



The purpose of this paper is to report on progress to date with the management of the building known previously as the Youth Centre and now as Ventnor Central and to ask Members to agree a funding allocation for its operation during the remainder of this financial year.

No. DETAIL

1) BACKGROUND

- a) The building was due for closure by the Isle of Wight Council on 30 September as part of its decision to end its Island-wide Youth Service provision.
 - b) Co-operative discussions between the two Councils in the run up to that date enabled the Town Council to take on management responsibility for it under a Tenancy at Will in a seamless handover from 1 October.
 - c) The Town Council Meeting of 13 October resolved to re-name the building Ventnor Central to reflect the fact that its intended development, although including opportunities and activities for young people, will be on a whole community basis.
 - d) The old signage has been removed and the locks changed.
 - e) Staff are keen to record our appreciation of the assistance to us during the handover provided by Linda Gorman, the Youth Worker attached to be building for many years.
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2) PREPARATIONS

- a) Ventnor Central has not yet opened for business in order to ensure that all necessary preparations are completed.
 - b) These include the need to complete Risk Assessments for both the activities in the building and the risks of fire.
 - c) A complete inventory of the equipment in the building is also important for both insurance purposes and the development of activities based on the encouraging range and quality of what is already available in it.
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3) BOOKINGS

- a) Bookings are already being taken for December and all bookings will be through the Assistant Town Clerk.
 - b) Enquiries about and ideas for activities in the building and its development are very welcome and our Youth Opportunities Officer is already in discussion with people in that context, including the bands that have made use of the music room in the past.
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4) OPERATIONAL COSTS

- a) Although the Town Council is not responsible for repairs and maintenance under the Tenancy at Will, its operational costs for the six months to 31 March 2015 are expected to be of the order of £5,000.
 - b) Coming as it did in the middle of the financial year, there is obviously no budgetary provision to meet associated costs and income growth will be slow.
 - c) Although, for the same reason, these costs were not included in the decision to ring fence £46,000 within the budget for services the Isle of Wight Council were planning to cease funding, this is also one of those services.
 - d) Given that the major funding changes to beach cleaning and grass cutting will not start until 1 April 2015, that provision will not be committed this year and there is consequently a case for committing an element of it to funding Ventnor Central to 31 March 2015.
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5) **RECOMMENDATION**

The Town Council is recommended to:

- i) agree to an allocation of £5,000 from the ring-fenced funding in the current budget to meet the operational costs of Ventnor Central to 31 March 2015; and
 - ii) ask its Clerk to prepare more detailed financial projections for its operation in 2015/16 as part of the Town Council's Budget process.
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