

CALA Homes and Coors Brewery

Charitable Trust Outline

Some time ago we put forward the idea of putting the S106 funding from CALA/Coors into a charitable trust controlled by local Trustees, but working closely with ATC and EHDC. At that time (April) there was reasonable certainty that a building (or money equivalent of about £3.5m) was on offer – and EHDC carried out a number of consultations to determine how best to use this “legacy” from the development of the historical brewery site. However, there was no firm conclusion out of this work because of uncertainty of the funding amount and because there was no agreed checklist of needs for community facilities.

Wind on to July, and the CALA staff at their public exhibition of plans for the brewery site were definite that the only “legacy” would be the formula-calculated CIL funds, estimated at around £2m. Of this amount, 25% would be deployed by the Town Council during the build period, the rest being open to infrastructure bidders such as HCC for schools, roads, etc. We hope and expect, however, that the current, formal pre-application negotiations will lead to a S106 settlement of roughly the same value as originally portrayed in the earlier consultations - in recognition of the “planning gain” made available by EHDC to CALA/Coors.

If indeed such a substantial legacy is confirmed, it needs to be deployed in a way that satisfies CALA, Coors and the people of Alton. A single new building would be the obvious choice, but there is no consensus on what it should be or where it could be located. Indeed, the existing plus some known needs for extra community facilities could not fit into a single, affordable building, even if a suitable space could be found for it. Examples include a performance hall and a gym. A much more realistic, flexible and future-proofed solution would be to maintain, enhance and expand existing facilities and services, particularly the Assembly Rooms and the Community Centre. The latter is owned by EHDC but survives (with difficulty) thanks to volunteer trustees, with over £250k spent on it in the last 3 years.

Fragmenting the legacy in this way might not appeal to CALA and Coors but, as an alternative, surely they would approve of a charitable trust being set up, with their names attached, to deploy the S106 funds into community projects? This structure should also appeal to the people of Alton who would thus choose, “own” and support these facilities, unlike the situation with the replacement Sports/Leisure building.

So the Alton Society is recommending that the original idea of a charitable trust is now adopted. Something similar is already in use in Bordon & Whitehill . This approach would fit in well with EHDC’s new approach of “Placemaking”, with Cllr Rob Mocatta as portfolio holder, who has already consulted with some stakeholders on the future of Alton’s community facilities and services. This approach would be strengthened if a senior EHDC officer were appointed with specific responsibility for championing and co-ordinating EHDC activities relating to Alton.

The combination of these initiatives with a “CALA & Coors Brewery Trust” would surely be supported enthusiastically by the people of Alton.

In summary we propose:-

- set up a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO), named as above, with experienced trustees selected from Alton residents , and with appointees from EHDC and the Town Council.
- transfer agreed S106 funds derived from the brewery site development to this CIO, adding the disposal proceeds of community assets owned by EHDC (eg Cross & Pillory Lane and the Boys' Club in Nursery Rd).
- consult thoroughly on real needs for community services and facilities which cannot be met by existing spare capacity.
- invest in new facilities based on these consultations, seeking extra funds from sponsorships of specific projects.
- where appropriate, support core costs (including rent) of new and existing community services and facilities.

We look forward to developing this initiative.

Nicky Branch
Chairman, The Alton Society
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