



PEDESTRIANISATION CONSULTATION

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 24/18

12 MARCH 2018

The purpose of this paper is to outline the proposed arrangements for the consultations on the potential for pedestrianising part of the High Street as an element of the town's Regeneration programme.

No. DETAILS

1) BACKGROUND

- a) The Town Centre was one of the four areas of the town that were included in the Town Council's Regeneration Plan as agreed by Minute 70/17 of its meeting of 10 July 2017 and based on Report 48/17 for it.
 - b) That Minute also released £2,000 for the development of the Regeneration Plan.
 - c) The potential for the pedestrianisation of the main trading area of the High Street was featured in the second half of the Annual Budget Consultation Meeting of 29 January 2018 attended by around 130 residents.
 - d) The Mayor, in closing that session, said clearly that this was the start of a conversation that would last for months as the potential was explored in detail with specific consultations with all the town's stakeholders being held probably in April.
 - e) This Report provides a framework for those consultations on the basis of the outline for them agreed at the Community Development Working Group meeting of 22 February.
 - f) A meeting of the Mayor, Community Development Officer, Economic Development Officer, Assistant Clerk and Clerk on 6 March developed the proposals to the level of detail as set out in the following paragraphs of this Report.
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2) RESIDENTS

- a) It is proposed to arrange four meetings for local residents on a Ward basis with Ventnor East and West being combined into one meeting in a central location.
 - b) The Lowtherville, St Lawrence and Bonchurch Ward meetings will be arranged in community buildings local to each.
 - c) The Mayor and lead staff team will attend all four meetings along with the relevant Ward Councillors with each being held on a separate early evening with a 6pm start in the week commencing 23 April.
 - d) A fifth meeting will be arranged specifically for those residents living the flats above the shops in the area of the High Street for which pedestrianisation is being considered.
 - e) This will be arranged as a drop in between 10am-12 noon and 5pm-7pm at the Baptist Church by personal invitation for all adults, with children being welcome at it, living in that area in the week commencing 16 April.
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3) BUSINESSES

- a) It is proposed to arrange four meetings representing the areas of business and service activity in the week commencing 30 April.
 - b) The meetings for Retail businesses in the town centre, Esplanade businesses, Hospitality providers in the town centre and Professional services will be arranged on separate evenings at 6pm in local venues with timing variations by agreement to suit trading responsibilities.
 - c) There will be a fifth meeting arranged directly with the town's providers of taxi services.
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4) LANDLORDS

- a) Landlords will be contacted in the first instance by post rather than through an arranged meeting, although the option of a meeting being arranged will be one of the items to which
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they will be invited to respond.

- b) The letters will be mailed in the week commencing 16 April including a personally addressed letter, a summarised version of the Business Case for pedestrianisation, a short questionnaire and a pre-paid envelope for return.
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5) WHOLE TOWN

- a) The Town Council has successfully provided a mechanism for all the town's residents to participate in the two major consultations it has arranged in the last five years: the campaign to develop Salisbury Gardens in 2012 and the Our Place Consultation of 2015.
 - b) These took the form of a delivery of a well-produced document to every household with a postage pre-paid return card for responses.
 - c) This time it is proposed to deliver to every household a 4-page A4 newsletter that will include content conveying clearly the significance of the choices to be made about the future of the High Street, the proposals for the pedestrianisation that is possible, a summary of the extensive research on its impacts in other coastal towns, the known threats to the future of High Streets like Ventnor's and details of the consultation meetings.
 - d) In order to both save the cost of paying for its distribution and ensure more complete coverage for it, it is recommended that Members undertake its delivery in their own Wards.
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6) COSTS

- a) The costs of room hire and the provision of tea and coffee for the 10 proposed meetings will be no more than £50 each.
 - b) The design and print of the 4,000 newsletters will be approximately £425.
 - c) The Royal Mail Licence Fee for the pre-paid postage arrangement is £97 and the second class postage charge – charged only on those cards that are posted back – is £0.35; assuming a maximum return of 500, the total cost of the mail arrangement would be £272 with an additional £100 for the printed cards.
 - d) The total cost can be set against the allocated £2,000 identified in 1(b) above.
 - e) The justification for the cost is the significance of the decision, whatever that decision is as both for and against will carry long-term consequences.
 - f) It is surely right, given this Town Council's commitments and track record, to give everyone with a stake in the future of the town the chance to contribute to that decision.
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7) RECOMMENDATION

The Town Council is recommended to:

- i) agree the framework for the consultation as set out above; and
 - ii) approve the funding identified as necessary for it.
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