

Arts & Crafts Centre Closure FAQs

Why are you extending the closure of the Centre?

The Centre was closed in March in response to the Covid 19 pandemic. In order to keep people safe, the Centre remains closed. The impact of Covid 19 measures including social distancing poses significant issues for the Arts & Crafts Centre as we cannot sustain the Centre without the full capacity of art maker income that underpins it. That means we cannot re-open the Centre for the **foreseeable future**. Closing the Arts & Crafts Centre wasn't a decision we wanted to make and it is not permanent. The Centre is a Henshaws facility run for the benefit of the community and without this decision we could have potentially lost the Centre permanently. We have looked at every possible funding opportunity and have had an appeal to develop and sustain the Centre which has not been fulfilled.

Will it affect staff?

The staff were the first to be informed and the formal consultation process with Arts & Crafts centre staff was started on June 9th with Unison in attendance. That process is ongoing.

Is the Arts & Crafts Centre closed for good?

We are considering options for what the future of the Centre will look like. Providing a safe and sustainable service will be at the heart of our decision making. You may send any feedback or suggestions to ACCclosure@henshaws.org.uk where we are collating both FAQs and ideas for the future shape of the Centre.

If banks, supermarkets and DIY stores can manage social distancing, why can't Henshaws? How is the College managing if Arts & Crafts can't?

We have been constantly reviewing Government advice on how to keep the Art Makers and staff safe. Considering the physical layout of the Centre, it would be impossible to segregate the number of Art Makers that we have and for them to travel to and from the Centre in safety. Any safety measures would severely reduce the number of Art Makers we could accommodate.

The college has 54% of its students attending. The rest are unable to attend as we do not have the room to accommodate them and maintain social distancing. The college is a regulated service, unlike the Arts & Crafts Centre, and so has different contractual responsibilities and is funded differently which meant we could stay open. Social distancing and all relevant risk assessments in line with government guidelines are in place.

Can I still visit the gardens/park my car?

The gardens are closed, but we have agreed to keep the car park open so the public can use it. We will introduce an honesty box for parking donations.

Have any grants or support been applied to from the government?

All possible financial avenues have been explored. Staff were supported through the Furlough scheme or are continuing to work either in the Centre or in other areas of the charity. Furlough payments received have allowed staff to continue to be paid. The Henshaws appeal has received donations which will help support some of the maintenance costs while the Centre is closed.

How has this situation arisen?

We cannot sustain the Centre without the full capacity of art maker income that underpins it. Even at full capacity we have relied on charitable donations and fundraising events to make ends meet and our fundraising has also been impacted by the pandemic. The Centre has always been subsidised by charitable funds. During the Covid period, these funds have also significantly dropped. Any decrease in Art Makers puts the Centre into a critical deficit. The changes in the Government Job Retention Scheme (furlough) mean that Henshaws, the charity, would be funding staff in waiting for a service which may or may not be able to return with a reduced number of Art Makers. So, it was with deep regret that we had to close the Centre for the foreseeable future.

Wasn't there a fundraising appeal to develop the Arts & Crafts Centre?

There had been plans and an appeal to develop the Centre and to provide sustainability going forward. The Arts & Crafts Centre appeal raised funds for on-going work and future development. This helped the Centre to continue and we are talking to institutional funders whose donations were restricted to the development.

Why don't you launch a fundraising appeal to save the Arts & Crafts Centre?

We have an urgent appeal in response to Covid 19 which is supporting work across the charity including maintenance costs of the Arts & Crafts Centre whilst it remains closed. We need a future funding model which is sustainable as well as being able to fundraise for extras.

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I pay privately to access Arts & Crafts services – why can't this continue?

There are not enough private funds to make the service sustainable. Dealing with the virus safely means that groups will not be able to meet as before. When reviewing the property arrangements and the staffing levels potentially needed at the Arts & Craft Centre, Henshaws cannot sustain the centre without the full capacity of art maker income that underpins it. Therefore, the Centre will not be able to re-open in the foreseeable future and not as before.

Will there be an alternative place I can go to for workshops with other people and professionals?

Where we can we will signpost you to any other services. We recognise Henshaws provided a unique service and we currently do not have an alternate suggestion.

What alternative activities will be available from Henshaws Arts & Crafts?

None can be delivered safely at the moment under current guidelines and restrictions; we are investigating digital options in the medium term.

Will there be a goodbye party when social distancing allows?

We do not need to say goodbye to the Arts & Crafts Centre. It is closing in its current form, but it will have a new future. We would also always prioritise safety in any gatherings of groups.

Is there anything parents can do to support the charity?

Parents can positively work with Henshaws to promote and define a new sustainable service operating under the guidelines that are expected. A survey will be available soon to input suggestions and feedback on workshops and how the structure of the new Centre looks.

Who will contact the Local Authority's on behalf of parents? Will social workers be informed?

Local authorities were contacted by Henshaws after the staff were told, then personal calls to parents and service users and volunteers were made. We are working with the host authority NYCC. Social workers were emailed on June 10th.

When can we expect a new service provision and what will it look like?

We don't know at the moment. Like for so many other organisations dealing with the current pandemic guidelines and the ongoing uncertainty, this is a changing situation. We are focusing on setting up a committee of key stakeholders, including the local authority, business, charity, parent representatives and others to develop a future vision and structure for the Centre. We will communicate what that looks like after we complete discussions with those parties. Any feedback or input is welcome through the email ACCclosure@henshaws.org.uk and will be brought to the committee.

What are the timescales for the new Centre to be re-opened? What are you thinking to provide?

We don't know at this stage, this will be considered as part of ongoing discussions and in line with a model that meets both safety, financial sustainability and a quality developmental service for users. The intention is to re-open the Centre but with a broader offer and with a model that doesn't rely on external funding.

Will it have the same workshops? Will it still be four days a week? Would it still be 9 – 4 when it re-opens?

We don't know at this stage; these things will be considered as part of ongoing discussions.

Could you keep in regular contact with us regarding this?

There is the ACCclosure@Henshaws.org.uk email you can use to ask questions and you can see updates on the Arts & Crafts Facebook page. The turnaround for email responses is about a week with current resourcing. A survey will be available soon to input suggestions and feedback on workshops and how the structure of the new Centre looks.