

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

10 September 2020

Petition Launched to Save Clair Hall

Liberal Democrats urge residents to help save Haywards Heath's Key Community Venue by signing online petition: midsussexlibdems.org.uk/en/petition/petition-to-save-clair-hall

On Monday, 14th September, Mid Sussex District Council's Cabinet will consider a proposal to permanently close Clair Hall, the prime community centre in Haywards Heath. If the Cabinet proceeds with the proposal it will be put to the full council at the end of September. That will almost certainly be the final curtain for an arts, entertainment and meeting venue which has served the town so well for decades.

Clair Hall provides almost **half**¹ of all the community meeting space in Haywards Heath. Its closure will mean the loss of a valuable community resource where residents of all ages and with a huge variety of interests have enjoyed pantos, music gigs, theatre productions, comedy shows and cinema screenings. It is also used for clinics, conferences, exhibitions, exercise classes, weddings, parties and many types of meetings.

Quite shockingly, there has been no public consultation either with local residents or with the many regular users of the Hall.

In August when the re-opening of Clair Hall was being debated, Liberal Democrat councillors proposed that the Council should commit to not closing Clair Hall unless like-for-like or better facilities could be made available. This was voted down by the Conservative councillors including those representing Haywards Heath residents. The latest proposal is to permanently close the Hall on the basis of a flimsy cost analysis without proper consideration of the alternatives.

Liberal Democrat District Councillor Richard Bates says "This is a travesty. The Conservative Council leadership have taken no account of the great value to the community which Clair Hall provides. They just don't seem to care."

The proposal does not include any plans for the future of the site apart from redevelopment with no commitment to provide a replacement community centre. "This is a time when we need to support and build our community not dismantle a key part of our local infrastructure" said Stephanie Inglesfield, Haywards Heath Town Councillor. "In the future more people are expecting to work from home, at least for part of the week, so entertainment and events at local venues are likely to be in more demand than ever."

Liberal Democrats are urging Mid Sussex residents who feel strongly about this issue to sign an online petition at: <https://midsussexlibdems.org.uk/en/petition/petition-to-save-clair-hall>

ENDS

FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:

Councillor Richard Bates, Mid Sussex District Councillor for Ashenground Ward:
Telephone 07802 805266, Email – r.bates111@btinternet.com

NOTES TO EDITOR:

1. Max Associates Report to MSDC: "Needs Analysis: Martlets Hall, June 2015, page 19, paragraph 5.13