

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE MONDAY 12 OCTOBER 2020

**Five Questions about Clair Hall that the Public Deserve Answers to.  
Ahead of a special MSDC meeting to review the decision to permanently close  
Clair Hall, the Lib Dems say that these questions need answers:**

**1. Why the Rush?**

What is driving the decision to push the closure of Clair Hall through at breakneck speed without proper regard to the Council's own decision-making rules?

**2. What does the Council want to do with this prime town centre site?**

What are the alternative uses envisaged for the site? What alternative locations are being considered for Clair Hall's replacement?

**3. Why were the public not consulted before the Cabinet decided to close Clair Hall?**

One of the Council's principles of decision making is that 'proper regard should be paid to internal and external consultation according to the decision in question'<sup>1</sup>. Why has this not happened?

**4. Is this Council still committed to facilitating culture and the arts across Mid Sussex?**

When MSDC closed Martlets Hall in Burgess Hill in 2018, one justification was that hall users could be relocated to Clair Hall in Haywards Heath. What does the closure of Clair Hall mean for this Council's future community and culture strategies?

**5. Is COVID-19 being used to push through the closure of Clair Hall – something MSDC have been attempting to achieve since the 2007 Haywards Heath Masterplan?**

With venues as varied as the Royal Albert Hall and Hurstpierpoint Village Centre both reopening despite social distancing restrictions, why does MSDC say that it is not possible for Clair Hall to do the same? Redevelopment of the Clair Hall site has been on the cards for over decade. Isn't COVID being used as a convenient excuse?

Cllr Alison Bennett, Liberal Democrat Group Leader said: "There's lots of public anger about the way this decision has been rushed through. Clair Hall is a much-loved part of Haywards Heath and there's a feeling that it's just been snatched away under the cover of COVID. Voters have got a right to have their voice heard on this and that's what we'll make sure happens on Tuesday.

"We don't expect the council to get everything right but we think this is a bad decision, reached through a flawed process. This meeting could give the Cabinet a chance to reset and come back with a plan that ensures the town doesn't have to wait years for a replacement facility."

**ENDS**

Continues overleaf...

**FOR MORE INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT:**

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**NOTES TO EDITOR:**

1. <https://midsussex.moderngov.co.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?Committeed=211&info=1&bcr=1> Article 13, paragraph 13.2 (c)
2. The meeting is being held virtually at 4pm on Tuesday 13<sup>th</sup> October. The public can view the meeting on the Council's YouTube Channel: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCW9I9y-TZXZs6jOFmOgiPyQ>
3. The reports for the special meeting of the Scrutiny Committee for Communities, Customer Service and Service Delivery are available here: <http://midsussex.moderngov.co.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=283&MId=2659&Ver=4>