

Norton Radstock Town Council 9 February 2009

Statement by Radstock Action Group regarding the Victoria Hall

Radstock Action Group has read the letter from BANES regarding the Victoria Hall and addressed to the Town Clerk.

Whilst we do not know the contents of the two letters dated 23 and 28 January from the Town Clerk to Margaret Masling and Tom McBain, and mentioned in the reply from Tom McBain, we urge the Town Council to take action to ensure that the following principles apply to all future discussions regarding the future of the Victoria Hall:

1. The Victoria Hall is a valuable asset which has always served the community of Radstock and should continue to do so
2. It should be protected from redevelopment and its architectural worth should be recognised, whilst ensuring that it remains fit for the purposes for which the community

We, therefore, ask the council to:

1. Challenge the statement in the letter regarding the covenants that may or may not exist and to reaffirm that all that can be said in relation to covenants is that, to date, BANES' legal advisers have apparently not identified any
2. Use all means at its disposal to pursue the search for covenants in relation to the building
3. Reaffirm its commitment to safeguarding the hall for residents, traders and visitors to the town
4. Work with local people to ensure that the hall is put to the best uses, as defined by local people and within the constraints of its status as an important community building which requires maintenance and protection from inappropriate development in the area surrounding it.

We note, with concern, the tone of the letter from BANES and urge the Town Council to maintain its commitment to the regeneration of the town centre, and to refute any moves to make continued occupancy conditional on changes to the rental agreement and/or on vague, possibly coercive statements such as those contained within the letter, regarding 'wider regeneration'.