

P-04-539 Save Cardiff Coal Exchange: Correspondence from the Save the Coal Exchange Ltd. 16.11.15

Dear Steve,

A good deal has been happening with regards The Coal Exchange since committee members came to visit in June. I attach a brief update that I have shared with the petitioner Jon Avent before submitting. I trust you will bring it to the attention of members, as particularly the actions of Cardiff CC give cause for concern.

If you need any further information please let me know.

Best regards,

Val Hill

Treasurer, Save the Coal Exchange Ltd

Save the Coal Exchange

Petition ref: p-04-539

Current status: for consideration

Petitioner: Jon Avent

There have been many developments since members of the Petitions Committee visited The Coal Exchange on 30th June which I felt may be pertinent to your discussions, and final decision as to whether to recommend a Public Enquiry into future use of the building.

- ⤴ In September Save the Coal Exchange were awarded a £10K Start-Up grant by Heritage Lottery to support the writing of a robust Business Plan and other governance issues, insurance for volunteers and some community engagement. This includes an HLF mentor.

- ⤴ We had previously been granted a mentor by Princes Regeneration Trust under their Brick scheme. The two mentors are in touch with each other.

- ⤴ Following an inspection and report by Mann Williams on the front exterior of the building and the south west wing, the H & S department of Cardiff CC revoked the prohibition on both the forecourt and underground car parks on 8th September.

- ⤴ While the forecourt car park is now in full use, the entrance to the underground car park is behind the Council's plywood barrier, and to date they have refused to give us access to this despite our submission of a clear plan of the parts the barrier that need to be moved, including our offer to reinstate the railings to protect members of the public using the pavement that is currently behind the plywood barrier. Without access we cannot do the necessary remedial work or improve public safety.

- ⤴ Mann Williams have undertaken a further inspection of the foyer, Hall and front of the building up to roof level. We are still awaiting the full report, but are assured that while there will be some minimal

maintenance repairs needed in the Hall the area is currently structurally safe and can be re-opened for public use.

- ⤴ The Capita Report on potential development of the Exchange, commissioned by Welsh Government's Economic Development Minister was published and a copy sent to Save the Coal Exchange Ltd. Though we might disagree with some details, we welcome this as a great improvement on anything existing before.

- ⤴ Around the 15th October Officers from Cardiff CC Economic Development department interviewed potential developers - we understand there were 4 developers interviewed.

- ⤴ Signature Living (based in Liverpool) were chosen as preferred developers.

- ⤴ On 9th November a Director of Save the Coal Exchange Ltd along with the Director of Coal Exchange Ltd (who used to run events in the Hall and has a lease registered at The Land Registry), visited Signature Living in Liverpool. Signature Living's current plan is to develop the Exchange into a boutique / heritage hotel along the lines of their hotels in Liverpool. These cater mainly for hen and stage nights, weddings etc. They offered use of the Hall to Coal Exchange Ltd for events and a museum / heritage centre along with an office to Save The Coal Exchange Ltd. Signature had no plans to develop the North Wing at this point, but to leave the black barrier in place. They expect the hotel would be open by August 2016, having been assured by a Cardiff CC consultant in Major Projects that ownership would be sorted out swiftly, and planning permission would only be needed for change of use, and would be very rapid.

- ⤴ On 12th November the same CCC consultant from Major Projects came to the Exchange to post a "Demand for Payment" notice on the wall claiming payment for £177,593.56 + 8% daily interest from 12th November 2015. This under Sections 78, 107 and 94 of the 1984 Building Act. The notice was addressed to "Occupier or Owner". It is well documented that significant concerns exist over the misuse of s78 powers by CCC and the justification for any ongoing claims for costs relating to those powers are a key element of the Petition request for a Public Enquiry.

- ⤴ The information with regards to Signature Living and the Notice was shared with Stephen Doughty MP on 13th November. He met with Paul Orders and Neil Hanratty from Cardiff CC and challenged the way they were operating. Stephen also spoke with Ken Skates AM who had no knowledge of CCC's actions. CCC asserted the North of the building was to eventually be turned into apartments.

- ⤴ We have also been in touch with Burgess Salmon, solicitors for the Crown Estate who currently hold the Exchange in escheat and they show some surprise at CCC's actions. Stephen Doughty has also been in touch with them.

I have tried to keep these notes brief as I am aware of the huge volume of work you have to deal with on very different topics, but if you feel it would be useful to have copies of the Mann Williams Report, Notice, correspondence with Burgess Salmon or any other documents please let me know.

Note: Save the Coal Exchange Ltd is a not-for-profit company limited by guarantee with charitable aims and objectives, constituted in December 2014 following a public meeting on the future of the Coal Exchange.

Val Hill

Treasurer, Save the Coal Exchange Ltd

16th November 2015