Community Assets Committee

The Community Assets Committee oversees the refurbishment of Pierremont Hall, its ancillary buildings, Retort House and any potential purchases or transfers of community assets to the Town Council. The Committee reports directly to Full Council and has held 7 meetings in the past financial year. Since building projects often require rapid decisions, the Committee has delegated spending limits and powers, currently extended until 31st March 2021.

During the past year, the Town Council offices have occupied part of the top floor of Pierremont Hall with 4 office suites of various sizes fully leased to tenants. Both the Music Room and The Cottage are also in use by tenants. The refurbished Hall also has two function rooms (Council Chamber and Mayor’s Parlour), kitchen and toilet facilities. Both function rooms have been in a variety of uses in the past year, albeit limited by the lockdown.

Phase 2 of the Pierremont project on the southern wing has now been completed and provides the Stella Maris office suite and 2 meeting rooms, together with an onsite facility for our security providers. A new tenant will be occupying the Stella Maris office suite shortly. You will have seen that the external fire escape has been removed and a ramp for disabled access has now been installed. External landscaping needs to be completed which will complement use of the Council Chamber function room and also help conceal the unattractive but very necessary ramp.

Phase 3 will be the complete refurbishment of the Hall’s basement. This alone is a considerable project and is not planned for the coming financial year.

Parking spaces are now fully allocated for tenants, council officers and visitors. There is also one space for use by tenants for charging electric cars.

Refurbishment of Retort House is complete, providing a community sports and leisure hall with new toilets, changing rooms and kitchen facilities in one half of the building and a commercial business in the other half. However the opening of Retort House has been considerably delayed by the need to upgrade the power supply to the building. We are now urgently seeking completion of the necessary works so that we can get the Community Venue back into use and the tenant can open as soon as possible once restrictions are lifted.

The Committee continues to hold discussions with Thanet District Council about other community assets, both buildings and land, but is very mindful of the extra financial pressure that may accompany a purchase or transfer.

As Chairman of the Community Assets Committee I would like to thank the Committee Members, Council Officers and all those who have supported these projects in many ways over the past year. I must give special thanks to the former Town Clerk Danielle Dunn, who worked tirelessly to overcome the numerous challenges that the Pierremont project threw at her and also the Deputy Town Clerk, Christine Chappell, who continues to meet the many challenges with Retort House. I have every confidence that our new Town Clerk, Kirsty Holroyd, will show equal fortitude when problems arise, as I am sure they will.

Cllr Rosalind Binks, Chairman - Community Assets Committee