

Outrage over Rose Garden Cafe Job Loss

Sheffield City Council has been accused of being “disgraceful and reprehensible” towards workers at the Rose Garden Cafe in Graves Park, which was closed last July because of safety fears.

Employees were given just 15 minutes to leave the cafe after it was condemned as structurally unsafe, and 12 workers suddenly lost their jobs, but the city council said it cannot help them because they were employed by an agency, rather than directly by the council.

Andy Kershaw, the co-chair of the Save the Rose Garden Cafe Campaign, said: “That action was disgraceful and reprehensible, we don't want to see any repetition of that kind of behaviour ever again in Sheffield.

“We're in the cost of living crisis and jobs don't come automatically or easily. That's no excuse for suddenly making people unemployed within 15 minutes, that was unforgivable.

“We were very angry about that, the majority of them struggled to find alternative employment.

“But the council had apologised for doing that. They knew they were wrong in doing it.”

He added there was very poor communication between the city council and the community.

Sheffield City Council has not replied to Mr Kershaw's comments yet.



*Andy Kershaw (Right) in a meeting with councillors
Source: Zhaona Li*

The criticism comes as the city council is working to develop a partnership with the Rose Garden Cafe to reopen the building.

Mr Kershaw said the purpose of this partnership is to explore and restore the café for less than the £1.79 million proposed by the City Council for a full refurbishment of the café.

“We hope this partnership will be a new departure, a new venture for the council in working in collaboration with the council, and I find it quite refreshing that they are willing to do that.

“We will take them on trust until such time as they abuse that trust, or we realise and recognize that we can’t trust them, then we’ll walk away from it,” Mr Kershaw added.

Councillor Mohammed Mahroof, Chair of the Audit and Standards Committee, said: “We are fully aware of their displeasure as local councillors for that area. We’ve been campaigning for a very long time to have that retained. We are equally frustrated by the whole process.”

He added that various meetings will be held with the Sheffield City Council and campaigners in the next few weeks.