



The Midhurst Society

Charity number 268565

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01730-815238

Copy of email sent to the Charities Commission on **3 August 2019**:

Dear Sirs,

Dunford House, Heyshott, Midhurst
Ref 0863472

It is a difficult task, running a charity. I know from my own experience (with The Midhurst Society) that sometimes principles are compromised for the greater good in the longer term.

However, I was disappointed to hear that the YMCA has accepted a commercial offer for Dunford House. Over 60 years ago, the Cobden family entrusted the estate to the YMCA to preserve Richard Cobden's name and legacy. If the YMCA has found that it can no longer honour the pledge made at the time it would seem fitting and proper that the estate be handed back to the family.

The memory of Richard Cobden deserves to be preserved. The YMCA does valuable work, and no doubt the proceeds of a commercial sale would be put to good use. But this is one time, surely, that the bigger picture needs to be examined. By handing back what remains of the estate (parts have already been sold off, for commercial gain) the YMCA would be ensuring an honourable end to their custodianship.

NCVO, in addressing the question of ethics, state:

"All charities should proactively champion ethical behaviour and reflect and apply their charitable values in any activity they undertake, in addition to meeting their legal and regulatory requirements."

In times of stress individuals and nations tend to revert to insularity and protectionism. The Cobden Monument, just outside Midhurst, proclaims: "Free Trade, Peace, Goodwill among Nations". This is not just a nineteenth century and obsolete curiosity; it is a message for today and for future generations. In the hands of the Cobden family and local supporters Dunford House could become a beacon of enlightenment. It would be a scandal if this unique building became just another hotel, conference centre, or block of apartments.

<https://www.midhurstsociety.org.uk/>
<https://www.facebook.com/themidhurstsociety/>

On behalf of The Midhurst Society, which represents the views of many of the residents of the town and surrounding parishes, I urge you to intercede in this matter and demonstrate that all charities, whilst maximising financial benefit for their good causes, are also obliged to operate in an ethical manner. Dunford House should be handed back to the Cobden family.

Sincerely

Harvey Tordoff
The Midhurst Society

"Making Midhurst a better place to live, work and enjoy"