

**A MEETING OF THE POLICY AND ORGANISATION BOARD
WAS HELD ON 25 APRIL 2023**

The Mayor Councillor Hutchison

Councillors Burgess, Chegwyn, Huggins (Substituting for Philpott) Hylands, Marshall, Pepper and Raffaelli

92. ASSET OF COMMUNITY VALUE - BRIDGEMARY MANOR

Consideration was given to a report of the Borough Solicitor detailing an application received to register Bridgemary Manor as an asset of Community Value.

A deputation was from Annie Manly.

She advised the Board that it was vitally important that the facts were heard to enable the Board to make an informed decision.

It was accepted that it was normal to make an application for listing an asset of Community Value prior to the premises being sold, however this had been undertaken in a secretive way that had prevented the opportunity to do so.

The actions of the vendor and the purchasers have presumptively assumed that the Council will grant planning permission for the Change of use. The company that have undertaken the purchase are part of a long line of investments and companies linked to the owners had a history of exchanging property and non-domestic status.

The loss of the pub and hotel would be huge in the community as it was a thriving business, it was always busy

There was still a lack of hotel rooms in the Borough despite the opening of recent chains, and this could be seen them in higher rate charged for rooms in Gosport compared to neighboring cities.

The Save Our Manor committee were sure that had the business and building been advertised as a going concern it would have sold.

Concern was expressed that the proposed dentist, whilst sounding like a good opportunity was merely the relocation of an existing provider, albeit it was believed they were trying to recruit additional dentists. It was felt these would not be NHS dentists.

It was felt that there were many other suitable sites in the Borough for such provision that were not in a residential area.

It was felt there would not be enough parking on site for dental staff and patients and that this would detrimentally impact on the neighboring roads one of which already had speed bumps as a result of being a rat run and led to a primary school and nursery.

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The Committee did not see the already undertaken works as being too late to stop the development but welcomed the opportunity of a blank canvass to provide a community facility.

She concluded with questioning whether as the owners had acted precipitously and potentially unlawfully did the Council have the power to enforce a reinstatement of the pub and hotel or levy substantial fine for breach of planning regulations.

The Board were reminded that consideration would need to be given to any future planning applications in their own merit, and that any ACV status was a material planning consideration but did not prevent a planning application being made or approved.

The Chairman advised that, in answer to the questions posed, the Council could not enforce that the premises be returned back to a pub and hotel, nor could they be fined as they had not done anything wrong.

The Board was advised that there was rumors that recruitment of additional dentists was underway, but it was speculated that these would be relocation of existing practitioners in the Borough.

Concern was reiterated towards the setup of the company involved, the Board were reminded that speculation could and should not be considered as part of the consideration and that though ethics were important they too did not form the basis of any listing.

The Board was advised that it was anticipated that there would be planning application submitted imminently.

The Board was advised that the hotel and pub were continuously used and always busy and that the business was separate to the property and it was the property that had been sold. It was felt disappointing that the local microbreweries had not been given the opportunity to explore operating the venue.

Members recognized that only facts could be considered with regard to the application presented.

The Board was advised that they were required to determine whether or not to list the Manor Hotel as an asset of community value.

The Board recognized that it would have been easier to consider an application prior to the property being sold and the fact it had added additional factors to it.

The Board was advised that although the property was sold, an ACV could still be listed, and that if it was listed, notification would be given and any further disposal would be subject to the moratorium presented by listed status.

The Board was advised that the registration threshold for ACVs was low and that the regulations would be triggered for any future sale.

Members were advised that consideration should be given to the risk to the Council by listing the property as an ACV and that it was important they understood the consequences of listing the property.

Members were advised that an ACV applied for 5 years and if they weren't added to the register, the fact an application had been made would be recorded.

There were a number of justifiable reasons for listing a property, social value, cultural being some, but it could also include medical facilities.

Members acknowledged that a successful conversion to a dentist, with an ACV in place, could lead to the ACV process being activated on its use as a dentist.

In this instance it would become most relevant to the property as a pub hotel if the owners did not open it as a dentist.

Concern was expressed that there would be a residential element to the proposal and this would pave the way for the entire building to be residential.

The Board was advised that listing the property as a going concern was not enforceable by an ACV.

Councillor Hammond was invited to address the Board as ward councillor. He advised that he felt it was unfortunate that the application had come in after the property had been sold and acknowledged that it was a crucial community asset and that there were very few alternatives. He advised that he accepted it was the owner's prerogative to act the way they did, but was disappointed that it did not get a chance to continue as it was.

Members felt that perhaps the opening of the Sailmaker and the hotel had not helped, but that there was still a demand for rooms. It was acknowledged that sometimes very successful developments like Brockhurst Gate inevitably had a detrimental impact elsewhere.

The next step would be a planning application, considered by the Regulatory Board in line with planning Regulations.

It was acknowledged that it was important not to preempt this.

A proposal was made that the Bridgemary Manor be listed as an Asset of Community Value and this was subsequently agreed.

RESOLVED: That Bridgemary Manor be listed as an Asset of Community Value.

93. APPOINTMENT OF AN APPOINTMENTS SUB BOARD

Consideration was given to the report of the Head of Human Resources seeking the appointment of an Appointments Sub-Board to consider the appointment of a Chief Executive for Gosport Borough Council.

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In answer to a Member's question, the Board was advised that Portsmouth City Council had agreed to advertise for a stand alone Chief Executive for themselves following conversations with head hunters and discussion

94. ANY OTHER ITEMS

CHAIRMAN

Concluded at 7.19 pm