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From: Katharine Sawyer [REDACTED]
Sent: 12 July 2022 12:02
To: Planning (Isles of Scilly)
Subject: P/22/033/COU - Town Hall

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I am writing to support the Council's planning application in respect of the Town Hall. I have been a Museum trustee for 18 years and am currently the Vice-Chair of the Board of Trustees; I am writing in a personal capacity.

Many people (including Council officers and members, Museum Association trustees and staff, representatives of Islands' Partnership and Creative Islands, as well as experienced consultants and architects) have spent a great deal of time examining possible new sites for the Museum. We have concluded that the Town Hall is the only viable option. Renovating the Town Hall will also bring the hall back into use for a wide range of activities including theatre, music, exhibitions, craft fairs and produce markets, social gatherings, etc. The combination of the two functions of museum and cultural centre allows access to a wider range of grant funding for the project.

There is a small window in the immediate future when applications can be made to both the Levelling Up Fund and the National Lottery Heritage Fund and this offers us a real opportunity to obtain sufficient grant funding to be able to realise this project. If the planning application is not approved on 26 July, it is likely that we will miss this chance.

Additionally, if the application is not approved, the Council will face the task of finding another new home for the Museum, which still has 44 years outstanding on its lease which the Council is legally obliged to honour. So far, no other suitable building has been identified. As a community, we will have a crumbling Town Hall which will only detract from islanders' and visitors' experience of Hugh Town. St Mary's will continue to be the only island without a community centre. It is probable that essential repairs will have to be carried out to ensure the ongoing safety of the Town Hall, even if it is unusable, and it is extremely unlikely that grant funding will be available for that.

We have a one-off opportunity to save our Town Hall and to give it new life and purpose. I very much hope that we take it.

Best wishes

*Katharine Sawyer
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