

**WILTSHIRE COUNCIL**

**WARMINSTER AREA BOARD**

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**COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER**

**The Close Centre, Warminster**

**Executive Summary**

This report deals with an application for the transfer of The Close Centre (former Youth Centre), Warminster to be transferred to The Warminster Athenaeum Trust in accordance with Wiltshire Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy.

**Proposal**

The Area Board is asked to consider an application submitted by The Warminster Athenaeum Trust for the transfer of The Close Centre, Warminster. The applicant's proposal is set out at Appendix 2.

**Reasons For Proposal**

This proposal supports and implements Wiltshire Council's Community Asset Transfer Policy.

**Recommendation**

To approve the transfer subject to the matters referred to in paragraph 9 of the report.

**Jacqui Abbott**  
Warminster Community Area Manager

**COMMUNITY ASSET TRANSFER**

**The Close Centre, Warminster**

**Purpose of Report**

1. The Area Board is asked to consider an application submitted by The Warminster Athenaeum Trust for the transfer of The Close Centre, Warminster (see plan attached at Appendix 1). The applicant's proposal is set out at Appendix 2.

**Background**

2. Wiltshire Council is supporting the principle of the transfer of community assets in order to empower and strengthen local communities. The Council believes that transferring appropriate public assets to communities leads to more responsive services that better meet local people's priorities.
3. Transfer of an asset can also provide the opportunity to lever more resources into a community and provide a more accessible and responsive base from which to deliver local services.
4. A community group or organisation can benefit from greater financial stability and build confidence through having ownership (or long term security through a lease) of a physical asset. This financial sustainability can help the organisation become less dependent on grants, provide security for further borrowing and opportunities for further growth.
5. Typically, organisations that would be considered appropriate are Voluntary and Community Groups/Associations, Town or Parish Councils, Trusts or Charities, or Social Enterprise Groups.

**The application before the Area Board**

6. The application from The Warminster Athenaeum Trust is attached at Appendix 2 and relates to the transfer of the Close Centre, Warminster.
7. The application was submitted in accordance with the Council's application process and meets the requirements for consideration by the Area Board.
8. The Community Area Manager has consulted with Strategic Property Services, who have undertaken appropriate consultation with service departments across the Council. Local consultation has been undertaken by the applicant in accordance with the application checklist and the

outcome of the consultation is included within the application. Cllr Davis, the local member, has been apprised.

### **The views of Council officers**

9. On behalf of the Council, Strategic Property Services (who have overall responsibility for the Council's estates and property) has provided the following observations to the Area Board.
  - 9.1 As the transfer is not to be to a town or parish council, or other government body, it will be by a 125 year lease.
  - 9.2 A small area of the property, being the site of part of a building, is leased to the applicant. This lease will merge with the new 125 year lease upon completion of the transfer.
  - 9.3 Wiltshire Council still occupies the property for the delivery of services, both direct and commissioned. Continued occupation to provide these services at a cost which does not exceed the existing costs of so doing will need to be safeguarded.
  - 9.4 Subject to the comments in 9.3 above, financial implications will be limited to the loss of the small rental income from the land referred to in 9.2 above and the transfer of property running costs to the applicant.
  - 9.5 The property is to be transferred on the usual basis. This will restrict use of the property to community purposes. If the property should cease to be used for this purpose the land will revert to Wiltshire Council.

### **Recommendation**

10. To approve the transfer subject to the matters in paragraph 9 above.

**Jacqui Abbott**  
Warminster Community Area Manager

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