



VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

DESTINATION VENTNOR

LEGAL INTERVENTION

We received a letter on 11 May from Solicitors Roach Pittis headed *Ventnor Town Centre Regeneration Proposals* on behalf of *a number of residents of Ventnor and businessmen with Ventnor operations or links*. *A list of these persons is enclosed with this letter.*

A copy of the letter is attached here, without the names, together with a copy of the Clerk's response.

A copy of *Destination Ventnor* is available by clicking [this link](#).

11 MAY 2018



ROACH PITTIS

LEGAL NAVIGATION

EST. 1877

When calling ask for: Tony Holmes Our ref: APH.KJT.G1859.1 Your ref:

The Town Clerk
Ventnor Town Council
Salisbury Gardens
Dudley Road
Ventnor
Isle of Wight PO38 1EJ

10 May 2018

Dear Sir

Re: Ventnor Town Centre Regeneration Proposals

We have been instructed by a number of residents of Ventnor and businessmen with Ventnor operations or links. A list of these persons is enclosed with this letter.

We are instructed on their behalf to express major concerns over the Town Council's proposals involving pedestrianisation of Ventnor High Street. Whilst the glossy brochure produced opens with the statement that there has been "no decision (public or private) to pedestrianise either the town centre or the Esplanade", the two options set out on the back page of the brochure both involve pedestrianisation of the High Street. There is no third option to leave matters unchanged nor any fourth option setting out proposals which do not involve pedestrianisation.

Our clients indicate that they are happy to support any viable regeneration scheme but respectfully suggest that what has been prepared is ill-considered, full of errors and, if implemented, would have a material adverse impact on local businesses and the future prosperity of the whole town.

We, as solicitors, are obviously lay people when it comes to town planning, but even we can see anomalies on the plan supporting your two options. The road identified as Steep Hill is in fact Spring Hill: Victoria Street bears at the northern end a single arrow implying one-way status: Pier Street is shown and described as having one-way status meaning, in effect, that the Esplanade must become one-way which given the exit at Bath Road would appear to be completely impractical given commercial delivery lorries servicing the businesses on the Esplanade.

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continued

ROACH PITTIS

LEGAL NAVIGATION

EST. 1871

Your brochure makes reference to potentially harmful gases from vehicles, but your options seem to divert vehicular traffic from commercial areas into residential areas: hardly a promotion of public safety.

Our clients are concerned that the Town Council has apparently spent a material sum in producing documentation which is totally unsupported by any input from consultants qualified to assess the potential outcomes. If acted upon, we have advised our clients, it would amount to nothing less than mal-administration and would expose members of the Town Council to complaint and potential litigation.

We invite you, please, to make available to us all relevant minutes on the subject of the regeneration proposals over the last two years and any studies which have been carried out. This information could be requisitioned under the Freedom of Information Act if not disclosed.

Surely the Councillors must understand that to launch a one-sided promotional brochure of this nature without proper professional advice is completely inappropriate and unacceptable given the duty of care the Town Council owes to its electorate.

Yours faithfully

ROACH PITTIS

Email: aph@roachpittis.co.uk

Enc.

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VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL



1 Salisbury Gardens, Dudley Road, Ventnor, Isle of Wight PO38 1EJ

Roach Pittis
60-66 Lugley Street
Newport
Isle of Wight PO30 5EU

21 May 2018

Dear Tony Holmes

I am writing in response to your letter of 10 May headed *re Ventnor Town Centre Regeneration Proposals*.

We are aware of the concerns expressed by those who have instructed you in this regard and have had further meetings with many of them since the date of your letter.

It may be helpful if I outline the context in which these discussions have taken place. Following the election of the new Town Council just over a year ago one of its major concerns was to develop a Regeneration Plan reflecting the already adopted Strategic Plan, available on our web site [here](#).

The first formal steps in the process were taken at the 10 July 2017 meeting of the Town Council with the adoption of three areas of the Town for inclusion in the Regeneration Plan: the Town Centre & Esplanade, the land on Leeson Road opposite the then site of the Island Free School and land behind the new site of the Island Free School in Upper Ventnor.

There was no reference to, or consideration of, pedestrianisation at that stage. The potential for that approach emerged after extensive research – over 200 other examples of its introduction were desk-researched - and, naturally, we were aware of the experience of it in Ryde and Cowes.

Although this showed very clearly that pedestrianisation had a very positive impact on many coastal towns, as *Destination Ventnor* clearly states - in the middle of column 2 – what we didn't know *is whether one of them would work in Ventnor – or whether the town would welcome it*.

So the decision was taken to test both of these considerations through a thorough consultation process. This was launched at our Annual Budget Consultation meeting – attended by over 100 residents - when the Mayor described clearly a conversation about it that would lead to a full consultation process *lasting up to a year*.

The arrangements for that process were confirmed at the Town Council Meetings of [12 February](#) and [12 March](#).

These are the Minutes directly relevant to your request in your letter's penultimate paragraph and I have provided links to them for your convenience although all the Town Council's Meeting Minutes are available on our web site.

I should add, in respect of the concern expressed in the second paragraph of the second page of your letter, that the Town Council has apparently spent a material sum in producing documentation.

The actual print cost of *Destination Ventnor* was £399 and 90% of its distribution was free as it was carried out by our Councillors who, as you will be aware, are volunteers. Our total Budget for the year is £450,828.

Contrary to the letter's assertion that it was totally unsupported by any input from qualified professionals, advice was made available to us before publication on a pro bono basis.

It was the awareness that if the proposal progressed there would be significant additional expenditure, including further and paid for professional advice, that was the reason for having the detailed consultation process to test feasibility and listen to the views of all the town's stakeholders.

In conclusion, we are delighted by your report that your clients are *happy to support any viable regeneration scheme*, and they have confirmed that to us directly at the consultation meetings held last week. We very much look forward to working with them on that basis.

Regards

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David Bartlett', written in a cursive style.

David Bartlett
Town Clerk