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To: Planning (Isles of Scilly)
Subject: Planning application: P/22/033/COU

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Dear Lisa & Andrew

Planning application: P/22/033/Cou

At the age of fourteen, (1976) I became involved with the Museum as part of my 'O' level History, with Steve Ottery, Schoolmaster, who had the then 'curator' / Secretary type role. We'd go in afterhours doing 'odd jobs'.

In the decades since, i've been both a volunteer and a committee member. I have archived material, built exhibitions, and manned the desk for more hours than I could possibly remember in the intervening decades, all as a volunteer, alongside countless other volunteers.

I personally think people, mostly those recently arrived to live in Scilly, have got carried away with these plans for a museum in the Town Hall. The Town Hall is a 'beast' of a building, designed for purpose, surely it should be left alone, and not have to be clad in hideous, over sized extensions, that take away its iconic place in our islands history.

I would prefer to see hall and stage renovated and put back into use. All the off islands communities have worked hard to get community halls, on St Mary's people took the Town Hall for granted for too long, and didn't realise what an asset it actually was.

I also think it unrealistic to cater for the supposed amount of footfall a new place of this size would attract, you cannot change visitors habits....from a desk volunteer perspective, unless it was raining, a typical tuesday afternoon, and friday afternoon, the slots i'd always do in the last few years, were usually devoid of visitors, the sun shine would mean that we'd be empty bar the odd one or two, often trying to get back in on a return ticket. You only need look at the ledgers to see the totals of 'actual' visitors to see this.

I note a shop is included, folk occasionally bought a postcard from the desk, but as the price of postage stamps increased in recent years, even sales of postcards diminished.

Throughout the 'off season' we'd open in the mornings, helping the Curator with jobs, and exhibitions, seldom did any visitor pop in. Any 'effort' Island Partnership may have made to extend the visitor season, in my view certainly didn't reflect in off season visitors in the museum.

I also have an issue with the proposed multi rooms exhibitions. Who would sit in them to monitor any suspicious activity, it was hard enough in the old museum, with two levels, but at least you could lean over the rails to look into the downstairs. Museums on the mainland invariably have people on duty in each gallery.

Whoever is running the museum now, seems to have alienated many of the original volunteers, myself included. The joy of the old museum was undoubtedly the skillset and knowledge of the previous curator and each and every volunteer, this will never be replicated. The original museum was quirky, and that's what many visitors to Scilly actually want, they don't want a 'state of the art', high tech, gadget laden experience.

The plans to turn Augustus Smith's Town Hall into a 'White Elephant' should be refused. It is rather sad that if the Council of the Isles of Scilly had not been such a negligent landlord, and had facilitated much needed repairs to the old building when asked, we may still have a local museum that could have been upgraded at far less cost.

Where are the Thai and Chip Van to be relocated?

Any tea shop trade will only take trade from businesses already established in the locality.

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