

# Appendix A.

Mrs Emma Goldring  
Clerk to Bembridge Parish Council  
5 Foreland Road  
BEMBRIDGE  
PO35 5XN

2<sup>nd</sup> July 2018

Dear Mrs Goldring,

I am sending you this open letter on behalf of a number of concerned parishioners. I am also copying it to Mr and Mrs Curtis of Captain Stan's, Mr Peter Burke of Conker Group, and Mrs Reeder who called for the Parish Poll. I would be grateful if you could copy it to all of the Parish Councillors prior to the meeting tomorrow. I will be seeking to publicise the letter on social media and elsewhere.

The disharmony within the Council has damaged both the community and the Council itself. Bad behaviour has been witnessed by the public in Council meetings and outside, and has been widely reported across the Island. Whilst disagreements can happen from time to time, and can help inform better decision making, the destructive and personal nature of the way this animosity has been allowed to be taken forwards and fester has been painful to watch. It would appear that all of this has been underpinned by the issues surrounding the future of 5/7 High St.

In a representative democracy Councillors have delegated authority to make decisions on behalf of their electors. They have a duty to represent those voters who have voted for them taking account of their election pledges. For unknown reasons several Councillors have not stood by their pledge to protect 5/7 High Street and this has heightened the unpleasant tensions already referred to. We understand that nothing can be done about this situation until the next election. In the meantime it is possible the vitriol and abuse could continue for the next three years. This would be hugely unsatisfactory and other residents and myself call on the Chairman to address this issue with Councillors.

The very clear outcome of the democratically run Parish Poll allows a breathing space for everyone, Councillors and parishioners, to take stock of the position. I am, however, deeply concerned that some of those Councillors supporting the decision to sell have been publicly stating before the Poll that they will ignore the result if the community view is to not sell. This is a serious breach of trust with the people of Bembridge if this threat is implemented, particularly given the overwhelming public view.

I consider that an Extraordinary Council meeting to "note" the result of the Poll has been convened for this Tuesday with indecent haste. It is my considered view that unless that Council meeting endorses the Poll decision and withdraws 5/7 High St from sale then the damage and division between the community and it's Council will become irreparable in the short to medium term. It may even have longer term consequences.

I appeal to all Councillors to apply the core principles of representative democracy and carry out the will of the community that has elected them. I further request that all Councillors put their personal antagonisms behind them and constructively find a way to put the building in question into an acceptable state of repair, and seek to repair the damage that has been caused within this wonderful community.

Yours sincerely,



Stewart Thomas

And concerned parishioners

24 Walls Road

BEMBRIDGE

PO35 5RD