



ST BONIFACE FIELDS DEVELOPMENT

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 67/17

11 SEPTEMBER 2017

The purpose of this paper is to record progress since the August meeting of the Town Council and identify the proposed next steps.

No. DETAILS

1) BACKGROUND

- a) The Town Council unanimously agreed to include the two fields opposite the St Boniface School in its Regeneration Plan by minute 70/17 of its meeting of 10 July 2017.
 - b) It unanimously agreed to ask the Isle of Wight Council to transfer the ownership or management of the fields to the Town Council by minute 84/17 of its meeting of 14 August 2017.
 - c) That minute further agreed the purchase of the Portakabins owned and installed by the Island Free School at a price also unanimously agreed and confirmed by minute 94/17 of that meeting of £20,000.
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2) PORTAKABINS

- a) The purchase of the Portakabins from the Island Free School was completed on 25 of August 2017 at the £20,000 price agreed by the Town Council.
 - b) The Island Free School facilitated access to the site and the Portakabins for an inspection by staff team and Councillor James Toogood and helpfully assisted with the handover of all necessary keys on Thursday 31 August.
 - c) Site visits including the Portakabins were arranged for Members on Thursday 7 September.
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3) THE FIELDS

- a) A request for an arrangement that will allow the Town Council to manage the site was made to the Isle of Wight Council by email on 20 August.
 - b) Its Head of Economic Affairs Ashley Curzon replied to say that once he had become familiar with the background of the site he would arrange a meeting to discuss the matter.
 - c) An initial discussion with the Architect Andrew Hitt, who has knowledge of earlier uses of the site, took place on site with Councillor James Toogood and Economic Development Officer Nick Cox on 29 August.
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4) PROPOSED USES/USAGES

- a) Although no agreements have yet been entered into, discussions about potential users and usages of the site have of course been ongoing through the development phase of the project as indicated in the Outline Proposal, with the following ready for approval by the Town Council.
 - b) *Ventnor Men in Sheds* are interested in a lease for the original Portakabin that was present on the site before the use by the Island Free School began and its Officers visited it on 8 September.
 - c) *Ventnor Artists Collective* are very interested in the opportunity to establish a permanent Studio and it is intended to progress discussions with them about a lease for the single storey Portakabin.
 - d) The *Youth Work team* are keen to take on the ground floor of the two storey block within the context of the Youth Offer programme and against the background of the closures of both the Youth Club and Café 34 facilities.
 - e) *Multi-use bookable space*: the advantages of retaining the remaining Unit for flexible uses are worth exploring.
 - f) *Allotments*: the lower field can provide space for a very significant expansion of the Town
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Council's current offer in respect of the statutory duty to provide allotments of just three allotments and discussions are progressing about the size, number and organisation of them.

5) OPERATING COSTS

- a) Not enough information is available at this time to provide an accurate estimate of operating costs although they are unlikely to exceed £10,000 a year.
 - b) Rents for the single-user Units will need to be set and agreed in due course and for the hourly/daily rates for hire of the Multi-use one.
 - c) Annual rents will also need to set and agreed in respect of the Allotment area(s).
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6) INITIAL COSTS

- a) There are a range of costs that will need to be incurred initially:
 - o separately metering the electricity supply to each of the four Units;
 - o legal advice on lease agreements;
 - o costs of preparing planning application;
 - o grounds maintenance;
 - o allotment layouts;
 - o water supply to allotment area(s);
 - o CCTV installation for security; and
 - o re-furbishing the lower field toilets.
 - b) None of the actual costs of these are yet known but Members are recommended to agree the allocation to them of £5,000 from the Salisbury Gardens' identified as a loan to be recovered over the lifetime of the project.
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7) MANAGEMENT

- a) Members are recommended to delegate oversight responsibility for the management of the site to the Town Clerk with the Assets & Services Working Group, advised by the Community Development and Economic Development Officers.
 - b) Administration services will be provided by the Town Council's admin team.
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8) PLANNING PERMISSION

- a) As Members are aware, the temporary planning permission for the Island Free School's Portakabins on the top field expires on 9 April 2018.
 - b) It is planned to have the proposals for the site sufficiently fully developed for a pre-application planning discussion with the Isle of Wight Council planners in the first week of December.
 - c) The proposed timing for the submission of a full planning application would then be early January 2018.
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9) RECOMMENDATION

Members are recommended to:

- i) approve the proposed potential uses and usages of the site outlined in section (4) of this Report;
 - ii) agree to commit an additional £5,000 from the Salisbury Gardens' account for the initial development costs identified in section (6) of this Report to be repaid over the lifetime of the project;
 - iii) delegate oversight responsibility for the management of the site to the Town Clerk with the Town Council's Assets & Services Working Group advised by its Community Development and Economic Development Officers; and
 - iv) authorise the preparation and submission of a planning application for the site by January 2018.
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