

Committee: Full Council

Date: 21 February 2023

Title: Somerset Skills and Learning Centre

Purpose of Report

Members to reaffirm the desire for the Centre to be registered as a community asset.

Recommendation:

Members to Resolve to delegate to officers to ensure that the Somerset Skills and Learning Centre on Ditton Street is reinstated to the SSDC (SC) asset register.

Background:

1. Under the Localism Act 2011 Communities were given the right to request for assets to be placed on the Assets of Community Value Register that is maintained by their Principal Authorities. The Assets of Community Value Legislation 2012 covers all of the necessary legislation that allows for assets to be registered.
2. At the Full Council meeting on the 5 December 2017 Members considered an option to Register the Somerset Skills and Learning Centre Building as an asset of community value. The Minutes from the meeting show:

The Council was asked to consider nominating the Skills and Learning Centre in Ditton Street, Ilminster as a community asset and request South Somerset District Council to make the appropriate registration.

Issues discussed during consideration of this agenda item included:

- *Current community uses of the building include:*
 - *Community education*
 - *Adult education*
 - *Polling station*
 - *Faith groups*
- *The premises may be suitable for Town Council Offices with community space available for small meetings and groups.*
- *It would be nice if the town had a small museum.*
- *It may be possible to co locate on the site e.g. tourism information, Christmas lights storage, resilience store.*
- *The current Town Council offices are not fit for purpose as having steps in the entrance makes it very difficult for people to get in and leave the building.*
- *There is no guarantee that the current Town Council offices will remain available for rent.*
- *The adult / community education programmes provided at the Skills and learning centre have been very popular and at one time there was a footfall of over 1,000 people necessitating use of the school next door as well.*
- *The building is within the conservation area.*
- *Within the grounds is a Grade II listed flagpole base.*

RESOLVED to request South Somerset District Council to list 47 Ditton Street, Ilminster, currently the occupied by Somerset Skills and Learning, as an asset of community value.

Report:

3. The Town Council was notified on the 6 February that the 5 year registration of the Somerset Skills and Learning Centre expired on the 5 February 2023.
4. Whilst the Town Council has since moved to new premises it may still wish to ensure that should Somerset Council in the future wish to dispose of the building that the Town Council be given an opportunity to either acquire it itself or work with other organisations to ensure it remains available for community use.
5. By having a building listed as an Asset of Community Value it effectively gives the community (including the Town Council) an opportunity to bid for the asset should it ever be offered up for sale.
6. When a listed asset comes to be sold, a moratorium on the sale (of up to six months) may be invoked, providing local community groups with a better chance to raise finance, develop a business case and to make a bid to buy the asset on the open market.
7. Members are asked to delegate to officers to ensure that the Somerset Skills and Learning Centre on Ditton Street is reinstated to the SSDC (SC) asset register.

**Mark Tredwin
Town Clerk
February 2023**