East Sussex*

This is a huge asset to the local community, especially younger generations. It inspired my love of science and would be a grave loss if not saved

*Esme, Farmer, East Sussex*

An extensive programme of repair and upgrading of the buildings and telescopes was completed in 2004 with the aid of a substantial grant from the National Heritage Lottery Fund. It is now a Grade II\* listed monument. The Centre is a major venue for exhibitions, lectures and educational programmes. The renovated telescopes are providing a unique facility for the general public, schools, colleges and astronomical societies.

*Mrs Tracey Harty, North Wales Astronomy Society, Wales*

Too much history to be discarded and lost. Huge economic benefit to the local town and nowhere else could provide the same level of interactive science and engagement for locals and beyond.

*Alice Marks, East Sussex*

The Observatory Science Centre has been based at its current site for nearly 30 years. The charity has looked after the site and improved it over the years by restoring the site and telescopes to working condition. Without the charity's involvement, the site may well have fallen into disrepair.

The charity is one of the only locations in the South of England to provide accessible science education to schools, families and the wider community.

The site has been used by countless tv, media and science communicators due to its historical significance over the years, the charity has facilitated this. The charity belongs at the location and deserves to continue as the custodian of this historic site.

*Charlie Davis, East Sussex*

Scouts provide "skills for life" to children of the community and part of that is to visit places like the OSC to learn, touch and feel things they might not readily be able to in other walks of life. To actually be inside an observatory dome is a once in a lifetime thing for most and lends immense substance to any learnings. I have personally taken over 200 children to the OSC and each & every child has been given knowledge and experiences they will value for their whole life. To have the opportunity to allow a child to "look at the stars" and possibly dream a bit, is immeasurable and should rightly be protected at all costs.

*Mr Chris Dabernig, Scout Group Lead Volunteer, East Sussex*

The OSC has done remarkable work preserving the site, honouring its remarkable history, and teaching others about astronomy and physics. It has taken great care of the buildings and facilities and is one of the very few places that whole families can genuinely enjoy a full day. I have a 5-year-old who now asks me questions about Astrophysics due to a talk here (which I and other adults also loved and found informative) and I've watched people in middle and advanced age get genuine enjoyment out of the great mix of history and hands-on activities there. It was a huge and memorable part of my childhood to visit here with family, the site strikes a perfect balance of education, history and fun. It's irreplaceable.

*E Earl, Teacher, East Sussex*

I am a home educating mum of a lively hands-on learner. I am also disabled. Trips to London to visit museums are possible but difficult. Having such a wonderful resource as the Observatory Science Centre on our doorstep enables me to enrich my child's learning with hands-on activities and experiences that I cannot provide at home. Seeing the domes and telescopes also provides the opportunity to discuss more unusual jobs such as astronomer,

astrophysicist etc as well as talking about how the buildings are designed for specific purposes. To move away from this site would definitely diminish the experience and opportunities the Observatory Science Centre can offer to the home educating community, of which they have been very supportive.

*Mrs Joanne Chorlton, Home educating parent, East Sussex*

The Centre is a very valuable resource and has invested a great deal of time and money in improving the Centre to its present high standard both scientifically and physically. Being evicted by a university leaves a bad taste.

*Cllr Ian Tysh, Wealden District councillor, East Sussex*

We visit the centre regularly and it is a great source of making a whole range of science accessible and fun. I have used the centre as a teacher and as a parent and now also as a home educator. This gives our son access to science in a way he enjoys and thrives on. It is a place for home-ed children to meet and share experiences of science. The staff are always enthusiastic and bring the subject matter to life. It is in a great location for a large catchment area.

*Adrian Chorlton, Retired teacher, East Sussex*

I am the Lead Volunteer of the Scout Group based in the village of Herstmonceux. Our Beavers, Cubs and Scouts have regularly visited the science centre over the years. Not only do they learn about science and astronomy, they feel a sense of pride at learning of the importance of the history of the observatory and the part it has played in their local community since it arrived. The staff at the Science Centre have always been supportive of our group - we count some of their past and current staff among our volunteers and they have provided us with practical support as well as raffle prizes to raise funds for our young people to take part in Scouting. In addition to visiting the centre itself, our group regularly uses the footpaths around the Science centre providing further opportunity to embed their learning and appreciate the Observatory building and how it is used throughout the seasons. We combine this with visits to the castle grounds to allow them to see the bigger picture and how the different areas of the estate complement each other.

We take our young people to lots of places. But there is nowhere which has the same impact at first sight and then continues to amaze and delight throughout the visit.

Science exhibits can be easily transported, but there are precious few places children can access this level of astronomy and have access to the expertise of the volunteers and staff who maintain the telescopes. This inspires young people to become not only scientists or astronomers - but engineers and designers too. It enhances their creativity, makes them think about the big questions and more closely about their own futures and career paths.

The telescopes set in their domes are an essential part of this. It is hugely disappointing that the owners of the estate who are directly involved in providing enhanced education opportunities for their students are seemingly comfortable to remove opportunities for young people in the local area.

*Jen Hortop, East Sussex*

I have taken students there who have been mesmerized and inspired and I have personally been there for the evening stargazing which has been fantastic. The interactive science activities are also brilliant. It is very close to all 10 of the most deprived areas in the South East and there is no other resource like it nearby for people to access.

*Miss Miia Forbes, Teacher and local non profit founder, East Sussex*

As a local resident and scenic enthusiast, I strongly support the community effort to maintain the Observatory Science Centre in its current place. The OSC charity has spent significant time and resources transforming the site into a beacon of scientific education. Having myself benefitted from similar institutions during my formative years, it is a shocking prospect to me that entire cohorts of students and members of the public interested in science will be deprived of this unique institution. It must be preserved for generations of curious minds to come and inspire the scientists and explorers of the future.

*Hauke Gruen, East Sussex*

Local resident was looking forward to my children being able to experience. Herstmonceux is famed for the domes and science centre and I think this is a farce.

*Anonymous, East Sussex*

This is a key visitor site in East Sussex attracting tourists and revenue into the area. The beauty of the dark skies area is that we attract people to Sussex. If this is closed I fear the 'landowner' will be tempted by a nice oh cheque from a corporate developer to bulldoze over it and put yet another new build housing estate over it. This would be devastating to lose such a lovely site of interest

*Lauren, East Sussex*

Over the last 20 years, I have taken my children and their friends to the Science Centre. I believe that the current site offers a unique experience for visitors, with the awe-inspiring observatory domes. The quiet, rural setting is also ideal for children with special educational needs. I don't believe that the Science Centre could replicate this experience in another location.

I cannot see the moral justification for this decision, particularly given that the landlord is also an educational establishment. They should be celebrating the huge contribution their tenant has made to science education and encouraging its continued success.

This decision will not only affect the local community, but also a far wider catchment area of schools and parents.

*Philip Boakes, East Sussex*

The Observatory and Science Centre are vital parts of the formative years of youngsters in the South East. Growing up in Bexhill, school trips and birthday parties were spent at the site. This fostered a scientific curiosity in myself, friends and schoolmates. There's nothing quite like it locally, it's a brilliant place to learn and engage in science in a fun and interesting way. Spending time in the telescope domes is a memory that's always stayed with me. The decision not to renew the lease is outrageous. The closure would be a massive blow to future generations. Sounds like a classic case of profit before people.

*Mr Patrick Pope, Bristol*

The Observatory Science Centre is on a historic site that tells us a huge amount about the history of astronomy in the UK. It's a vital regional gathering spot for astronomers and astronomy enthusiasts in the South-East who would otherwise have to go up to London. It's got a truly unique and historic site and we would lose so much if the OSC moved.

*Dr Osnat Katz Moon, Historian of Science, Overseas*

We have taken great pleasure in taking our grandchildren to the Observatory Science Centre over many years now. The exhibits are inspiring and educational. The Observatory domes and the centre are complementary, to separate them is almost criminal. What will happen to the domes, will they still be open to the public? If they are to be open it will be rather boring and dead without the science centre. Come on, get behind this campaign and keep the centre open!

*Steve Ziegler, Retired DT Technician/ business owner/historian, East Sussex*

I have children aged 6 and 8 and I can honestly say that the OSC at Herstmonceux is our favourite day out. We have loved finding out more about the telescopes which are fascinating from both a scientific and historical perspective. And in terms of hands-on activities for the kids that really bring science to life and make it fun, I think the place is far superior to any of the larger city-based museums. Living in Hastings, there are some lovely attractions nearby but absolutely nothing like the OSC at Herstmonceux, and it would be a huge shame for any young science enthusiasts if this centre went elsewhere, particularly given the levels of deprivation in our Town.

On a personal level, it's really important to me as my dad used to go there many years ago with Sir Patrick Moore when he was a teenager. It's a huge regret that COVID and illness meant we couldn't take him back there with his grandchildren before he passed away last year.

*Anna Lewis, Museums consultant, East Sussex*

This is used by many, loved by many and would be a huge loss to the area  
*Carer, East Sussex*

I worked as a lab technician at a local school for 17 years, and in that capacity accompanied many school outings to the Herstmonceux Science Centre. The kids always got excited about going there, not only because of the interactional activities, which they love to do together, and from which they were excited to learn so much (and, having seen the lack of excitement in a classroom sometimes, this was particularly a joy to see...watching them come to life and get truly engaged through play was eye-opening!) but they were especially stoked that they would be not only seeing the telescope domes, but would go inside them too. Somehow, because they were already more alert from the games, they were also more alert for learning about the telescopes & their history. They being on the same site linked current science and past science. It linked many scientific ideas they discovered in their playing with the practicality of science both past & present. Just seeing the domes initiated this excitement for those who had been there before.

I am also a mother of four children. As children, they visited the Herstmonceux site for both astronomy and for the science activities. Even recently, my grown-up daughter wanted me to go with her there. We both went with the same excitement as the school children, to have a tour of the telescopes/domes and to play with the interactive science activities. They are joined in our minds as being a valuable expansion of sciences not only what we see & experience here on Earth, but to beyond our planet into space, into our solar system and even further - to the stars! The link between the two cements the ideas of going micro to going universal. That is why it is so important the science activities and learning stays with the observatory - it expands the imagination in every direction.

*Mrs Annelisa Christensen, Author (previously school lab technician), East Sussex*



From school trips as a young child, through to the venue of my own wedding, the OSC has provided me with so much. I fear if it were to move that the local, younger generation would miss out on so much opportunity to learn.

The stargazing nights in particular are an incredible experience for all to experience - no matter your age, if the site were to move then the publicity and opportunity to use the amazing domes and telescopes won't be possible.

*Mr Alex Marks, East Sussex*

I went growing up and would now like my children to have the same

*Mrs Leanne Brooker, East Sussex*

This has been amazing for my children to learn all things science and we regularly take the children who have disabilities to the centre and they interact in such a cool way it gives everyone young, old and of any ability a way to get into the routes of the amazing world of science!

*Miss Amber Stubbs, ESCC children's services worker, East Sussex*

The OSC is a national treasure, championing children's education and preserving a special history of scientific knowledge and astronomy. It is extremely valuable. As a former child visitor, I begged my parents to bring me here because joy was educational and unlimited, and as a former employee, I've seen first hand how much excellence, confidence and determination the OSC can bring out in the young minds of today. The site is well loved, well cared for and has been in kind hands for thirty years. The heritage of these telescopes and domes and their continued use to teach young and old about the stars, the planets and beyond, is very literally unrivalled. There is nowhere else quite as interactive, inspiring or special.

*Elana Waite, Previous OSC employee, current business admin manager, East Sussex*

The Observatory Science Centre is hugely valuable for public engagement with science - something we need more of rather than less. And a large part of this value lies in place - the historical narrative and infrastructure, connection with community, investment of resources, time and love by those who run and take care of the place, outreach. Given the clock ticking on the global environmental crisis linked to a lack of public scientific literacy and sense of place in the universe, this is a time to support rather than displace this important Science Centre.

*Dr. Michael Bell, Honorary Research Fellow, Scotland*

I work at Hailsham Community College (the nearest secondary school to the Science centre). I have seen the benefit to our students by having such an accessible, informative and welcoming centre close by. Our students always comment how fun and interactive the centre is. If we lose this extraordinary local science centre, a generation of children will miss out on some extraordinary experiences that are on their doorstep.

*Gary Page, Local teaching assistant, East Sussex*

A local institution, simply unthinkable that it would not be there.

*Adam Edwards, Teacher, East Sussex*

Such historic sites should be maintained in their original position unless they are under threat by natural pressures, I.e. flood. The fact that these telescopes are still in use is an absolute wonder and something that should be maintained for further generations.

*Hazel Sheppard, Veterinary nurse, East Sussex*

Unique establishment

*Anonymous, Publishing, East Sussex*

I have visited many times with my children now with grandchildren the science centre offers so much for everyone it should remain here at Herstmonceux because of the history to the telescopes and what the castle used to be used for where else is going to offer such a site the history our heritage is so important

*Ned J Harris, NHS staff, East Sussex*

My son and students find the observatory so fascinating and it peaks their interest in astrology.

*Anonymous, Teacher, Herefordshire*

I love the site, it's a beautiful piece of history, it's had love and care and provides people something intelligent to be captured by, I have a baby boy on the way in a month and always thought I would take him to it, to give him an interest he can be in awe of, please don't take this away from people who currently love it and the future people who love it.

*Anonymous, East Sussex*

It is a unique location in beautiful surroundings to take children to encourage an interest in science. Not only is the science centre an excellent day out with interesting experiences but to be set in the observatory with all the history of astronomy totally adds to the experience. How lucky we are to have this amazing piece of science history in our area.

*Ms K, Science technician, East Sussex*

We are frequent visitors and when the kids were younger members .

*Anonymous, Swim school owner, East Sussex*

My kids love coming to the science centre, they have learnt so much through their visits and retain it due to the fact that they can enjoy and explore at the same time. My son has attended parties here and had an amazing time with lasting memories, this brings such a huge influx of visitors and money to the site and also brings in tourists. My older children have come on cub scout visits and had the chance of viewing the moon through the telescopes, something that they still talk about today. It would be incredibly sad to take this away from everyone.

Thanks to the science centre my children have a keen interest in space and science and love learning about the star constellations, they forever look up in the night sky looking for planets and constellations. Please reconsider your motions.

*Anonymous, East Sussex*

The current use is a unique blend of keeping the site available for its authentic, intended purpose, and continuing to promote and educate astronomy to all ages and skillsets. It has

huge potential to be even better and a major worldwide centre of excellence, it should not be restricted, mothballed or closed.

*Stephen Penny, Engineering manager, West Sussex*

Throughout my teaching career the observatory was a big part of bringing Science to life for the children with additional needs that I taught. It was also a place that all my own children loved and visited on a regular basis. The uniqueness of its setting and the facilities on offer make it a very special place.

*Mrs Sophie Gurney, Retired Headteacher, East Sussex*

Common sense would indicate exactly why the observatory science centre should stay within the environ of these magnificent telescopes

*Mrs N Apthorpe, East Sussex*

The science centre goes hand in hand with the telescopes & domes. If the science centre goes, the domes will likely fall into disrepair and be rarely used and unlikely to be readily available to the general public.

*Anonymous, Business owner/hair salon, East Sussex*

A real asset to this area.

*Mrs Docksey, Retired, East Sussex*

The development and investment over recent years has led to a fantastic and educational science centre alongside the iconic telescopes. This proximity means that popular stargazing events can include all the aspects and activities available at the current location making an event there most definitely more than the sum of its parts.

*Ms Jay Ashworth, Horticulturist and local Parish Councillor, East Sussex*

We visited the Observatory often as my children were growing up - they loved it, as will future generations of students. My eldest enjoyed a birthday here with friends looking at the telescopes. An amazing day. Please reconsider your decision and allow the Science Centre to continue. Thanks

*Anonymous, East Sussex*

Having visited the site with children it's a great place for a day out. Some activities are great for kids and some interesting aspects for adults as well. Caters for all! We loved watching the science shows and seeing the history. Would absolutely go again

*Anonymous, East Sussex*

The history behind this site, with telescopes and observatory domes that date back to Greenwich and the advent of modern astronomy must be preserved

*Mr Dean Lawrence, East Sussex*

It needs to stay there as such an iconic location

*Mr Stephen Dann, Engineer, East Sussex*

The science centre in its current form is such a valuable resource for home educating families. It's the perfect combination of interesting, educational and fun. My children are

neurodivergent and having such a setting as this, with open spaces, outdoor areas, is really important to us.

*Anonymous, Home educator, East Sussex*

So sad to see this valuable asset having to move. Wonderful for children to experience science outside of the classroom and I imagine for many local school trips coming from the local area an absolute eye opener for some children. Please rethink this-surely you can remove this one area from your commercial redevelopment plans.

*Anonymous, Retired teacher, East Sussex*

This site has provided so many opportunities for myself and my family. My middle son's interest in science was supported by regular visits and work experience at the centre. The site is easily accessible, the centre supports local schools, especially with STEM projects and also one of the most important things for the placement of the telescopes, there is little light pollution, meaning the views are spectacular. When we moved here from London we were delighted to find out we had a beautiful Observatory on our doorstep. If this site is moved it will make it difficult for local families to access, due to large expenses getting to London to Greenwich.

*Mrs Natalie Mulcahy-Vince. BSC Adult Nursing, Mum of 3 extremely gifted scientific boys., East Sussex*

The observatory is an important landmark and should be protected. The domes are an iconic part of Herstmonceux heritage, and are just as worth saving as the castle. We are very lucky to have the science centre in the area, with access to the telescopes, which have inspired countless visitors to learn more about our universe. As a child I was inspired by the setting of the centre. It's not just a museum. Learning about space and science in a setting where real scientists worked toward understanding the universe creates a sense of wonder and magic at the observatory. Something that couldn't be duplicated at another venue.

*Elsa Crouch, Phlebotomist, East Sussex*

Having visited the science centre and telescopes on several occasions, this is a heritage scientific site and seeing the restored telescopes up close and viewing through them is an amazing experience and inspires youngsters. They should be preserved as a national monument.

*Dr Neil McConkey, Retired local GP, East Sussex*

I found this place advertised in the Friday ad years ago. Me, my mum and my sister have fond memories of discovering this amazing place, I had plans to take my own step children and am always recommending it to other people, I personally would be devastated if it all moved.

*Mr Ollie Brock, Lab technician, East Sussex*

As a local family we have visited the Science Center on numerous occasions and the scientific learning value has been very enlightening and hugely beneficial. As a mental health support worker, my workplace has also visited with our groups and the pure joy and excitement the guys obtain cannot be understated, the hands-on experiences and learning environment is invaluable.

*Grant Tulley, Mental Health Support Worker, East Sussex*

This is an excellent local facility enjoyed by residents and visitors. I first visited the telescopes when at school in the 1970s and my interest in astronomy has continued ever since. More recently I took an excellent astronomy course there with the wonderful Dr Sandra Voss. It is important for today's young people to be able to learn about science and the world around them. This facility has been built up over time and is irreplaceable in my opinion.

*Alison Sorlie, East Sussex*

This venue has been a great educational resource and day trip for all my family, including visitors. There's nothing else like it in East Sussex. So to get this same great service and resource for my home educating children will be impossible if this closes for good. Losing their links to science and their interest in astronomy as a subject.

*Anonymous, CEO of local charity, East Sussex*

The OSC is a critical element of the United Kingdom's scientific heritage and must be saved for future generations in order to fully understand the UK's importance in science

*Anonymous, East Sussex*

It is a wonderful addition to our village and provides much interest to local schools, clubs & individuals. It sits in a fabulous area and is much used by all for its amazing facilities. The domes which house the telescopes are incredible and can be seen from miles away.

*Anonymous, East Sussex*

The OSC is not the OSC without the magnificence of the historic telescopes/ buildings. Without science projects or a significant and unlikely investment the grade 1 / 2 star building will fall into ruin, just like its cousin the Issac Newton dome down the road.

*Mr Green, Surveyor, East Sussex*

This centre is an absolute jewel in the crown of East Sussex, to see it go would be a monumental loss to the local area & the wider community of East Sussex. We have visited on numerous occasions & hosted my father's 70th birthday there - one of the most magical & memorable families we've ever had. All 3 of our children have had numerous fun-filled & educational days there & it has always been one of our favourite places to visit. At a time where communities are eroding & more & more sites of irreplaceable value are being eaten up by bland housing developments (that still remain out of the reach of the vast majority of the population) we must do everything to ensure the safety of unique institutions like the observatory & science centre. The faculties there are wonderful & would not easily be moved elsewhere. Everything must be done to save this incredible institution.

*Ms Rebecca Haynes, Director of Garden Guardians CIC, East Sussex*

I have visited the Observatory and Science centre numerous times over the years. It is a unique place that is inspiring for both children and adults. It is part of our local heritage and will be missed by both residents and tourists visiting the area. It is not a place that can be replaced with something better so I think it should stay.

*Melissa Coley, East Sussex*

The centre is an important resource for school, not only for East Sussex but the whole of the South East

*Mr Eamonn Burke-Duggan, East Sussex*

I live in Herstmonceux and love our regular visits to the science centre. My children also go with the scouts and beavers and are in absolute awe being able to look through the telescopes and out into the universe. It caters for such a wide age range and it will be a great loss to all.

*Mrs Fordham, East Sussex*

The OSC in its current location offers an engaging educational experience for thousands of children in a stunning location.

*Gemma Collins, Marketing and finance manager, East Sussex*

The combination of equipment and experiences at the centre is unique and enhances the overall objective of introducing children to the sciences. The setting is a pleasure to visit and brings commerce to the area in a sensitive way.

Most children and adults will have no previous experience of observatory domes and telescopes and this is a fantastic way of bringing this to the public. How else could the children of East Sussex and beyond be introduced to the various aspects this site offers in a pleasurable and easy to access way?

*Anonymous, East Sussex*

The OSC needs to stay at the current site due to the proximity of the wonderful & historic telescopes & observatory domes.

*Mrs Amanda Cox, Retired, East Sussex*

The Science centre is currently housed in a unique building which is very appropriate to its mission. It's hard to see what better use can be made of the domes and telescopes than science education. Currently the telescopes are well maintained and in regular use, inspiring children and more experienced astronomers alike. If the site is used for housing or other leisure facilities these UK assets are likely to fall into disrepair.

*Mrs Amanda Britt, University research administrator, East Sussex*

This valuable and historic site should be preserved and shared with generations to come.

*Mrs Lisa Phillips Horner, Customer relations manager, East Sussex*

My children have always loved coming to visit the science centre and both love science, partly because they have been inspired there. Having the domes / telescopes etc pushes them further in their knowledge than just a science centre alone.

*Ms Charlotte Ross-Goobey, East Sussex*

Please keep this wonderful space. It's such a great resource for Sussex and must be protected as it stands and not moved

*Anonymous, East Sussex*

This a fabulous educational resource the like of which is not seen anywhere in the south east or possibly further afield. The telescopes are used for observing evenings for everyone and provides easy access to science for children.

*Mrs S Allpress, Retired teacher, East Sussex*

I have loved visiting the centre, both with my daughter and alone. The site is loved by so many and is a local outstanding landmark. It is critical they stay where they are for our local history and the connection they bring for astronomy study to locals.

*Liz Overs, Musician, East Sussex*

This site has fought to provide a centre of excellence in the south east on teaching and informing people and especially children about astronomy. It brings people to the area. Herstmonceux is a valuable historical site which is part of the English heritage. If it seems likely they want the site back to develop we must fight tooth and nail to protect the astronomical element and to keep this dark corner in an over developed south east.

*Ms Beth Green, East Sussex*

My Dad (John Fairway) was a carpenter who helped build the domes and buildings. My family lived in a house owned and built by the RGO for over 50 years. The people of Herstmonceux who worked there and those who did not made the RGO and this site an integral part of our village. This is NOT a "site" to be given or sold to outsiders. It has defined Herstmonceux for over 70 years and remains an integral part of the village and the people who live there. The village people have come together to give their time, love, care and financial donations to make it what it is today. It is also a vital part of our national history. Herstmonceux suffered a massive loss when the RGO closed and moved and they quite simply cannot bear to suffer that loss a second time because outsiders want to take this away from them. This quite simply cannot be lost to people who do not care about those things and the danger it will become yet another "quirky" holiday let or worse. I support the people of Herstmonceux and I consider myself to still be a part of the Herstmonceux community with strong links to the village and many "RGO families" who live there. I fully support them in their robust defence of this site and their absolute right to keep it in trust as an integral part of their village and their identity.

*Shirley Banester (was Shirley Fairway of Dacre Road and later Queens Road), Retired, Norfolk*

The observatory centre in Herstmonceux has been an inspirational and enjoyable place for the children to visit while growing up. They have enjoyed many hours of scientific fun that they would never have had - science lessons are ok but the observatory makes it fun and they want to be trying everything out themselves. School trips - again, nothing else in the area for STEM trips which are fun and inspiring.

*Ms Jodie Hooper, East Sussex*

The site and equipment there is of National importance. At present it is being well cared for and open to so many individuals and groups to explore Science. I worry this would be lost forever.

*Anonymous, East Sussex*

The Observatory Science Centre is at the heart of science learning and education in Sussex and possibly the South East. There is simply nothing like it in the area or region. We as a family have come on numerous occasions, been inspired by the history, the hands-on exhibits which have promoted a love of and understanding of science and its value. To remove it from the area would be incredibly harmful and detrimental to children and adults in the region. Travelling to London is not an option for many, yet science trips from schools to the Observatory Science Centre make science accessible for local children. My 9 year old daughter had a wonderful trip this year with peers who have never been to the Science Museum and this therefore was their first exposure to a scientific building and environment. To take that away from the children will definitely harm their chances of being exposed to a potential career path. Please reconsider - we need the Observatory Science Centre, it is vital to the region and invaluable for the future scientists of the south-east, not to mention the countless astronomers and adults who continue to enjoy visiting and learning about our scientific heritage.

*David Thomas, Filmmaker, East Sussex*

The East Sussex skies are some of the clearest in the country - the site offers a visitor experience like no other - its location also brings the opportunity to further explore history at the castle.

The plot is the perfect size / situation & can accommodate visitor parking etc while also not negatively impacting its immediate environment.

*Mrs Natalie Lloyd, East Sussex*

This is such an amazing and iconic place and invaluable to all who visit it old and young alike, it was only a couple of weeks ago my grandson had a school visit there and hasn't stopped raving about it, now totally space obsessed now.

*Anonymous, Barber, East Sussex*

I believe under Herstmonceux's Neighbourhood Plan not only was Herstmonceux's Castle listed as a Community Asset but so was the Science Museum. This therefore legally gives the Science Museum and the local community the right to set in motion the power to purchase it from the establishment running the castle. This is powerful protection so please use it

*Cate Sullivan, Part of a Neighbourhood Plan contributor, East Sussex*

This site supports so many creatives, dreamers, STEM. It's inclusive and inspiring

*Miss C Sheppard, Civil service, East Sussex*

My husband and worked and volunteered there for about 13 years It would be a national disaster for it to become derelict again or worse demolished The educational side of the observatory is second to none and the hands on science has inspired so many youngsters to go on to engineering and astronomy where else in the country have you got such amazing facilities

*Trudy Gower, Retired, East Sussex*

The current custodians of the Centre have done so much to save a significant part of our scientific heritage and to return historically important instruments to working order. The site



with its historical links to Greenwich can continue to inspire future generations of astronomers and space scientists.

*Anonymous, Retired cyber Security Consultant, East Sussex*

It's a beautiful location with low light pollution. It's part of the unique village of Herstmonceux and frames the entrance to the castle. Stunning to look at and brings visitors.

*Ms Nicola Blunt, East Sussex*

The RGO, Herstmonceux Castle and more recently the OSC are part of the fabric and modern history of the area. The science centre gives local schools and families an affordable hands on experience without the expense of travelling to London

*Sue Sellors, Retired teacher, East Sussex*

Children all over Sussex come here to learn and have fun year after year. A lot of whom would have found their very own special interest in astronomy. Also, these telescopes shouldn't be left to rot again like the first time - when it had to be saved - this too will inevitably be saved. I just hope this time it won't be too late!!

*Miss Leanne Jessup, East Sussex*

I grew up visiting the science centre and observatory with my parents and this is what got me interested in science. I want the chance for my daughter to visit this centre as she grows into a teenager. I cannot believe that the owner refuses to renew this lease. Although they have already shut or closed all of the excellent events held next door at Herstmonceux Castle this is a step too far and I object in the strongest terms to this ridiculous decision. We want our Science Centre

*Dr Peter Josling, Health Food specialist, East Sussex*

This is such sad news to learn the licence will not be renewed. I have visited this site for over 12 years as my children have grown. We have all loved visiting. So many interesting informative amazing displays which they have enjoyed playing with, learning from. The domes are so iconic and have offered such interesting evenings with the telescopes. This site must continue to allow the next generation to experience and love what we have as a family.

*Mrs Mackintosh, East Sussex*

This has been a very important part of Herstmonceux for many years and I feel it should remain where it is.

*Mrs Rhonda Brockman, East Sussex*

This is an historic site which has science and astronomy educational benefits to schools, and particularly beneficial to SEN needs. It is also run by astronomers who know about these telescopes and the use of them. This must continue and not be left to ruins.

*Miss Maxine Hustwayte, Employee, East Sussex*

This site is crucial to the history of Astronomy

*Anonymous, Local Business owner, East Sussex*

Both my daughters have visited the science centre several times, and one chose to have her birthday there. We particularly love the historical aspect of the telescopes and the stories behind them, as well as the opportunities to visit and star gaze after dark. It is a unique and perfect location for inspiring our children in science and astronomy. It would be absolutely tragic to lose this fantastic institution and all the work volunteers have done over many years to make it what it is today.

*Nuala, East Sussex*

I used to take my children here and now take my grandchildren. They have learnt so much from visiting the science centre. My eldest grandson is considering studying astronomy because of this

*Anonymous, Retired Practice Manager, East Sussex*

We have loved visiting the science centre for years, I have taken many children there. My own and other children. From age 2 to 17 years old. All the children have enjoyed themselves and few wanted to leave when it was time to go home. It is an interactive experience for them so teaches them to become scientists who explore, ask questions and sometimes find answers. There is nothing else nearby like it.

*Mrs Felicity Carter, Nursery manager/owner, East Sussex*

I think the Observatory is a very special site that needs to be protected and the Science Centre has been the perfect guardian and partnership with it for many years.

*Gilly Cant, Property Inventory Clerk, East Sussex*

I don't know where to begin. I'll sum it up instead - looking out from ourselves....matters. Thinking of Carl Sagan's' little blue dot in space. Also - history - the historical significance of that particular site.

See what I mean about where to begin?

*Bernie Bell, Retired, Scotland*

To comply with the legal requirements of the National Lottery Heritage grant used to restore the telescopes, they must be used for public access and cannot be sold.

*Mr Jeremy Harrison, Parish Council Vice Chair, East Sussex*

The site was a gift to the University and the Science centre fulfills an important educational role. It would be a travesty if a University undermined their central plank of existence i.e., the education of the young especially if it were sold, done in the pursuit of profit alone.

*Anonymous, East Sussex*

Not only is Herstmonceux an historic and beautiful site, the OSC provides scientific education and is an amazing resource for training and encouraging students of all ages to become the scientists of future generations.

*Mrs Gillian Thomas, Retired nurse, East Sussex*

Such an iconic building, that MUST remain. Visited by so many people, including schools - vital educational centre.

*Steph, East Sussex*

I've lost track of the number of visits with children, grandchildren and students. A remarkable and unique site which must be protected.

*Anonymous, Teacher, East Sussex*

It is impossible to imagine it being anywhere else. It is a great centre to visit and an extremely interesting place for all age groups in East Sussex.

*Mrs Daphne Sarson, Retired, East Sussex*

I have taken my children to the science observatory many times and they have also been there on school trips. It is an amazing place full of enrichment and learning. It would be a huge loss to the communities locally to lose this.

*N Gregory, Gardener, East Sussex*

As a teacher I have taken many children to the Science Observatory over the last 20 years. I have seen first hand the impact and inspiration these visits have had on the children. The way the observatory brought science and scientific concepts to life for the children is just inspirational.

In a world where children are unfortunately addicted to screens and elearning, the loss of such a wonderful site would have devastating consequences.

*Mrs Manlow, Teacher, East Sussex*

Provide wonderful educational facilities for schools from a wide geographical area

*Anonymous, Surrey*

I clearly remember the first time I went to an open evening at the science centre and the really interesting things that I learned from that evening have stayed with me ever since. Have been back a number of times and still find it interesting and informative, particularly now with new information

*Mrs Pat Hartland, Local retired accountant, East Sussex*

This site is unique in terms of the in situ domes and telescopes remaining here is vital to continue to curate and care for this important historical and scientific site.

It's important in terms of heritage and local attraction as well as providing access to young and old to be able to see through the telescopes on special open days. Will also be a loss for tourism and local jobs in an area with very few rural opportunities.

*Ms Louise Waghorn, East Sussex*

We have lived in Herstmonceux for many years and our children really enjoy visiting the science centre. They learn so much and it will be a real shame that it will no longer be local to us. They have been to visit with school and the local scout group and have really enjoyed their sessions.

*Mrs Jessica Norton-Hill, East Sussex*

Extremely valuable resource to local families and youth groups, encouraging exploration of the world around us, critical thinking and curiosity. A well used local resource for those from the area and visitors/tourists.

*Greg Rampley, Operations Manager- Social care, East Sussex*

Lived in Herstmonceux my whole life and grew up around the science centre. My current school where I work do yearly school trips here for their space topic and I know many other schools in the area that do this too. This hands-on experience is amazing for the children and sparks a love for outer space.

*Anonymous, Primary Teacher, East Sussex*

This site is of critical importance to people of all ages and abilities.

Over the years it has helped to generate and further educate interest to many people at its present site. Many of whom could not travel to another site physically and thus would likely lose interest. In these cases everybody loses.

*Mr Danny McCormack, Company director, East Sussex*

The Observatory Science Centre provides an important introduction to science for young children and adults alike. There aren't enough of these types of facilities as it is, especially locally in East Sussex. We wouldn't dream of getting rid of the Towner Art Gallery in Eastbourne, so why aren't we protecting this valuable resource.

*Mr Ryan Clarke, Software Systems Lead, East Sussex*

This resource is so important for the locality and for science education in general, it has been a springboard for many young people going on to university where there has been no family member having entered higher education and no expectation for them to do so until they discovered science and astronomy at the OSC

*Lynnie Lou, East Sussex*

It is a fantastic way to learn science and astronomy in a fun and exciting environment. Generations of children and adults have gained knowledge and insight into science and astronomy they would never have known.

*Mags Southam, East Sussex*

I have been a nanny for over 34 years & taken many of my charges to the science observatory as part of an education learning experience! The sight is part of our heritage everybody knows where it is !

The wonderful teachings and classes at this sight are monumental in our learning ! If it's moved how are they to replicate the telescopes in a new position surely at great cost !

It just doesn't make business sense either !

*Samantha King, Nanny, East Sussex*

A wonderful place for both children and adults to have a wonderful scientific experience.

*Anonymous, East Sussex*

This observatory is essential for teaching our children about science and space.

*Ms H Wakefield , Nurse, East Sussex*

I've heard wonderful things about this place... and really want to still be able to visit.

*Tracy Stone, Midwife, East Sussex*

I believe this is a historical heritage asset. The observatory is maintained by volunteers & the excellent Science Centre is a wonderful place for young & old, near or far to visit and be

enchanted. In addition it attracts visitors who spend money locally and support the wider economy. It would be a great shame to see it leave.

*Gary Pharo, Key account manager & Ninfield Parish Councillor, East Sussex*

The centre has been an inspiration to both my children and with such focus and push to encourage STEM subjects, this will be a huge loss to our local area. Both my daughters have found a passion in these areas that they wish to pursue thanks to the Observatory Science Centre. My youngest dreams of working with NASA one day! With the London Science Museum being a costly day trip away, I am saddened to think of all the families who will not benefit like recent generations have done so, due to financial constraints.

*Victoria Ripley, Civil servant, East Sussex*

For me this is about both continued promotion of science, astronomy in particular but also heritage and preserving a site of historical interest

*Debbie Owen, Nurse, East Sussex*

History matters, as does stability. The only alternative will be a complete loss of the whole site. Please save Herstmonceux!

*Paul Jeffery, Palaeontologist, Lincolnshire*

The site is historically important and part of our national history. Closure and/or relocation would be a tragic loss of context.

*Greg Collins, Retired Information Technologist & District Councillor, East Sussex*

This site has been the source of much joy to myself and my family over the years. Educational and fun, with the most knowledgeable workers. It would be a devastating loss to East Sussex and its ability to promote an interest in science amongst our youth.

*Katie Ates, Education Pastoral Manager, East Sussex*

The science centre is a key education centre for all, especially for school age children. To be in the site of the observatory gives it extra excitement for all visitors. I hope the reason for not renewing the lease is not greed and for further house building in the area. We need new scientists to help the human race develop in a more sustainable way protecting our planet, reversing global warming either human or planet adjustment.

*Mr David Hyder, East Sussex*

The telescopes are hundreds of years old and have been used for many amazing discoveries and by many truly inspiring scientists such as Sir Patrick Moore and Stephen Hawking. The telescopes need to be cared for as they are to keep them from falling into disrepair once again. The science centre is much loved and a huge part of the community, inspiring future scientists and astronomers. There's no other centre like this nearby. Please don't close it down!

*Miss Danielle Henderson, East Sussex*

I myself used to visit here as a child and absolutely loved visiting the science centre as well as the observatory buildings. I now bring my own children to visit and they are fascinated with the buildings and exploring the telescopes, they also love the pond and the fishes inside.

*Miss Jessica Aitken, East Sussex*

In my opinion it has been there and should be an English heritage site  
The telescope and domes are all part of our local history

*Mrs Deanne Huggett, Hairdresser, East Sussex*

This site is so important for introducing & educating people into many areas of science & astronomy. It is a gem to have on our doorstep. My family & friends have learnt so much over the years & best of all it's fun! Where else could you do all that they have to offer ?!

*Becci Stallman, East Sussex*

We live in the beautiful village of Herstmonceux surrounded by beautiful countryside, a castle, a great local pub and of course the fantastic science centre. Over the years we have taken our 4 children there on many happy days out and the open evenings of the telescopes. What a complete shame and loss not only to our community but all the schools, tourists, various clubs and thousands of visitors that will miss out on this great treasure. We need to fight to save this treasure.

*Mrs Kathy Price, Self-employed domestic cleaning business, East Sussex*

This site is critical for fostering a love and curiosity of science so essential for the next generation of budding scientists. Have used this site educationally & for my family enjoying an excellent science day out.

*Geraldine, Retired teacher, East Sussex*

It's my boys favourite day out and we never say no to going there as it's always a good day, full of fun, learning and activities. It would be a massive loss if the center had to move from this amazing location

*Mrs Isabelle Grimes, East Sussex*

Local gem, brilliant domes with telescopes

*Laura Southam, Fitness coach, East Sussex*

I have taken small groups of children (20) aged 7-11 years to the Science Centre in the school holidays for the past 5 years. It's a fantastic educational hands-on experience that East Sussex will sorely miss

*Caron Teague, Teacher, East Sussex*

Our year 5 students (over 90 of them!) enjoy a trip each year to the science centre for our space topic. Without this place, our topic will be null and void.

At every single school I have worked at, we have enjoyed trips to this place. Not only this, I also bring my own daughter.

*Mrs Lyndsey Pengilley, Teacher, Grovelands community primary school, East Sussex*

This excellent and unique science centre has been crucial in preserving the history and importance of the telescopes on site. It has enriched the local community by providing excellent educational and fun facilities for local children and those visiting from further afield. It would be incredibly short-sighted to remove this from our local area.

*Eliza Harding, Local Teacher, East Sussex*

An important local educational facility.

*Mr. Jeffrey Southgate, History visitor for schools, East Sussex*

Brilliant place to take grandchildren for learning and fun! It is ideally located for others with good access and visitors to area.

*Mr Ian Stewart, Retired solicitor, East Sussex*

Please please don't leave. We have visited on occasions and been overwhelmed with this fascinating place.

*Michele Broad, Medically retired, East Sussex*

It is important to Herstmonceux, it is important to retain this iconic tourist attraction

*Mrs Tina Harffey, Farmer, East Sussex*

This a legacy of scientific endeavour in history and should not be cast aside for short-term interests

*Ian Peaple, Shop worker, Buckinghamshire*

Amazing organization and service to the South East of England. Without the support of the wider facility their impact will be reduced and the good they do diminished. Finding a comparable facility would be nearly impossible and it is the perfect location for adults and children, tourists and locals.

*Ariel Horn, Head of Product, East Sussex*

Such a fantastic educational facility! Would be so sad to see it close!

*Mrs Alison Perry, East Sussex*

Invaluable learning centre for the young & not so young in East Sussex. Awakens curiosity & interest in the previously unknown & enlarges young people's horizons & ambitions when choosing their future careers.

*Mrs Jacqueline Chandler, Retired, East Sussex*

This would be such a massive loss to not only the local community, jobs, education, leisure but to the wider East Sussex county and beyond. It would be a crime against education in general.

*Mr Ian Cant, East Sussex*

The Science Centre in its current location provides an important link to the history of astronomical observation at this site and the development of scientific knowledge in many people including school children. I always find new and interesting things to see when I visit the science centre.

*Gary Dicker, Mechanical Engineer, East Sussex*

It's the perfect place for it.

*Dave Wilkins, Case Officer, East Sussex*

Being a local all my life, I have grown up knowing and seeing the iconic domes of the Observatory, a truly wonderful sight to behold. Then the telescopes themselves and the wonderful images that they bring to the greater public, the science behind the universe. I am still lucky enough to have a picture taken from the telescope at Herstmonceux of Halley's Comet which I hold dear as it was given to me by my Auntie who worked at the Castle many many years. My children have grown and also enjoyed the Observatory and in later years the science centre that they have not only enjoyed on our family trips there but also with their schools over the years. I feel that it would be ripping the heart from Herstmonceux by not having the Observatory there for all to enjoy and admire for years to come.

*Julie Edwards, East Sussex*

I've completed two of the observatory courses and been to many open evenings. Being able to look through a big telescope is an incredible opportunity to inspire future generations.

*Emma Saunders, East Sussex*

This site has been a wonderful resource to educate my children. The ability to see the observatory and experience it first hand has engaged them in a way that pictures or videos simply cannot. The interactive activities are brilliant. There is no similar local resource for hands-on learning of science.

*N Webber, Company director, East Sussex*

My son and daughter have enjoyed visiting the science centre for many years and have found it both educational and fun. We've spent many long days exploring everything and my daughter hasn't wanted to leave.

*Nicola, East Sussex*

My children absolutely love the science centre. It is such a great educational facility.

*Bethany Cottingham, East Sussex*

Always loved the observatory as a child, would hate to see it gone.

*Katie Neve, Customer consultant, East Sussex*

Crucial for local children and students to have the hands-on experience of a science resource in these grounds and in this area.

*Mrs Julie Claxton, Teacher, East Sussex*

It is vital that young people (as well as professionals and other adults) have the opportunity to learn about the universe and have access to observational tools and their use.

*Edward Scott Iglehart, Retired Scientist and Artist/Craftsman, Southwest Community Woodlands Trust, Scotland*

I live locally and have always had a great interest in the local observatory and its history throughout the decades. It is a fascinating place of Science and of heritage and it seems incredibly disappointing to lose that.

I am also a secondary school science teacher and have taken a number of groups on school visits over the years. It is wonderful to be able to allow students to visit somewhere locally steeped in such scientific history, to be able to meet local scientists and volunteers who are passionate about astronomy, and for kids to be able to see working equipment.



There is very little like this - in terms of Science - in the local area and it would be a tremendous loss.

*Lisa Murray, Teacher, East Sussex*

Such a brilliant place for children to learn as they play

*Jackie Farnham, Accounts, East Sussex*

An amazing opportunity for many students and people to enjoy the experience of being linked with space. Such enriching experiences should be protected and encouraged, not eliminated!

*MR Yann HUET, East Sussex*

This is a local treasure that brings so much to the community. The stargazing evenings are fabulous and all the interactive exhibits amazing, all in the most beautiful and accessible setting. It would be a [great shame] to lose this much loved gem.

*Lizzie Hall, Retired, East Sussex*

It is such a valuable resource for young people to gain knowledge and foster a deeper interest in space and science.

*Mrs Zoe Henderson, Crematorium operator, East Sussex*

It's a wonderful asset for all of us but especially our children

*Valerie Bennett, Retired, East Sussex*

I have taken both my boys to this wonderful place and we have many school trips which we attend here along with birthday parties.

*Rezia Amin, Teaching Assistant, East Sussex*

Moving the museum anywhere else would just be illogical! This is its home

*Vibeke Harrison, Teacher, West Sussex*

The Science Centre is an amazing resource for our local community, as a primary school teacher it is such an inspiring trip that has helped so many children find their passion for science and astronomy. There is no other place like it where we could possibly take our children and inspire them in this way.

*Miss Katie Hawkrigde, Teacher, East Sussex*

It is such a fantastic site with access to the telescopes and observatory domes a truly unique experience. My children thoroughly enjoyed visiting. Interacting with all the amazing exhibits. Such a shame if forced to move to other premises.

*Mrs Shellie Simpson, East Sussex*

The Observatory and Science Centre are the perfect partners to the castle. They compliment the historic site with school trips and exciting inspiration for those wanting to learn more.

*Julie Kennedy, Local Business Owner, East Sussex*

Although now living in Scotland, we lived for many years in Sussex. We used the centre to take our children to explore and try to explain the night skies above us. A highlight was

spending the day there for the solar eclipse in 1999. The centre is renowned for its history and needs to be saved for future generations to visit and learn about the stars and planets. It's also set in a dark skies area, which sadly are becoming less and less in the South East of the UK.

*Mrs Janet Wilkinson, Scotland*

This is a historic and crucial building to not only scientists around the south of England but also the community of East Sussex. From a practical point of view, this location has everything an Observatory could possibly need, and moving will disrupt the great work currently going on there. From a sentimental point of view, with the Observatory celebrating its 30th anniversary next year, it feels only right that this celebration takes place in the Observatory's home: Herstmonceux.

*Mrs Lianne Baldwin-Brown, Hampshire*

The observatory is an amazing place and is vital to remain at Herstmonceux as this is the only facility of its kind in SE. It encourages interest in children and helps everyone enjoy what our planet and beyond has to offer. It would be an absolute travesty for it to be closed down.

*Mrs Sarah Jones, West Sussex*

This is a major tourist attraction and important to scientific study.

*Mrs Katie Lewis, East Sussex*

These listed buildings are too precious to allow the owners to do as they like.

*Richard Walder, Eastbourne College Laboratory Technician, East Sussex*

The Herstmonceux castle and surrounding buildings need the observatory at the site as it brings in visitors from all over the world. Without the observatory the castle will fall into ruins

*Neil Coomber, East Sussex*

The Science Centre provides a unique fun learning environment which I and my family have thoroughly enjoyed many wonderful days out at over the years. We have also enjoyed the night sky events where my children and I have learnt so much and been in awe at what we could see. As a teacher I have brought school parties who, similarly, had an amazing educational experience taught through hands-on fun and led by enthusiastic and knowledgeable staff and volunteers. This special place means so much to so many

*Jo Stevens, Primary School teacher, East Sussex*

It's such a wonderful Science museum for children and there is nothing else like it close by. It would be a real shame to lose this wonderful place. My family have been taking us there for years and now we are taking our children there. You never know who will inspired to go on to study science after a visit, it certainly had a good impact on our family.

*Kate ROe, East Sussex*

A fabulous resource that has taught thousands of children about astronomy and science. A critical resource for the schools and clubs for young people in Sussex. An inspiring resource which is much loved and vital for locals and visitors to Sussex alike.

*Clare Paine, Teacher, East Sussex*

Important educational facility

*Gavin Williams, Business owner, East Sussex*

As a regular visitor to this wonderful local site I would be deeply saddened to see it moved. I'm not a professional astronomer, but have a lifelong interest and this is the beauty of the site, I can make my living elsewhere and still get the pleasure and beauty of their expertise and telescopes. It would be damaging to the culture of the area for it to be moved.

*Katie Ford, East Sussex*

The home of UK astronomy. An historical monument and a record of scientific technical discovery. An internationally recognised facility. Listed buildings? Why isn't the government stepping in to save this facility for the Nation so that it may remain for the Nation. Or will it become another foreign asset or Brown Field building site? Save it for the Nation.

*Mr Robert Buckell, Retired, East Sussex*

Please reconsider. The observatory science centre is an integral part of the local area. My children who both were involved with scouts & brownies had several visits over the years and learnt so much from their visits. It will be a massive loss to the local community.

*Carole Stapley, East Sussex*

My son (5) and I adore visiting and to think he won't be able to visit and look through the telescopes himself one day is truly sad. This must stay, nothing comes close to this in the area and so many children will miss out in the future if this site closes. It's part of our history and the public should have access.

*Mr Oliver Salmon, East Sussex*

This is something that I hold dear to my heart. My father David Jackson, devoted his whole life to the RGO and meticulously maintained the mirrors to all the telescopes at the observatory, and many around the world. It is through the science center that many young people learn about the stars and where we all come from, and with this, the importance of looking after our own planet earth.

There are so few places for people to go where there is so much on offer for people to learn these important things, and I believe the science center plays an important role in the future of our planet. I was lucky enough to have grown up within the grounds, and to have been able to observe the stars and planets using these amazing telescopes. They must be preserved and used as intended for years to come, and I believe the passion to do so comes from the science center and the people who do an amazing job maintaining it.

*Mr Simon Jackson, Kent*

It is crucial for community access.

*Frederica Chapman, Director, Theater For The Earth, Overseas*

Access to this wonderful site is so important for our children growing up in the area as science on our doorstep is absolutely essential

*Mrs Susan Palmer, Retired, East Sussex*

This is a wonderful asset to East Sussex and should be embraced, cherished and utilised by the community at large.

*Jason Prior, Accountant, East Sussex*

This valuable scientific resource has served our family through generations we have visited and gained educational knowledge. This is such a valuable organisation for our community.

*Mrs Alison Woodgate, East Sussex*

This really is a significant piece of English scientific history, we must not repeat past mistakes of its management. It needs to be protected for the public good and maintained as an accessible asset to inspire future generations.

*Mr Andrew Lissamore, Kent*

The Observatory Science Centre should remain where it is. There are few places like this in Sussex where telescopes, the domes etc are available to see and use, for those interested. I took my own children there and they have taken my grandchildren. All had an amazing time, learning a lot about different aspects of science. As a teacher, I also visited with classes over the years. It is a fabulous place for learning.

*Mrs Sue Harrison, Retired teacher, East Sussex*

Educational in a fun way - encourages children to learn science and engineering with the use of all the great equipment! For all ages too!

*Mrs Susan Stewart, Retired teacher, East Sussex*

This place provides a rare and valuable educational experience, for children and adults alike. My family have been visiting for many years. It is sad that others may not have the same opportunity.

*Kevin Parker, Engineer, Kent*

I'll always remember school trips to the OSC and can't imagine Eastbourne without the OSC adjacent on the historic site with grand telescopes and copper domes. It's a remarkable experience which can't be cut and pasted to a town hall or wherever.

*Mr Daniel Bell, Financial analyst, East Sussex*

One of the top space attractions in the UK. Brilliant educational facility to promote STEM. Volunteers are hugely knowledgeable and have done such a fantastic job in caring for this national historic site.

*Richard Severn FRAS, Nottinghamshire*

Please save this historical establishment. It's a historic facility which should be saved for future generations

*Rob Davies, Wales*

Because it is the observatory. Everybody knows it's there it's part of East Sussex heritage

*Cheryl Calver, East Sussex*

Wonderful learning tool for children

*Mrs McCartney, Retired, East Sussex*

This is an amazing place to teach our generation about the wonders of science, it has played a huge part in discovering aspects of our universe and is a great asset to our county

*Mrs Nancy Dickson-Fisher, Nurse, East Sussex*

My children, grandchildren and great grandchildren are lucky enough to live nearby they have all benefited from the wonderful educational trips they have made with their friends it would be such a shame if this didn't continue

*Mrs Lesley Pepper, East Sussex*

Whilst living in Sussex my two young children attended many educational events at the observatory. There are precious few facilities in the country for children wishing to learn, who are curious about their world, their environment, their universe. Herstmonceux Observatory is one such place and should be treasured, not abandoned.

In 2014, 1200 Brownies from the London and South East Region came to the Observatory Science Centre for the Big Brownie Birthday Star Quest. As well as going into the science centre and the domes, the car park area was used for other activities. It's hard to find places to host big events like that, especially where the attendees are primary aged children.

I also took my own Brownie unit on many occasions to the science centre, it's an exciting trip at a reasonable price and the centre understood our badge work so themed workshops accordingly.

*East Sussex Brownies*

Please don't end the tenure of the OSC at Herstmonceux. It's a historic site with beautiful buildings not found anywhere else, in a dark skies environment. It could not be fully replicable elsewhere, even if that were an affordable option. The site enriches East Sussex communities, socially, culturally and economically and is of national importance as a unique educational, historical and architectural treasure. Stephen Hawking studied here as a young man! When you visit the site, hear the tales and testimonies from the knowledgeable and dedicated staff, and see the beautifully restored observatories and telescopes, you really feel the awe of invention and discovery. Closure of the lease and the site would be a loss of national proportions and a blow to our scientific heritage.

*Philippa Mariani, Chief Executive, East Sussex*

We first took our son when he was 2 years old, and our twin daughters were only a year old when they went - but we visit a few times every year ever since. Our son is autistic, so the Science Centre is a trusted place we can all enjoy. He loves the different activities, the exhibitions. It's a safe, engaging place that we trust and love to visit. It feels a treat to spend time on a historic site.

*Mr Thomas Flood, East Sussex*

It is such an interesting and inspiring place to visit. The history behind the design and building of the site for the telescopes cannot be replicated. The domes and telescopes must be preserved and used in the space made for them. We have visited many times and enjoyed every moment.

*Mrs Rae Cecil, East Sussex*

The observatory has provided an incredible outing for every pupil that has passed through Southover Primary School in Lewes. The site ignites a passion in students for astronomy that is impossible to replicate in a classroom. The history, location and purpose of the Observatory Science Centre is too precious to lose.

*Anonymous, Southover Primary School, Lewes*

Spreading knowledge to this and subsequent generations can only be enhanced by the OSC remaining at this historically significant location.

*Mr Viv Cecil, Retired technical illustrator, East Sussex*

It is a historic site and a valuable asset for the local schools

The telescopes need to be protected

*Anonymous, Retired, East Sussex*

If the Observatory Science Centre moves to another site, it would not be possible to relocate the telescopes that are such a valuable asset to the Centre.

*Mrs. Angela Mitchell, Florist, East Sussex*

For use of the telescopes, the open evenings and a beautiful venue.

*Mrs Amy McGowan, East Sussex*

To move the site seems a ridiculous option when you consider the cost. The current location is perfect for access and the work undertaken to bring the centre up to its current high standards has been phenomenal. Where else could this site move to?!

*Penny Galitzine, Retired social worker, East Sussex*

My first job at the age of 13 (1976) was in the tea rooms at Royal Greenwich Observatory. I had a chance to learn about the Isaac Newton Telescope, Sun spots being studied using the smaller telescopes and the Atomic Clock. I was lucky to grow up with freedom to explore the castle grounds (Dad was the shepherd at Church farm) and learn about both the history of the area and the history of the observatory.

I also learnt about the weather and why the castle was originally chosen to be the location for the observatory. The sky is clear across the marshes and allows for greater time to use the telescopes. This was frequently proven when there was hardly any snow at my parents home Milland Cottages and there was about 6 inches at Battle where I worked.

*Mrs Karen Bain (Nee Brawn), Former employee Royal Greenwich Observatory (1976), East Sussex*

This is an amazing asset to the East Sussex community. I've spent brilliant days and evenings here and was able to share a love of space with my nephew. We will be devastated to lose this space. We do not have a space like this in Sussex otherwise.

*Mrs Charlotte Dowling, Teacher, East Sussex*

The instruments on the site have a lot of historic significance and the unique buildings are a snapshot in time of the history of astronomy.

*Richard Abraham, Retired, East Sussex*

There is a direct connection between the science centre and the works of the Observatory, the two compliment each other greatly. The inspiration I felt on my first visit over twenty years ago seeing the Domes, is still with me.

*James Pressdee, East Sussex*

Exceptional historic site for education purposes. Fun for children and adults alike. Great day out too!

*Fiona Cruise, East Sussex*

The Observatory Science Centre (OSC) is a valuable local resource. There is nothing comparable for miles around, and the OSC is an invaluable resource for the local community, for schools and particularly young people, to introduce them to the wonders of science and astronomy. To access anything similar would involve travelling further afield (indeed I am not sure whether anything comparable exists anywhere), and not everyone can afford the time or money involved in travelling such a distance. We are fortunate to enjoy dark skies in much of East Sussex, so the loss of the telescopes and observatory domes would be nothing short of tragic and a huge blow to the community.

*Alison Wilson, District Councillor, East Sussex*

Polegate School have brought year 1 pupils to the science centre every year for over 6 years now and it is one of the best local school trips we provide as a school. Such a fantastic opportunity for the children and they often mention it in year 6 as one of their fondest memories of their entire primary school experience.

*Anonymous, Polegate School, East Sussex*

It would be a great shame to lose this valuable educational and historical site.

*Ms Polyblank, Therapist, East Sussex*

I grew up in Herstmonceux and I learnt so much from the RGO that I am now able to pass onto my Grandchildren. So much history there and it needs to remain

*Mr Chris Elliott, Veterans Support, Buckinghamshire*

The views and open space they have to be able to observe the sky. It belongs there with the castle.

*Charlotte, NHS, East Sussex*

We as a supporting village use the science centre on a very regular occasion, it is used as a learning aid for children from all over England, it would be a very big loss in educating our children.

*Mrs Patricia Ann Hawkins, East Sussex*

The centre offers a fantastic local education facility in a great location. It needs to continue giving such a superb service to local people and visitors.

*John C, Reprographics Technician, East Sussex*

Brings Tourists to the area

*Mrs A Howard-Kilner, East Sussex*

Over the years I have brought many children to this centre. It is an amazing place and inspiring to many. We are so fortunate to have these amazing facilities near to our home. Please don't take it away!!

*Belinda Johnson, Retired, East Sussex*

This site shows how an interest in science can translate to real world applications. The site gives children a learning experience that grows with them, as they start visiting the science centre and get to see the ongoing experiences and knowledge that is available to them at the observatory.

*C. Stanbridge, East Sussex*

The centre is a major venue for exhibitions, lectures and educational programmes. The renovated telescopes provide a unique setting for the general public, schools, colleges, and brownie and scout groups to learn about science, space and the world around them

*Klara Bridge, East Sussex*

My own children enjoyed many visits to the OSC growing up. They loved all the interactive exhibits, the outdoor activities and seeing the domes and telescopes. We've also attended some of the stargazing evenings and the staff have always been so passionate and enthusiastic to share their knowledge. As a teacher previously, I've also taken several classes on school trips. The children always had a great time and learnt so much. To have such a gem nearby is fantastic and it would be devastating to lose this unique and historical site. I wonder how many of today's scientists were inspired by their visits to the OSC. Its contribution to our individual and collective scientific capital cannot be overestimated.

*Mrs Victoria Pritcher, Teacher, East Sussex*

This site is of great community, education and scientific importance.

*Mrs Donna Christman, Teacher, East Sussex*

This is an important site for the observatory which has been here for a long time. Provided employment for local people over the years.

*Anonymous, Academic, Northamptonshire*

The science centre is such an important establishment in inspiring young people to get into STEM. The exhibits are great but it just wouldn't be the same without its iconic location and telescopes.

*David Cooper, East Sussex*

To preserve the telescopes for future generations

*Mr Nigel Akehurst, Farmer, East Sussex*

Brings about so much life to the small village. I have been there multiple times throughout my childhood and also into adulthood. I went on school trips, which opened up my eyes into the science world through being able to play with equipment that was truly fascinating.

*Isobel Southouse, Local dairy farm worker, East Sussex*

A learning resource on our doorstep that would be very sad to lose.

*Mrs Gail Cockburn, East Sussex*



As a resident in Herstmonceux for the past 30+ years, the Science Centre, observatory and the entire castle estate has been a constant feature we have enjoyed during the upbringing of our son and with visiting friends and family. It is lovely to see the science centre facility so well used by visitors, every visit made that much more special by virtue of it being within the backdrop of the original observatory buildings. We also extensively use the castle and its wonderful grounds (owned by the same landlord as the science centre) for regular visits that offer us a peaceful and tranquil escape from the hullabaloo of life, so we see the castle together with the science centre and the grounds of the entire estate as an integral part of our local environment, and we are also mindful of the possibility that the landlord might be looking to sell on the whole estate once the current castle roof repairs are completed, with the risk that we will be denied access to this wonderful area and these facilities for which we, as local residents, feel a strong sense of ownership.

*Mr K C Eastaugh, East Sussex*

I took my son to the Science centre many times and he spent hours looking and playing with the exhibits whilst learning at the same time. It is a beautiful location and a great place for families to learn about science whilst having fun. It is a great asset to the local area.

*Mrs Christine Tilford, HR, East Sussex*

The Science Center is a magnet for you scientists to come together and hone their skills.

*Mrs. Julie-Anne Reid, Documentary Producer, East Sussex*

The Science centre is an excellent educational and fun facility which is local to us. My two children (6 and 3) love all the activities and the opportunity to see the telescopes, we have visited a number of times. If this closed we would have to travel up to London for a similar experience which is much more costly and takes a lot longer. Closing this site will be a huge loss to the community and surrounding communities.

*Michelle Mahoney, Secondary teacher of Maths, East Sussex*

When the RGO left the observatory in 1989 the telescopes and domes, and the entire site was left to decay. Queen's University did the local community in Herstmonceux and the wider global science community a great service in taking over the castle estate. Science Projects did a great service to the wider science and educational community in taking custodianship of the observatory. Since then most of the telescopes and domes have been restored to usable states and the site now hosts some 60,000 visitors a year. They visit because it is the observatory, they are inspired into science because it is the observatory.

*Jarvis N. Brand, FRAS, East Sussex*

The science centre should remain at the observatory as they need each other. It is due to many years of hard work and commitment of the staff at the observatory science centre that the telescopes are back up and running and the building has been saved from years of neglect. I fear for the future of the telescopes and the domes if the science centre were to leave. The unique location has inspired new generations of scientists that you wouldn't get from any other location.

*Mrs Zara Drake, East Sussex*

The OSC has been a fine custodian of the site over almost 30 years. Science education is their specialty, and is a perfect fit to the Astronomy and astrophysics heritage of these former RGO buildings and instruments. Despite operating on a tight budget, Science Projects has admirably preserved the site, introduced its history and explained its importance to thousands of visitors over the years. As a volunteer, I regularly witness the light in the eyes of those, many of them children, who visit the domes as a lifelong love of science is ignited. The site must continue to be open to the public for stargazing and to share its amazing legacy. The best way to ensure this is for the OSC to retain the lease.

*Ian Whiteley, Editor, East Sussex*

As a former member of staff, I've witnessed first hand how important the setting of the Observatory buildings is. The Science Centre is able to make STEM subjects meaningful and accessible, especially Astronomy, which can be a complete enigma to many people. I will never forget the first time I saw Saturn through a lens which had helped prove Einstein's General Theory of Relativity. I was 25, and had no idea about astronomical matters. Since then, I've heard so many exclamations of sheer wonder from visitors as they took their first peek through a telescope, it really brings the subject to life for those that may feel that science or astronomy are not subjects that they can get close to. This history of the site lives on in the dedicated team operating the telescopes on viewing evenings or taking the public on tours of the domes.

*Helen Weeks, East Sussex*

What is your reason for doing this ?

*Mr Gary J Ball, Stargazer, East Sussex*

This is a local attraction for our children to experience science.

*Mr Nigel Skilton, Retired, East Sussex*

It's for children scientific education

*Mrs Little, East Sussex*

Dark skies no light pollution

*Anonymous, Retired, East Sussex*

Nationally important site!

*Retired optical engineer, East Sussex*