

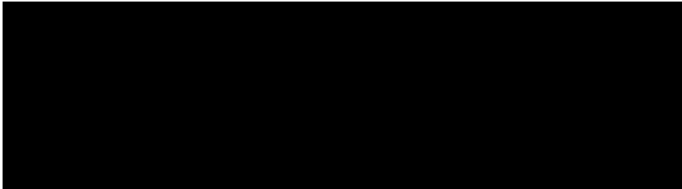
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Anita,

Prior to the current leaseholder taking on the lease the entire premises it was leased to Look & Sea Ltd, a charity, so it was not under ADC control and management and this has been the case since the building was completed circa 1999 / 2000.

I wanted to stress the business viability issue here which has only been compounded by the current Covid 19 situation. The present leaseholder has four separate cafes under lease, all of which are now closed due to the pandemic. The leaseholder has made a very substantial investment and commitment in these premises in Littlehampton town and in doing so has accepted and is paying a full commercial rent for the entire premises. If the leaseholder is unable to generate sufficient revenue from the upper floors then it is a commercial fact that the ground floor business will be unable to sustain rent at the current lease level. A very successful café in this location, which we hope Harbour lights will be, once fully established and known, trading to its maximum potential, may be able to sustain an annual rent circa £25K to £30K at the absolute maximum.

These premises beforehand were not under ADC direct control or management and the premises were leased to a charity (Look & Sea Ltd). It is therefore difficult for me to accurately comment on their use but it is my understanding in terms of revenue lettings that the letting use of upper floor rooms was infrequent. The upper floors are divided into a number of smaller rooms making them less attractive and interaction with the ground floor has always proved difficult. These upper floors were in essence a "visitor attraction" although again the reality is that these were aged dating back to the original construction some 20 years ago and so were not popular and certainly not up to any modern day attraction standard. One thing that is completely clear is that the upper floor past use was not commercially sustainable, directly evidenced by the demise of the last premises operator (Look & Sea Ltd). Any repeat of this situation must be avoided as a further empty unviable commercial premises in the town will clearly be to the detriment of Littlehampton. Most importantly here it needs to be noted that the demise of the previous operator (Look & Sea Ltd) occurred even when running a popular and very busy café on the ground floor. This past business failure clearly evidences that ensuring the correct future use of the upper floors can proceed will play a critical role here. Ensuring permitted correct use and revenue generation from the upper floors is considered an essential aspect in order to secure the long term commercial viability of the whole leased demise, including

Harbour Lights Café business on the ground floor. The current leaseholder is acutely aware of this and recognises the urgent need for additional revenue income in order to ensure they have a commercially viable lease. Successfully securing the current requested change of use will provide the leaseholder with this essential opportunity along with all year round employment for local people. The leaseholder has given a commitment that the current lookout tower will remain accessible to the public. Therefore this tourist attraction and interest draw will remain within Littlehampton. It should also be noted that access to the lookout tower to view the surroundings and harbour was one of the biggest draws for these premises previously and so this aspect of the premises will remain, even with the proposed change of use this will not be lost.

In the event that this current planning application fails then there should be no doubt that the whole centre will be at risk of closing once again.

I do not believe that there is any evidence to suggest that Littlehampton town currently lacks usable community space. In fact one could argue that there is plenty of alternative meeting space including, The Body Shop, Dove Lodge, various good quality halls such as the Guide Hall in Duke Street and of course Littlehampton Town Council whom have a range of public meeting / group meeting space available.

In operating for only for a very short period circa 8 weeks it is evident that the current leaseholder has already gone to considerable lengths in order engage with many local groups. Since opening the business has purchased and set up a number of very large tables within in the ground floor café and laid the premises out specifically so that areas that can be cordoned off for group use. This action has been taken by the leaseholder in order to attract locals and community groups and others who are clearly made welcome and use the venue as a meeting space. The leaseholder has reported that they already have had a number of large meetings (up to 25 persons) on a weekly basis that they are able to accommodate this and are actively seeking to continue to promote this local meeting aspect. The leaseholder also reports that they have been approached by local businesses regarding hosting of an AGM and other regular meeting requirements again evidencing that they are actively engaging with the community in order to provide a service complimentary to their business. This can only be a positive thing for Littlehampton town in the event the leaseholder is permitted to be able to remain commercially viable and I am of the view that commercially this must include suitable use of all floors of the premises.

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