



BEMBRIDGE PARISH COUNCIL

The Clerk to the Council,
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Bembridge Community Hub Committee Clarification and Update Statement

1. Introduction

On 16th January 2017 a petition signed by 1317 members of the community was handed in to the Parish Office entitled;

'We are Bembridge residents and we wish to stop the proposed sale of 5-7 High Street since this would be detrimental to three businesses based there: Captain Stan, SH Tree Services and Conker Group. We understand that signing this may lead to reassessment of the Village Hub project.'

A planned Community Hub Committee meeting was held later on 16th January 2017 at which the potential sale of 5-7 High Street was discussed as an agenda item.

The committee agreed that the petition has to be taken into account prior to the sale of the property. Some members of the community present at the meeting felt that insufficient information had been provided in the past. The Community Hub Committee has decided that further consultation with the community is required to ensure all required information is provided.

2. Facts

At the Bembridge Parish Council meeting held on 18th October 2016 approval was made for the sale of the 5-7 High Street premises for maximum return on asset and relocation of the public toilets within the village centre. The building has not been marketed for sale at the present time.

- 5-7 High Street is currently leased to:
 - Conker Group (first floor) – lease expires on 7th January 2019
 - Captain Stan – (ground floor) lease expires on 7th January 2019
 - SH tree services – (rear yard) license is open ended with 3 months' notice by either party.

Notice was served by the Parish Council with the caveat that SH tree services can continue to operate from the site until such time as any sale is agreed.

- Southern and Scottish Electricity – (sub-station) lease expires 10th June 2026.
- In addition a Nissan hut located in the rear yard of the property is used by the Parish Lengthsmen. Initial enquiries have been carried out to identify the costs of relocating this workshop to an alternative Parish Council owned location.

The building (5/7 High Street) is located in a conservation area which, as defined in the Bembridge Conservation Area Plan, will be expected to preserve a traditional appearance in relation to shop fronts and advertising.

- The property is located within the business centre as identified within the Bembridge Neighbourhood Development Plan and there is no planned change envisaged to the retail unit of the property.
- There are no plans for the demolition of the property; indeed conservation area consent must be obtained for any proposal to totally demolish a building.
- The ground floor of the building also houses public toilets which are old and unattractive but in a usable condition.

- A new public toilet would be required if the sale of the property went ahead. However, with the current condition of the public toilets, a decision may be taken to site a public toilet elsewhere regardless of whether or not 5-7 High Street is sold.
- The Community Hub Committee in liaison with the Village Hall Management Committee has investigated the possibility of installing a disabled access public toilet within the Village Hall with separate external access.
- In total the Parish Council receives £11,750 per annum in rent from the businesses leasing 5-7 High Street. This is offset by running costs of circa £6,750 per annum giving a net income of circa £5,000 per annum.

Planning Permission

- Professional advisors have been consulted in respect of planning permissions appropriate for 5-7 High Street which includes retention of the retail shop and additional;
 - Conversion of upstairs into a 2 bedroom flat
 - Conversion of the public toilet area into office space
 - Provision of parking spaces and garages at the rear
- Detailed plans have been produced and a planning application was submitted to the Isle of Wight Council in December 2016. There is no intention by the Parish Council to implement the changes; planning permission has been sought to maximise the sales value should 5-7 High Street be marketed.

Building Maintenance

- 5/7 High Street requires significant maintenance in the near future as detailed in a condition report issued on 26th January 2012. The Parish Council has requested an updated condition survey to be undertaken as a priority in order for a quantity surveyor to provide an up to date report on the building state of repair and a cost to carry out the required maintenance
- Additionally, the Parish Council is mindful that the Village Hall building is also in need of significant maintenance work in the near future as outlined in a condition report issued on 26th January 2012. The Parish Council has requested an updated condition survey to be undertaken as a priority in order for a quantity surveyor to provide an updated report on the building state of repair and an estimated cost to carry out the required maintenance
- The current level of finance reserved for essential maintenance is:

| | |
|-----------------|---------|
| 5/7 High Street | £25,000 |
| Village Hall | £25,000 |

Grant Funding

- The Community Hub Committee has made a grant submission (maximum award value £70,000) which can only be used on additions and not for the maintenance of existing buildings. A decision on the grant submission is scheduled to be announced by the end of February 2017.

Library and Heritage Society

- The Library and Heritage Society have stated that they are willing to take on a long lease for the library building which is with Isle of Wight Council (freeholders). Subject to the lease being agreed the Library and the Heritage Society will be remaining at their current location.

Parish Office

- The building at 5 Foreland Road currently used as the Parish Office is owned by the Parish. The building was purchased on 9th May 2008 at a cost of £111,000 using a Public Works Board Loan. The conditions of the loan are such that repayment of the loan would incur a significant penalty as detailed below;

| | |
|---------------------------|-----------------|
| Outstanding Principal Sum | £91,575 |
| Early Repayment | £31,296 |
| Total Due | £122,871 |

- Accordingly, selling the Parish Office is not seen as financially appropriate and an alternative option under consideration is that the building could be commercially leased for circa £8,000 per annum.

3. Impact of selling 5-7 High Street

- The Parish Council would receive significant funds from the sale of the property which would have to be used on capital projects within the village (e.g. the Village Hall, Community Centre, 5 Foreland Road etc.)
- No future maintenance costs will be borne by the Parish
- Loss of rental income circa £5,000 net per annum
- Ownership of the building would be outside Parish control
- Current lease holding businesses occupying the site would liaise with the new owners regarding requests to have existing leases renewed in accordance with the Landlord and Tenant Acts.
- Funds would be available to create new Parish Office within an existing property. This will enable 5 Foreland Road to be leased generating income of circa £8,000 per annum.

4. Impact of NOT selling 5-7 High Street

- Parish has to find adequate funds to maintain the building at 5-7 High Street
- Parish has to find adequate funds to maintain and refurbish the Village Hall building
- No additional funds would be available for increasing the capability of the Village Hall
- The Parish Office would remain at 5 Foreland Road and potential rental income would be lost.

Village Hall

In November public consultations and Village Hall user group meetings were held to determine the wants and needs of the community. From these sessions it was clearly understood that repositioning the kitchen, and changes to the hall were not acceptable.

Should any money become available from the sale of 5/7 High Street changes to the village hall could include:

- Addition of new and modern public toilet only accessible from outside the hall
- Relayout of the kitchen equipment, leaving the kitchen and the servery where they are
- Repair of the roof, to include solar tiles thereby improving the carbon footprint and reducing running costs
- Replacement of windows with double glazed units, again improving the carbon footprint and reducing running costs
- Possible extension at the rear to accommodate the parish office and to provide internal storage for users
- Updating the heating system
- No other changes to the hall

Further consultation on plans for the Village Hall will be undertaken once finance is identified.

Any questions please do not hesitate to contact the Parish Office 01983 874160 or email clerk@bembridgepc.org.uk

20th January 2017