



The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the latest available information on the future of the Coastal Centre/Salisbury Gardens.

**No. DETAIL**

---

**1) INTRODUCTION**

- a) The Town Council formally nominated Salisbury Gardens as an Asset of Community Value under the Community Right to Bid on 7 January 2013. The Isle of Wight Council's policy for dealing with such nominations requires a decision to be made within 8 weeks of their receipt of it.
  - b) At the annual meeting of the town's voluntary and community sector, the Town Council launched a major consultation with residents on its proposal to seek to retain Salisbury Gardens in a situation where the Leader of the Council had declared that it was to be sold to the highest bidder.
  - c) This report provides updates on both of these developments.
- 

**2) ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE?**

- a) A letter from the Isle of Wight Council's Strategic Manager Economy, Tourism & Events, Ashley Curzon, dated 4 March 2013, the Town Council was informed that the application had been unsuccessful.
  - b) The reasons given for the decision are:
    - o *The previous use does not qualify as being of community value or facilitate/further social wellbeing*
    - o *The proposed use does not qualify as being of community value or facilitate/further social wellbeing*
  - c) The letter is attached for information.
  - d) Also attached is the Nomination itself, following the only guidance made available by the Isle of Wight Council.
- 

**3) CONSULTATION**

- a) There were three clear routes for people to respond to the consultation: a reply paid card inside the Briefing Paper on the choice and delivered on a door-to-door basis, a petition form and a section of the web site.
- b) The numbers of people who had signed up to support for the Town Council's commitment to retain Salisbury Gardens for the benefit of the town as at 13 March were:

<i>Route</i>	<i>Numbers</i>
<i>Reply paid cards</i>	<i>1,110</i>
<i>Petitions</i>	<i>480</i>
<i>Web site contributions</i>	<i>35</i>
<b><i>Total</i></b>	<b><i>1,625</i></b>

- c) Of the 1,625 total, 1,454 were from a PO38 postcode and 1,387 from Ventnor, 28% of the town's electorate.
-

---

d) The comments of the 35 contributors to the consultation are attached to this report.

---

**4) RESPONSE**

- a) Given the strength of the case in the Nomination and the clear evidence of the town's support, the Town Council will need to consider its response carefully.
  - b) As the letter from the Isle of Wight Council states, there is no right of appeal provided by the Localism Act, but it is clearly unacceptable that, given the spirit of the Act and the democratic nature of our society, the Isle of Wight Council should be able to reject such a strong case on the basis of its own decision-making without challenge.
  - c) The Town Council will, therefore, discuss and determine its response in the private agenda item for this Meeting.
-

11 MAR 2013

Directorate of Economy and Environment  
Director of Economy and Environment  
Stuart Love

Ventnor Town Council  
The Coastal Centre  
Dudley Road  
Ventnor  
Isle of Wight  
PO38 1EJ

From

**Ashley Curzon**

Strategic Manager, Economy, Tourism and Events,  
Isle of Wight Council, County Hall, Newport, Isle of  
Wight PO30 1UD

Tel (01983) 821000  
Fax (01983) 823699  
Email [ashley.curzon@iow.gov.uk](mailto:ashley.curzon@iow.gov.uk)  
DX 56361 Newport (Isle of Wight)  
Web [www.iwight.com](http://www.iwight.com)

Our Ref: 6C25-007423  
Your Ref:

4<sup>th</sup> March 2013

Dear Sirs,

**Community Right to Bid- application CRTB / BC / 0003 WM, received 7<sup>th</sup> January 2013 in regard to Coastal Centre, Salisbury Gardens, Dudley Road, Ventnor**

I write to inform you that the Council has come to a decision regarding your application to nominate the above named land or building as an Asset of Community Value.

Your application has been **unsuccessful**.

The result of this unsuccessful application is that the building will be placed on the list of "Unsuccessful Nominations as an Asset of Community Value". The property will remain on the list for 5 years, at the end of the 5 year period the property will be removed from the list and the council will notify you in writing that the property has been removed. If you believe that the reason(s) that this application was unsuccessful are no longer applicable once the property has been removed from the list, another application may be submitted.

The reason(s) for the decision are as follows:

The panel has concluded that:

- The previous use does not qualify as being of community value or facilitate/further social wellbeing
- The proposed use does not qualify as being of community value or facilitate/further social wellbeing

The Localism Act, the legislation under which the Community Right to Bid has been created, does not provide for any appeals in relation to unsuccessful nominations, the decision of the panel is final.

If you have any queries please contact Will Minton, Legal Services on 01983 821000 or email [william.minton@iow.gov.uk](mailto:william.minton@iow.gov.uk).

Yours faithfully,



Ashley Curzon  
Strategic Manager, Economy, Tourism and Events  
For Director of Economy and Environment



# VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

---

## NOMINATION FOR LISTING AS AN ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE

---

COASTAL CENTRE (AKA SALISBURY GARDENS)

28 NOVEMBER 2012

---

**1) A DESCRIPTION OF THE NOMINATED LAND OR BUILDING INCLUDING ITS PROPOSED BOUNDARIES INCLUDING A LOCATION PLAN.**

- a) The asset is the land and building locally known as Salisbury Gardens on the southern side and western end of Ventnor's Dudley Road.
- b) The Land Registry documentation, including the location plan, is attached with this nomination.

**2) THE ADDRESS OF THE ASSET BEING NOMINATED INCLUDING POSTCODE**

- a) The postal address is: The Coastal Centre, Dudley Road, Ventnor, Isle of Wight
- b) Its postcode is P038 1EJ.

**3) NAMES AND ADDRESSES OF THE EXISTING OCCUPANTS OF THE ASSET (IF RELEVANT) AND OF ALL THOSE HOLDING A FREEHOLD (OWNERSHIP) OR LEASHOLD INTEREST IN THE ASSET**

- a) The current occupants of the building are the Coastal Management Team of the Isle of Wight Council and Ventnor Town Council, both using the address and postcode in 2) above.
- b) The freehold, according to the Land Registry documentation, was registered to the Isle of Wight Council on 27 November 2008.
- c) Ventnor Town Council has an interest in the asset based on the fact that the last transfer for value was the purchase by VUDC in 1945.

**4) EVIDENCE THAT THE LOCAL GROUP MAKING THE NOMINATION IS ELIGIBLE TO DO SO UNDER THE TERMS OF THIS POLICY**

As a Town Council this nominating body is eligible to make this nomination under the provisions of the Community Right to Bid.

**5) A WRITTEN STATEMENT AND SUPPORTING EVIDENCE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE ASSET IS OF COMMUNITY VALUE: PAST & PRESENT**

- a) The building has been primarily used as the base for public services since its purchase by Ventnor Urban District Council in 1945. Initially by that Council until 1 April 1974 and then by South Wight Council until 1 April 1995, followed by the Isle of Wight Council until the present day.
- b) The Isle of Wight Council opened the building in 1998 as the Isle of Wight Coastal Visitors Centre *to provide coastal learning opportunities for the local community and visitors to the Isle of Wight* with an education programme of 11 courses designed for levels of the national curriculum

- 
- c) The Isle of Wight Council secured a Heritage Lottery Grant in a total of £49,900 for a project to *focus on interpreting the physical, social and cultural history of the Isle of Wight coastline, its fragile nature and how residents and visitors can all help to enjoy, celebrate and preserve the heritage.*
  - d) Although the Visitor Centre became restricted to an appointment only basis from September 2010, its external signage continues to brand the building conspicuously as the Coastal Visitors Centre.
  - e) The building was used as the base for the Isle of Wight Council's Rights of Way Team from 2004-2012.
  - f) It also housed the voluntary organisation, the Isle of Wight Natural History Association from 2006-2011.
  - g) Ventnor Town Council has rented offices in the building February 2011.

**6) A WRITTEN STATEMENT AND SUPPORTING EVIDENCE TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE ASSET IS OF COMMUNITY VALUE: FUTURE USE**

- a) Ventnor Town Council has two prospective uses for the future development of the building providing ongoing and sustainable services for the local community.
  - b) The first is the already fully developed proposal for the building to become an Enterprise Hub for business start-ups in the creative industries and other office based activities that has secured the positive support of all the major relevant partners:
    - o Job Centre Plus
    - o Chamber of Commerce
    - o Isle of Wight College
    - o Isle of Wight Council's Adult & Community Learning Service
    - o Chair of the Island's Employment & Skills Board.
  - c) A copy of the Draft Business Plan for that development is enclosed with this.
  - d) The second, following from a recent discussion with the Isle of Wight Council's Chief Executive and Deputy Director Economy and Tourism, would be based on a rehousing of several existing local services including:
    - o Ventnor Library
    - o Ventnor Youth Centre,
    - o NHS teams
    - o Police.
  - e) The accommodation needs of these services would leave some rooms for the business start-up and office services development envisaged in the initial scheme.
-



# VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL



SALISBURY GARDENS WEB SITE CONSULTATION RESPONSES

@ 13 MARCH 2013

- Historically the building belongs to Ventnor and going forward should be brought back under the control of Ventnor Town Council and used to serve the community. David Pugh's plan to flog it off so that some developers can make a load of cash and the main council chiefs can bolster their coffers is nothing less than revolting.
- I believe the coastal centre should be made available for community use and the educational element of the building maintained. It is an important part of tourism to show issues relating to coastal management and is also a way of attracting research from all over the world.
- This really is scandalous behaviour by David Pugh. The VTC has proceeded correctly, secured support and funding for their application but David Pugh has ignored you and deliberately caused delay so that he can rush into a sale. I hope that our two County Councillors are working on it too. Well done VTC and good luck with your campaign.
- If a local council has the political will, drive, funds, skills and expertise to take on a building to turn it into a thriving community hub, then it should do so and be given all the support possible from the principal authority. If other buildings in the town can be sold for £1 to make them into thriving businesses then the same should apply to the coastal centre. Salisbury Gardens belongs to Ventnor, please make sure it continues to do so.
- I have received the Consultation Document produced by Ventnor Town Council. There appear to be a number of options available to increase the usage of the building and these should be tried before any sale. Previous generations on Ventnor UDC bought the building and I think we owe it to them to try and find a good Community use for it now.
- We have got to start taking control of our local facilities and not let the Isle of Wight Council sell anything they can get their hands on ... I am fully behind the Town Council's efforts to try and acquire this building for the local people of Ventnor.
- We believe that Salisbury Gardens should be kept for the use of the people of Ventnor. It is a lovely building in a great position, and should not be given up without a fight, especially as the people of Ventnor were the last ones to purchase the property!
- I would like to support the retention of Salisbury Gardens as a community hub and resource especially in regard to the housing and support to business start-ups - vital to the Town's regeneration.
- He must be stopped from putting the sale of the Salisbury Gardens in the open market
- I am a born and bred Ventnor person, and I object in very strong terms to the arrogant behaviour of the IW Council, regarding this matter. Salisbury Gardens has been an integral part of the Town forever. In my knowledge it's been a Council Office a doctor's surgery, the Coastal centre and Offices. Morally the building belongs to the people of Ventnor and to that part I support the Building being used as a Business and Arts centre, indeed a better use could not be found. It would be good to have a IWC contact point there and to use the lower floor as a gallery and coffee shop.
- 1. The people of Ventnor originally purchased this building through their rates.
  2. The IOWC inherited the building via South Wight Borough Council and paid nothing for it. I feel that it is their duty to safeguard this remaining building (The Winter Gardens and the Town Hall have been dispensed with).
  3. Most other towns on the Island have retained at least one building for public use.
  4. The IOWC sold our Winter Gardens, following years of their neglect, for 1p to a businessman, but at the same time they seem to be refusing to allow our Town Council a chance to take The Coastal Centre on for the benefit of the town, even it seems, at a proper price or lease.Good luck VTC in your efforts, and shame on Mr. Pugh and his chums for hindrance in this matter!
- I fully support Ventnor Town Council's campaign to retain the Coastal Visitor Centre building and its green as a hub for the town and a community resource. Please add my name to your petition
- Salisbury Gardens belongs to Ventnor, please make sure it continues to do so. Thank You.
- I hope that this community building and land is saved it is essential to our children of Ventnor!!
- It seems to me madness to let such an asset go for a short term financial gain, or saving, when properly managed this site could be run at a profit for the good of all. From your leaflet the decision to place this on

the market ASAP seems pretty autocratic to me, with no attempt at discussion or willingness to at least listen to an alternative rather than outright sale for a 'significant capital receipt'. I assume this process is legal? I guess it's all about money now and not about people, the Ventnor area, in my humble opinion, is crying out for investment, job opportunities, local facilities, training opportunities, visitor attractions, this site is an ideal location and indeed could be multi-functional.

- Ventnor Council should be allowed to retain this building and green space for the community. It is a unique spot and could provide an excellent community space to be enjoyed by residents and tourists alike.
- The Isle of Wight Council has a duty to maximize the value of assets held on behalf of its taxpayers. It is not clear to me how selling the Coastal Centre outright to a private buyer will achieve that. A cash receipt of £400k would compare very unfavourably with the £2m net gain that a private developer would likely achieve from a conversion of the building into apartments for sale. This needs also to be set against the potential income to Ventnor that conversion of this building as a community and visitor hub for the entire Undercliff might yield. The arrogance and defensiveness of the IOW Council on this issue is cause for very serious concern.
- We run a guest house and over the years have had many customers who have stayed with us because they could easily access the visitor centre and would do so again if local projects such as the environmental studies that were carried out there, were to start again. We have been involved in a number of community projects and agree it would be better if these could be housed together to enhance communication and sharing of resources. We have been staunch supporters of the many activities that have taken place on the gardens and at the visitor centre over the years and would be keen supporters of the new initiative to bring all these together under one roof. We have some understanding of the value of particular buildings and their potential usages and having taken a look at the St Boniface school. It would seem to us that this would be a much more attractive site for potential developers because of its ease of conversion.
- Towns across the country, resources are under severe strain and cuts abound. We understand the issues but in a way that is the very reason it important to retain the building and use it for the people of Ventnor. It is owned by them and should be developed for their benefit and not to support the short-termist attitude that is prevalent everywhere right now. The last thing we need is an unsustainable commercial development and more car parking spaces!
- I am a property owner and council tax payer in Ventnor and a regular monthly visitor to the town which has become an important part of my family's life. My family and I are firm supporters of the idea of Salisbury Gardens being a civic hub for Ventnor and agree with all the town councils suggestions about it various uses. I would say that the new centre could include a new dental practice as part of NHS services as the other ones in Ventnor are closed to new patients.
- I fully support Ventnor Town Council retaining this building - the IWC has sold off enough properties.
- I feel strongly that the IWCC is ignoring the wishes of the Town Council and its residents, in wishing to retain Salisbury Gardens as a community asset of Ventnor. The building was originally purchased by Ventnor and the IWCC only gained it through local government reorganisation. If the IWCC can sell off the Winter Gardens for a nominal sum and lease the Botanic Gardens to commercial interests, then it should give priority to letting Ventnor Town Council regain ownership of Salisbury Gardens, preferably at an advantageous price.
- I totally agree with what Ventnor Town Council would like to do with Salisbury Gardens: I think it should stay as part of Ventnor and be put to good use supported by Job Centre Plus, Southern Housing, Isle of Wight College and Isle of Wight learning service. I like the idea of the library possibly being relocated here with lots of local help being all under one roof, easy for all to find. The ideas and possibilities for this building are endless; don't let Mr Pugh get his hands on it!
- I completely agree with Ventnor Council's proposals for Salisbury Gardens. All of the facilities are very much required, and the iconic building should not be lost as an asset of all the council tax payers in Ventnor. If the Isle of Wight council require more funds for essential projects, they should be truthful with voters and increase council tax.
- This building should be retained, so that the library, local offices and the Health Clinic would be in one central part of town with car parking in Dudley Road. The use of St Boniface School site is impractical as it is on the edge of the town and no parking facilities. David Pugh is only interested in making money for the Island Council, which would be squandered in other areas. Fight to retain this building for Ventnor!!
- Is the Isle of Wight Council jealous of Ventnor's history and beauty? They certainly seem to be. First of all they close our beloved Winter Gardens and allow it to become derelict, having turned down local applications to revitalise it. Now they want to sell Salisbury Gardens while ignoring our town's rights over the property and local people's plans for its future use. We're behind you, Ventnor Town Council - fight for it!
- The Coastal Centre and Salisbury Gardens should not be sold off, but should be used as an important resource for the town including a relocated library, community use and startup business opportunities. It would be a vile travesty

of local government if the Isle of Wight Council were to sell this property to raise money for its cash-strapped budget; a short-term measure that could never be reversed when the economy grows once again.

- I find the desire to sell this property unacceptable, and the fact the money will be used ELSEWHERE on the Island is ABSOLUTELY DISGUSTING. If the property is sold for any reason then the money raised from it should be put back in to Ventnor to improve the town for its residents and to increase tourism in this town for the benefit of the local residents. If other places on the island want to benefit from such a sum of money then they should sell something of their own. Isle of Wight Council Leader David Pugh is out of line and should have no further say in anything on the Island.
- I find it difficult to be concerned about selling off this building as I have never entered it myself or met anyone who has. It is probably expensive to run and should not be a drain on the taxpayer. It is a shame we were not so concerned about other buildings that have been sold off with locals not benefitting from these sales; the list is too long to mention here.
- I write to fully support your decision to try to obtain this building for the benefit of Ventnor. Another block of flats we do not need! This strategically placed building with its interesting history should part of the town's future. That the Isle of Wight Council should treat Ventnor in such a cavalier fashion should not come as a surprise. It seems Ventnor is never at the top of their list of priorities. As for the green in front of the building, what an inspiring site this is with its wide ranging town and coastal views. Let us keep it this way! I hope you are successful in gaining ownership of this important building.