



TDRA MINUTES

On 7th December 2016, 7.30pm at Tenterden Day Centre

1. Present

A Bates (Chairman), M. Lyons, M. Winniberg, C. Parkin, K. Grant, H. Burnside, S. Nepp, W. Chantler, N. Webb, and Mike Carter who attended for the first part of the meeting as the TTC representative.

2. Apologies

I Marsden

Special Meeting called to discuss strategy for responding to the Lipton Group Consultation.

H. Burnside reported that the Consultation Group felt that a cinema would only be viable if subsidised, with the operators renting, but fitting it out. It was felt that we should challenge this preconception and ask how much the subsidy was likely to be.

Community Hub – there was concern at the question raised “should the Town Hall be a Community Hub or a Cinema?” which could only result in restricted answers. It was felt that the Town Hall was not suitably modern enough to provide the facilities needed. Attendees were given the impression that Councillors would always be available, which was misleading. There was a further question as to whether the Town Hall could be refurbished with these funds, and doubt expressed that this would really be long term maintenance, which would probably be illegal and should have been dealt with over time by the Council. It was thought that refurbishment could possibly amount to about £1 million. There was doubt however whether there were conditions on what the money could be used for from the wild flower meadow.

Football – it was generally agreed it would be good to see football moving outside the Town Centre, thus freeing up land for other opportunities. It would be likely, if they moved that the FA would help.

Gymnastic Facilities – these are much in need of improvement and we should support this. At present the people using it have to set up and take down the equipment each time it is needed. They have 300 members with a further waiting list of another 300.

C. Parkin – concern was raised that there were very few facts and figures provided at the Consultation, and such vagueness made it difficult for a considered response. The Committee agreed that it was vital to see the report, which it appears might already be in a draft form. There was a need for evidence based information, and since the Consultation is funded by public money we should be entitled to see it. If there is any reluctance we should resort to a Freedom of Information request.

A Bates reported on the need for a Community Hub, should there be one for youth and another for older residents? Generally it was felt that they should be separate, as a youth hub would encourage the young to feel some ownership of the facility and therefore respect it. Highbury Hall was unsuitable as they did not have exclusive use, and it was agreed that the Pavilion would be better and that noise would not be such an issue there. There would however be a need for supervision. It was felt this could be achieved for about £50,000 using quality fittings.

With regard to skate boarding facilities at present the youth have to go to St. Michaels, but he favoured allowing them to continue using their self made site in Six Fields.

St. Mildreds – it was noted that St. Mildreds was also aiming to provide community facilities and that it would make a good venue for music. It was unlikely that funds could be made available for this purpose, but maybe some arrangement could be come to whereby the Church Hall was sold to the Council, therefore making funds available. Possible sites for the cinema were considered, including the Pine Shop, Glebe Hall, and Pilgrims Hospice Furniture Store (ex Tenterden Garden Machinery).

Conclusion

There was general concern that the process lacked rigour and that Councillors have preconceived ideas. It was agreed that we should refrain from a response until we know what is in the final report, allowing point by point consideration. In the meantime A Bates to speak with the Kentish Express explaining that we will be commenting in due course but reassuring that we are keeping a close eye on matters in the meantime. He will also draft a Press Release which will be put on the website. He will also ask the Council when the report is due out and that it will be made available.

Generally it was felt that £3 million is not a vast amount and should not all be spent at once, leaving some for future projects. It was also noted that match funding would probably also be available. It was considered that if the Town Hall were to have a new use, it might get Heritage Funding. At present it is an underused asset.

S Nepp to tell Kentish Express what Silverscreen are proposing.

14th December, 2016