



BABY BOX, FOOD BANK AND PANTRY PROPOSED ROOM RENTAL AGREEMENT

FULL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING REPORT 36/25

11 AUGUST 2025

To consider a proposal from Cllr Steve Cooper to rent a room within the council building to the Baby Box / Food Bank / Pantry initiative for half a day per week, enabling the organisation to use the premises as its main address for grant applications.

NO. DETAIL

1) BACKGROUND

The Baby Box / Food Bank / Pantry initiative currently operates without a permanent or registered address, which presents a significant barrier to accessing certain funding opportunities. Many grant-making bodies require applicants to demonstrate a stable operational base or provide a formal address for registration and correspondence. Without this, the organisation may be deemed ineligible for support, regardless of the strength or impact of its work. A formal arrangement with the council could help overcome this barrier and strengthen the initiative's ability to secure external funding, which aligns with the council's community support objectives.

2) KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Initial proactive exploration by officers:

- a) Legal and Administrative Requirements
 - a. A formal rental or licence agreement must be established, even for short-term or part-time use.
 - b. The agreement should clearly specify:
 - i. Duration and frequency of use.
 - ii. Permitted activities.
 - iii. Use of the address for registration and correspondence.
- b) Grant Eligibility
 - a. Many funders require a stable or registered address.
 - b. A formal agreement with the council could potentially satisfy this requirement, subject to the organisation meeting other eligibility criteria.
 - c. The organisation should confirm that their intended funders accept shared or part-time premises as a valid registered address
- c) Impact on Council Resources
 - a. Availability of suitable space within the building.
 - b. Scheduling and access control to ensure smooth operation.

- c. Insurance and liability implications for both parties.
- d) Community Benefit
 - a. Baby Box / Food Bank / Pantry supports vulnerable residents through access to essential services.
 - b. Further enhancing local service provision and community resilience.
- e) Timing and Governance Pathway
 - a. Through engagement between the Cllr Steve Cooper and the charities involved, it has been identified that a decision would ideally need to be reached by October half term 2025 to enable the Baby Box / Food Bank / Pantry initiative to meet upcoming grant application deadlines. Many funders require confirmation of a registered or stable address as part of their eligibility criteria.
 - b. To ensure Ventnor Town Council (VTC) operates within the scope of its Standing Orders and the Terms of Reference for Full Council and its Committees, the following internal governance pathway would need to be followed, in the following order:
 - i. Business & Community Committee
 - 1. To consider the initiative's alignment with the council's community support objectives.
 - 2. Next meeting: 10 September 2025
 - ii. Buildings Maintenance Committee
 - 1. To confirm the suitability and availability of the proposed space.
 - 2. Next appropriate meeting: 22 October 2025
 - iii. Policy & Resources Committee
 - 1. To review and approve the legal and financial aspects of the arrangement.
 - 2. Note: Cllr Steve Milford and Cllr John Watkins are trustees of Baby Box, which presents a conflict of interest. Substitute members will need to be nominated to ensure the meeting is quorate.
 - 3. Next appropriate meeting (after 22 October 2025): TBA
 - iv. Full Council
 - 1. For final approval, given the cross-committee nature and the requirement for a formal agreement.
 - 2. Next appropriate meeting: After 10 December 2025

3) CONCLUSION

Given the cross-committee relevance - spanning community benefit, use of Council premises, and formal agreements - and the need to meet desired timelines, the matter is being directly brought to Full Council for approval to progress.

4) RECOMMENDATION

Full Council supports the proposal, enabling officers to work with Cllr Steve Cooper and representatives from Baby Box, the Food Bank, and the Pantry to undertake due diligence, assess key considerations and implementation viability, and work towards delivery.
