



Letter from the Chair:

**To Members of Warwickshire County Council Cabinet
Copy to Strategic Directors**

Dear Cabinet Member,

Re: Acquisition of land and existing premises at All Saints' School, Bath Place, Leamington Spa.

Bath Place Community Venture (BPCV) managed a successful Community Centre on the above site from 1974 until 2009, when a disastrous fire all but destroyed the fabric of the building. Since that time BPCV continued its service to the community in the Old Library, but again had to move to other premises when this was sold to developers.

Because of the dearth of suitable community buildings in the area of need, the Board decided to use its remaining resources to register the above site as an Asset of Community Value, and then, when the opportunity arose, to submit a formal request to the County Council to acquire the land and building pertaining to its former home.

This is not a sentimental journey. We know from long experience that this building is in the right place to service the needs of South Leamington and Brunswick Ward, and our studies confirm this. The needs of our clientele bear out the designation of the wards as within the 20% most deprived in Warwickshire nationally according to the most recently available locality statistics. Our Partners, Local Councillors, and our Member of Parliament confirm the necessity of such a provision in this location.

Moreover the proposed footprint of the building enables services to be provided without external subsidy, by using flexible space for commercial activities. This will generate sustainable revenues, as our financial projections demonstrate.

We do not ask you to take our word for the viability of the concept. We have used external consultants to test our model, develop plans to use the space effectively, explore the grant regimes needed to purchase the land, and produce realistic financial projections based on a conservative estimate of the possible. We have, successfully, obtained grants to pay for these professional activities. As a result we attach our Business Proposal, and a substantial number of Appendices to provide the information necessary for you to conduct your 'due diligence' procedures.

The County Council already supports Hatters Space, a Community Centre in a deprived neighbourhood –this time in Nuneaton. Its operational model, and indeed its location in a former school, has a number of similarities to our proposals. This is important because, as we would wish to do in Leamington, Hatters Space delivers services and facilities on a community wide basis, not through an exclusive or specialist approach. We can demonstrate through a sophisticated Social Return on Investment (SROI) calculation that the proposed Community Centre generates a value to the community of £ 4.85 Million and, as a result, substantial reductions in the ongoing costs of providing community services of both County and District Councils. We believe these values are just as real as straight forward cash receipts, but accept that it will take time to generate the results which will prove this.

We argue that this SROI supports our view that the County Council should consider this proposed acquisition by BPCV not as a simple financial transaction, the purchase of land, but as a part of a package of measures to support the locality. The model for this is contained in the County Council's Protocol for Community Asset Transfer, and the formal bid statement below assumes that Asset Transfer. We have to accept that this is a difficult and arduous road to follow by both the County Council, and ourselves. However we think the loss of a modest capital gain to the County Council is more than offset by the delivery of a valuable asset which will bring long term benefits –and savings for the local authorities –to individuals, and to the community at large.

Yours sincerely

David Williams
(Chair – BPCV Board of Trustees)

Forward:

By: Chris White, Minister of Parliament for Warwick & Leamington

In my role as both Member of Parliament for Warwick and Leamington, and as a Trustee of Bath Place Community Venture (BPCV), I am pleased to endorse this bid to Warwickshire County Council for the acquisition of All Saints' School.

This is an unusual bid in that the amount tendered is largely based on a detailed and sophisticated calculation of the social value to the local community of the services to be provided in the proposed rebuilt Community Centre, which was previously destroyed by fire in 2009. As the Parliamentary sponsor of the Social Value Act 2012, I know this proposal demonstrates a clear understanding of the legislation and the contribution that will be made to the area by the many activities the Centre aims to provide.

BPCV has also helped to pioneer the way community assets are registered with the Planning Authority under the Locality Act 2012, thus giving the opportunity to local community organisations to respond effectively to the untimely disposal of a much loved and respected resource.

This innovative use of recent Acts of Parliament has been inspired and developed by former staff of the organisation, ably assisted by professional consultants in business and financial planning, funding strategies, architectural design, and quantity surveying.

Tribute must also be paid to the Social Investment Business, the Leamington Conservation Society, and the Town Council for their financial support in creating a viable and professional bid for the site.

I recognise that Warwickshire County Council (WCC) has many pressures on its resources, and gratefully acknowledge the support provided by local WCC councillors in promoting awareness of our needs to Cabinet members. We hope that the bid will demonstrate the seriousness of intent and will enable WCC to grant a favourable response in due course.

Chris White MP