

Castletown Town Commissioners

Town Hall & Civic Centre, Farrants Way, Castletown,
Isle of Man, IM9 1NR
Tel + 44 (0) 1624 825005



Mr. S. Willoughby

Sea Terminal

Douglas

IM1 2RF

Wednesday, 26 June 2024

Dear Mr. Willoughby,

RE: Petition under Section 25 of the LG Act 1985, regarding the sale of the area currently forming the Commissioners Works yard, workshops, Thie Clooie, and ancillary buildings and land situated off Alexandra Road, Castletown.

The Castletown Town Commissioners seek the Department's approval to dispose of a parcel of land that has formed the Town's Work Yard. The land previously housed the Castletown Gas Works and was acquired by the town in 1975.

The site abuts Mill Street to the southeast and Alexandra Road to the north. It is currently used as the Castletown Commissioners' depot for storage, plant growing (including a polytunnel), vehicle parking, and workshops. Additionally, there is a residential dwelling on the site, historically tenanted by a member of the Commissioners' staff.

You will recall from our previous dialogue in 2023 that the Board resolved to seek expressions of interest in the site, given that it represents a significant maintenance liability and does not provide suitable facilities for our manual workforce. Furthermore, it was considered that the location could potentially be used more effectively for the town's wider benefit than as the Commissioners' works yard. The site has historically been used for industrial purposes; indeed, parcels of the wider site have been disposed of previously, supporting successful businesses on adjacent land.

When considering future uses of the site, in line with the Castletown housing Land Review, (gov.im/chlr) the Board of Castletown Town Commissioners discounted the potential use of the site as residential, or mixed used developments.

Following consideration of expressions of interest received in response to a public advert in July 2022, the Commissioners evaluated responses received and resolved that the proposal from Marlinspike Properties Ltd be the preferred option.



Castletown Town Commissioners

Town Hall & Civic Centre, Farrants Way, Castletown,
Isle of Man, IM9 1NR
Tel + 44 (0) 1624 825005



The intention of the transaction was not to simply dispose of the site to the highest bidder. The sole purpose of the disposal is to facilitate the relocation of an internationally recognized Manx business, Bushy's Brewery, into the site. In order to demonstrate value to the ratepayers, a valuation was obtained from an independent appropriately qualified valuer, Mr Wallis Bsc (Hons) MRICS of Black Grace Cowley.

In addition to relocating the brewing activities from the Mount Murray Brewery, the plans include an associated brewery tap room. The Board considers that the regeneration of a brownfield site within the town by a business that would support employment and drive increased footfall, in addition to meeting obligations to our staff, warrants the resolution to dispose of the site.

This petition, therefore, seeks approval in principle for the sale of the site at an independently determined market value (deemed to be £625,000 + VAT) so that the proposed development may take place. In line with feedback from the Department, the preferred applicants, Marlinspike Properties Ltd, have now obtained planning permission under reference 23/01235/B, and the appeal deadline has lapsed.

Given the nature of commercial property availability, we are not able to confirm the location of a permanent site at this time.

Should the town identify a site with potential to be a long-term base, any proposal to acquire an alternate site would likely be the subject of a separate petition once funded. The Town has made arrangements for the temporary relocation of its equipment and welfare facilities for the outdoor workforce into the Old Fire Station and the Community Hall and intends to contract out the early-stage growing of plants for floral displays until such time as the polytunnels have been re-established.

The Board of Castletown town Commissioners believe that we local authority reform is long overdue, and we have attempted to initiate discussions with nearby authorities to discuss the potential for collaborative working. The current working hypothesis is that the Town will continue to be self-servicing and longer-term options under consideration include:

- Application to the Department for a 21-year lease on a site in its ownership.
- Short term lease of an unit / former builders unit on Farrants Way.
- Lease or purchase of a unit in Balthane.
- Construction of a modern facility on the School Hill site.



Castletown Town Commissioners

Town Hall & Civic Centre, Farrants Way, Castletown,
Isle of Man, IM9 1NR
Tel + 44 (0) 1624 825005



Your early consideration and approval of this petition are therefore requested under Section 25(3) of the Local Government Act 1985.

For clarity, I have provided the proposal from Marlinspike Properties Ltd to relocate Bushy's Brewery, an independent valuation of the site, a copy of the planning approval notice and a framework conveyance for the proposed transaction.

My Board would welcome the opportunity to discuss the proposal in more detail and offer Minister Crookall a tour of the site as it stands.

Yours sincerely,

H F Mackenzie
Town Clerk



SERVING THE COMMUNITY SINCE 1884