

**Reopen the Regent presentation
to Dover District Council Scrutiny Committee**

6pm, 13th September 2016

Deal Town Hall

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The campaign group Reopen the Regent has two goals:

- To see as much as possible of the Regent building preserved and restored, as soon as possible.
- To see the Regent building, once restored and made ready, leased to a bona fide cinema operator to fit out and reopen as a cinema for the people of Deal and beyond.

We will do whatever we can to be of help in the achievement of these goals¹.

Our support is community wide and, thus far, we have gathered 2,588 signatures.

Questions for Scrutiny

1. Given that you sold this public asset to developers to turn into a cinema over five years ago, why hasn't this happened?
2. What due diligence was undertaken to ensure 'Silver Screens' or those calling themselves thisⁱⁱ had the experience and wherewithal to make this happen? What guarantees were sought from 'Silver Screens'?
3. When the price was dropped, why weren't the other bidders notified? Isn't this a legal requirement?
4. What covenants have been applied? Class D1 and D2 and Sui Generis Theatre within the Use Classes Order 1987 is documented but a 20-year clause which prohibits a change of use has been mentioned in the pressⁱⁱⁱ. Where is this documented?
5. Why – when the building is deemed of historical interest^{iv} and is in a conservation area – is it not being protected and preserved? What measures have DDC's heritage and conservation staff taken to date and what will they be taking in future? Does the Committee agree with DDC's CEO's opinion that it would be 'counter-productive to enforce the covenant. Clearly if we felt no effort was being made then the Council would look to take action'. At what point would DDC deem progress to be 'inaction'?
6. Why has the Council not used any of its widespread powers of enforcement to make the current owners:
 - maintain the fabric of the building
 - use the building appropriately
 - pay appropriate rates (does DDC believe that the current occupants of the Regent are paying business rates on the whole building?)^{v vi}
 - open the building as a cinema?

7. What further action could the Scrutiny Committee advise the Cabinet to take to move the matter forward?

i [REDACTED] have all expressed a theoretical interest in the Regent. We have contacts should you wish to talk to potential leasers and buyers.

ii Property was sold to TM Trustees Ltd, James Wallace & Mark Digweed. The monies were paid by HBJ Gateley Wareing LLP. Silver Screen Cinemas is not a registered company but the name used by James Wallace's father Alexander (Sandy) Wallace who leases cinema buildings in Dover and Folkestone.

iii From EKM [report](#) 01/05/2015.

iv 1971 Kent County Architectural Appraisal: category B (in favour of preservation).

v After years of denying it, James Wallace [admitted](#) running (at least one) business out of the building.

vi March 2016 business rates have an exemption listed for property 6503980700: 'void RV minimum' and is classed as 'void'