

# SAVE LEICESTER ADULT EDUCATION COLLEGE!

You don't need to be Sherlock Holmes to figure out that something rotten is going on at Leicester Adult Education College. With job losses; staff being re-located; skilled people disappearing; restructuring, with staff having to do more than one job; people who've left not being replaced... it all adds up to one thing - Leicester Adult Education College is being set up to fail.

## The Incredible Shrinking College

We've seen courses being streamlined, other courses disappearing. We've already seen the closure and privatisation of the Creative Writing School. The Art Department is visibly shrinking with the loss of one of its three rooms, and now the loss of yet another.

## Saatchi & Saatchi, it isn't!

Courses are not being advertised well; the website was down for ages and has only recently been working again; students were receiving prospectuses late; people have been turned away from art courses when spaces were available; removal of the art display in reception, with bizarre reasons for this given... the list goes on.

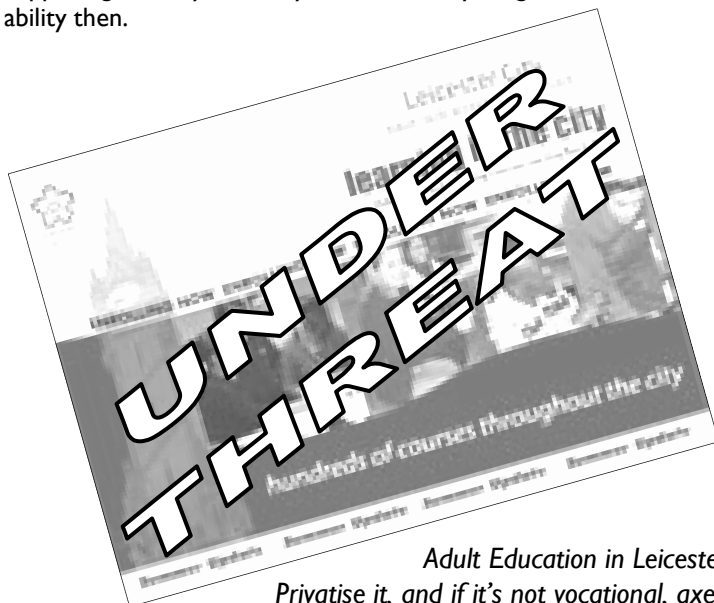
## It's good to talk

Management don't seem to be particularly hot on their communication skills. But it's obvious to anyone with an ounce of sense that the College is being wound down and made ready for closure - either that, or we're witnessing wholesale vandalism on the part of management. But has management actually taken the trouble to inform anyone of what's happening and why? The answer is a resounding no!

## As for public accountability...

Leicester Adult Education College is a public institution and a public building, belonging to Leicester City Council. In other words, it's partly financed by your Council Tax payments. Because of this, you'd expect a degree of public accountability.

So, just who's been informed of what's happening at the college? Have there been any public consultation? No. Have staff been consulted? No. Have those trade unions party to recognition agreements been consulted? No. Have students and college users been consulted? No. In fact, student reps are ignored. Are local councillors aware of what's happening? If they are, they've not said anything. So much for accountability then.



*Adult Education in Leicester...  
Privatise it, and if it's not vocational, axe it!*

## STOP PRESS...

Finally on 17 March, staff receive an email from Head of Adult Skills and Learning, Chris Minter, who is "pleased to announce" certain details of the privatisation of Leicester Adult Education College.

Minter tells us that this is "an exciting new opportunity to diversify the use of the college's facilities and income streams and will provide an excellent resource that fits well with our strategic priorities around employability." In this new multi-agency initiative, Highcross Development Employment Hub is IN, Art and Design is OUT! Art and Design staff will be moved to inappropriate accommodation, some of these workers may well lose their jobs. So, non-vocational education gets the boot, while the kind of jobs training and advice which can be placed literally anywhere in the city gets prime position at the college.

We repeat, there has been zero consultation on this, and Minter's email is an announcement of a done deal. In fact, the first some staff heard about this was when they were given two days notice to pack up their things for a move to Holy Cross. Students and college users have still not been informed of these plans either.

# So what's it all about?

As management are so reluctant to inform anybody about what the hell they're up to, we can only speculate.

- Why all the secrecy? If it's for the public good, why isn't management being more transparent with their plans? Why all the ducking and diving?
- Could it be that the college premises on Wellington Street is worth a load of money to the council, who just want to discretely sell it off with the minimum of public fuss?
- Is adult education being privatised? "Partnership" is being touted as the way forward with other non-adult education agencies now being moved into Wellington Street. We suspect this may be quite a lucrative venture for the council.
- What's actually going to happen with the building? Will there be any actual adult education courses or will they all be shifted elsewhere?

Talking of being shifted elsewhere, art courses are being relocated to Holy Cross church with a view to eventually moving them to New Walk Museum. This move presents a serious health and safety risk, as the tutors are women on their own who will be working in a building where anybody can just wander in. No security will be provided. No first aider will be present either. Also, there'll be no disability access. While current learners have been accommodated, it will mean discrimination against new learners, who will have to be turned away.

We have no argument with the new "partners" who are taking over the space, but we realise they are not involved in adult education. Moreover, as they are offering advice services and used to operate from a unit in the shires, they can go anywhere and don't actually need to be in a college, nor do they need as much space.

## Stop the rot!

Whatever the reasons for all these changes, it's clear to us that Leicester Adult Education College is being closed on the quiet. It is our intention to put a stop to this.

The IWW union represents various workers at Leicester Adult Education College, who all say enough is enough. This leaflet is the first step in organising a public campaign to fight the closure of the college. We already have the support of other IWW education branches, the Leicestershire general branch and the wider IWW.

Our union has real experience in saving colleges from closure. The IWW recently spearheaded the fight against the closure of the Crichton Campus in Dumfries... **and we won!**

**We call upon members of other trade unions, students and the general public to back us in saving jobs and saving the college. So get involved, join the campaign!**

## PUBLIC MEETING

SAVE LEICESTER ADULT EDUCATION COLLEGE!

STOP THE PRIVATISATION OF ADULT EDUCATION AND SAVE JOBS!

7.00pm on Wednesday 9<sup>th</sup> April

at Leicester Secular Hall

75 Humberstone Gate, Leicester LE1

(Opposite Sainsbury's)

## EVERYONE WELCOME!

*Organised jointly by Industrial Workers of the World LAEC job branch 620, Leicester general members' branch of the IWW, UCU members and other staff at LAEC.*

Contact: **IWW, Unit 107, 40 Halford Street, Leicester LE1 1TQ**  
Tel: **07981 433 637** Email: **laec\_campaign@iww.org.uk** Website: **www.iww.org.uk**

