



*From a Whisper to a Roar*

## *Foreword*

In July 2009 Seaton Town Council put forward a motion to buy a property and convert it to new council/business offices. Several people in the community were concerned about this and attended the council meeting where the item was being discussed. During the standard 15 minute public speaking time, members of the public voiced their opinions on this proposal.

The majority of comments were against the proposal because of the vulnerable position it placed the town hall in, as it currently houses the council. Following this meeting a large number of people attended a public meeting arranged a week later to discuss options and a way forward.

The points raised fell into the following categories

- ✚ The council's lack of consultation and public accountability
- ✚ The lack of a business case/plan for Willoughby House
- ✚ The sustainability of the town hall
- ✚ The lack of positive promotion for Seaton

It was recognised that the thoughts and concerns of those attending needed to be carried forward and so two groups were formed A and B. Group A were a small number of people who could commit time and energy to moving forward. Group B were a larger number of people who would support Group A as and when required.

Group A spent time talking to others; linking with agencies; providers; Seaton Town Council and East Devon District Council. Exploring the option of running the town hall as a social enterprise for the community, under the recommendations of the Quirk report 200?

Following a thorough investigation into the possibilities for the town hall and establishing a group to deliver them. Group A founded Seaton Voices and launched the Town Hall Community Enterprise Project on January 29<sup>th</sup> 2010

This document is the plan that will bring the town hall to life, to restore community pride and identity by bringing people together to deliver this vision. What this document will not show is the determination, passion and energy of this group who will bring the town hall back to life. It can't let you hear the discussions and debates that have raced around a lounge table; stacked with papers and cakes; interrupted only by the sound of a boiling kettle. It will not translate the enthusiasm shown by people that we have spoken to who want to be involved. It cannot create the wave of inspiration that rises when we watch a young person speak about their future, our future, Seaton's future. This document is the framework, the map, setting the boundaries of the plan to achieve our aim. The world is littered with great plans and documents. The success of this project will not be the plan but the dynamics of the people involved. The sheer force of an unwavering belief that this can be done, is the critical factor that will drive this project through its worst times and capture everything at its best.

## *Introduction and Summary of Actions*

We are a group of like minded individuals who want to promote the town they live in and share their expertise and experience in enhancing community activities for all ages. Our skill set include: Strategic Management, Project Management, Operational delivery, Human Resource Management, Marketing, Event Planning, Finance & Budget Control. We have experience working within the community and have knowledge of issues for young people, disabled people, families and the elderly. We have established relationships with public, private and voluntary organizations, they are:

- East Devon Council – Formal notification of intent
- JCP & DWP – Employment Programmes
- PCT – Supporting Healthy living
- CVS – Supporting Community services
- Business Link – Supporting Social Enterprise
- Adult Education Service – Providing Educational Opportunities
- The Chamber of Commerce – Seaton Businesses
- South West Charity – Employment Opportunities for young people 19 -24
- Axe Valley School – Supporting Community Learning & Social Enterprise.
- Refresh SGI – Website & Community Development
- Local Groups – Supporting Community Activities
- Devon County Council
- Changemakers uk
- Co-active – supporting social enterprise

*Our research has identified the following partners.*

- Alan Simpson – Head Teacher Seaton Primary School
- Martin Smith – Head Teacher Axe Valley Community College
- Local business, groups and individuals, (from launch the community)
- An individual who has donated £1000 start up funds
- Website design company that will work with us to develop ecommerce
- WIFI Hub company that will set up internet provision
- St Loye's Foundation who will link with us to provide employment opportunities for 19 – 24 year old under the government Future Jobs Fund (FJF)

*Our research has identified the following activities*

- A breakfast and after school provision for 11- 16 providing homework support, web access, café.
- A joint team of FJF employees and young entrepreneurs ( Axe Valley)
- Themed activity sessions where 4 zones could be establish to provide a variety of activities for all ages, utilizing flat screens and WIFI connections
- Various activities from tea dances to entertainment evenings
- Development days for organisations, providing break out rooms, food etc.
- Holiday activities for visitors
- A base for implementing other community projects, such as a 'clean up' or planting exercise.

*How will we make it work?*

- Securing staff from FJF fund/St Loye's
- Securing an office base for staff
- Funding screens and equipment, some furniture etc from STC
- An agreement on rental costs for a short term period with EDDC
- Fundraising for ourselves by running events, jointly hosted with organisations that can provide insurance cover etc.
- Fundraising for smaller groups to support town hall usage

- Developing ecommerce/ sponsorship on the website
- Establishing a membership/ subscription service
- Linking with service providers, health, education etc to ensure sustainability for all
- Communicate with the community openly and transparently

*Phase One (approx cost 1k)*

- Establish the group and decide legal structure
- Explore the options for ourselves and town hall
- Talk with everyone, partners and service providers
- Open dialogue with STC and EDDC
- Identify costings and suppliers
- Create strategic plan for short and long term vision
- Secure office base, staff, equipment and WIFI
- Secure mentors for staff.
- Launch website to generate income from sponsors and membership (4k + 10k)

*Phase Two – Running the TH in partnership with EDDC*

*( EDDC will work in partnership where they remain the landlord and we ‘run’ the town hall, the website will have an online booking systems. They will come to an agreement about cost and may even let us have a licensing agreement with no rent to be paid for 6mths)*

*( approx cost of equipment £20K to be secured from Seaton town council)*

- Create a learning zone, lounge room upstairs
- Create an activity programme for the main hall (day usage)
- Run the activities
- Run social events to capture a new audience for the town hall, balls, discos, quiz, bands. ( with other groups who have insurance etc)
- Work with ST loye’s to provide staff for clean up jobs ( they have a pool of people who would just come over for a set number of days)
- Secure other funding
- Raise funds/ in kind support for any building or development work to brighten up the town hall.

*Phase Three ( approx cost unknown at present)*

- Secure the building with asset transfer (Quirk) or a partnership arrangement for long term sustainability ( at least a year to two years away)