



PUBLIC BUILDINGS

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 42/13

20 MAY 2013

The purpose of this report is to propose that the Town Council establishes a Public Buildings Working Group.

No. DETAIL

1) INTRODUCTION

- a) Both the Town Council and the Town have become increasingly aware of the risks of losing Ventnor's remaining public buildings.
 - b) These include the Coastal Centre, Rew Valley Sports Centre, St Boniface School, Ventnor Youth Centre and the Library.
 - c) The concern about the first of these was clearly evidenced in the responses to the Town Council's consultation on its future undertaken in February this year and resulting in 31% of the town's electorate signing up to its retention.
 - d) There is no reason to believe that such levels of support are unique to the Coastal Centre.
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2) DISCUSSIONS TO DATE

- a) All of these public buildings have been referred to during the past 12 months in discussions the Mayor and Town Clerk have been involved in with a range of the Isle of Wight Council's (IoWC) most senior officers.
 - b) To the extent that the previous IoWC administration had a plan for any of these buildings it revolved around their concept of establishing what they referred to as a Community Hub based at St Boniface School and incorporating the Youth Centre, the Library and the Town Council.
 - c) The possible use of the Community Right to Bid in connection with the commitment to retain them for the service of Ventnor residents has been discussed with an influential group of representatives of local voluntary organisations and by the Town Council on a number of occasions.
 - d) Rew Valley Sports Centre has been discussed separately with the senior officer responsible in view of the fact that its funding expires in March 2014 and is now the subject of discrete discussions on mechanisms for securing its future.
 - e) All of these were the subject of an evening Seminar with the new Town Council on Thursday 16 May.
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3) RECOMMENDATION

- a) The change of IoWC leadership has opened the way for constructive, partnership based discussions about the future of all of these buildings.
 - b) There is now a considerable amount of work to be done in researching the potential – and the problems – of all of them and exploring potential relationships with partners.
 - c) The Town Council is therefore recommended to establish a Public Buildings Working Group, including the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, to work with the Town Clerk in clarifying the issues, preparing the basis for discussions with the Isle of Wight Council and making recommendations to future Town Council meetings.
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