



The purpose of this Report is to inform Members of the current stage of the negotiations around the Lease for the site.

No. DETAILS

1) BACKGROUND

- a) As Members are aware, the Town Council currently manages the site under a Tenancy at Will from the Isle of Wight Council.
- b) The purchase of the old St Boniface School building by St Catherine's School prompted its interest in retaining management of the area around the surfaced games area.
- c) In February last year very co-operative meetings with Tony Flower from the School's Trustees readily arrived at agreement for St Catherine's School to lease part of the site as a games area for their use during school hours, initially for a period of two years with an option to extend to 125 years, with the assistance of the Isle of Wight Council's Senior Surveyor Andrea Jenkins.
- d) Part of that agreement included the School's willingness to allow the Town Council to continue to use the main's electricity supply point on the School's premises and fed through the tunnel..
- e) Subsequent discussions have resulted in the Isle of Wight Council offering only a 35-year lease to both the Town Council and the School without the right to renew.
- f) Tony Flower informed the Town Council that the School were not willing to proceed on that basis and added that it would not continue the provision of the electricity supply to the Fields if the Isle of Wight Council refused to agree the right to renew.
- g) A letter from the Town Council requesting clarification about the proposed withdrawal of the electricity supply was sent to the Chair of the School's Trustees on 27 April and a reply has been received dated 28 May; a copy is attached to this Report.

2) THE ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL

- a) Discussions with the Isle of Wight Council have resulted in agreement that the Town Council will be offered a 35-year lease for the whole site without the right to renew and without a guarantee of an electricity supply.
- b) New Heads of Terms will be provided for the Town Council's consideration as soon as the Isle of Wight Council has concluded the Section 77 process that is required to have the Department for Education's permission to release the top field's classification as a school playing field.

3) ST CATHERINE'S SCHOOL

- a) The outstanding matter is the electricity supply to the Fields.
- b) Currently the supply comes from a main cable located in the School's external area where it is split between two meters – one for the school and the other for the Fields - with the Town Council having an established account for the meter recording usage on the Fields.
- c) In view of the communication from the School's Trustee Tony Flower in section 1(f) above the Town Council requested a quotation for the installation of a separate mains' supply and that came in at £10,994.
- d) This cost can be avoided by an agreement between the School and the Town Council to retain the existing arrangements.
- e) A letter to the Chair of the School's Trustees of 29 May – a copy is attached to this Report – requests a virtual meeting with the Trustees to discuss the matter directly.

4) RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to consider if what, if any, further action it wishes to take at this stage.



St Catherine's

Together a voice, a future

David Bartlett
Town Clerk
Ventnor Town Council
1 Salisbury Gardens
Dudley Road
Ventnor
Isle of Wight
PO38 1EJ

28th May 2020

Dear David

Thank you for your letter of April 27th and apologies for the delay in my reply. I was keen that the issues you raised were discussed fully by all our Trustees but unfortunately the current situation resulted in us having to re-schedule virtual board meetings.

The Trustees discussed the matter in some detail at the full board meeting. The following points were agreed:

- The site is in poor condition and would require considerable investment to bring it up to a standard suitable for both student and community use
- In order to secure the grants necessary to fund the project, we would need a 125 year lease on a peppercorn rent directly from the IoW Council; this would be protected by the 1954 Landlord and Tenants Act

As the School and College do not have the resources to fund the project without grants, this is the only way the Trustees are prepared to proceed. We will therefore be in contact with the IoW Council to discuss the situation further.

If the Council are unwilling to offer the 125 year lease, Trustees were of a view that we will not proceed any further to secure a lease on the land. We would, of course, then arrange in a timely manner for Ventnor Town Council to set up its own electricity supply.

I hope this clarifies the situation.

With best wishes

Elizabeth Bowen
Chair of Trustees

"Our aim is to support and enable our children and young people to achieve more than they ever thought possible."



VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL



1 Salisbury Gardens, Dudley Road, Ventnor, Isle of Wight PO38 1EJ

Elizabeth Bowen
Chair of the Board
St Catherine's
Grove Road
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Isle of Wight PO38 1TT

29 May 2020

Dear Elizabeth

As indicated in our letter to you of 27 April it is important for us to complete the lease arrangement with the Isle of Wight Council for our use of Boniface Fields

The only outstanding matter in those discussions is an assurance of an ongoing electricity supply to the fields.

In discussion of this at a meeting this week our Mayor, Stewart Blackmore, suggested that a virtual meeting – that we can arrange – might facilitate progress. His suggestion is that he, one of his colleagues and I meet with you and other members of your Board.

The very positive relationship with your School has always been important to us, as recently reflected in the visit of your then Acting Principal and Project Manager to our October Town Council Meeting; I've attached the Minutes of that meeting for your information.

Meanwhile I'm available anytime on 07720 771114 if a phone call would be helpful.

Best wishes

David Bartlett
Town Clerk