

By email to [mikeja@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk](mailto:mikeja@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk) and [JamesP@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk](mailto:JamesP@pembrokeshirecoast.org.uk)

**Subject: Provision of Tourist Information in Newport.**

Sent 27<sup>th</sup> October 2016

Dear Cllr James ( Chair PCNPA) and James Parkin ( Director of Delivery and Discovery PCNPA).

I am writing as a supporter of the National Park for over 20 years through the Friends of PCNP and as a Voluntary Warden .

I quite understand that the NPA needs to examine new ways of delivering its services, particularly in the face of changing visitor requirements and reducing budgets.

However I am concerned that the NPA is considering selling the visitor centre in Newport before the full implications of the changes have been rigorously thought through. In particular, little convincing evidence has been provided to the public that the proposed replacement services will be effective. For example, 'Parkwise' requires the active support of businesses to give time, training and space but such evidence was not forthcoming that this has been achieved. In general, shops in Newport are poorly provided with space, convenient car parking and disabled access, whereas the Visitor centre offers excellent facilities.

I am also disappointed that the stated NPA priority of contributing to local community life appears not to have been explored thoroughly. Options for sharing resources with local organisations such as the library, town council and local organisations requiring small meeting spaces do not seem to have been investigated with the energy necessary for a productive outcome. Furthermore the current leadership vacuum in the Newport community, due to conflicts of interest or ill health, makes it even more important for the NPA to engage positively with the community.

Although we were told that finance is not the driving force behind the proposals, initiatives which could offer regular income would no doubt help. I understand that the visitor centre costs the NPA only about £20K net per annum and has rising income and customer numbers. This represents about 4.2% of expenditure on the 5 National Park visitor centres and attractions, whereas the Newport centre accounts for over 10% of the 300,000 customers per year.

In conclusion it would seem premature to sell an asset which is ideally located in the centre of Newport which serves north Pembrokeshire, the largest area of the National Park, before the benefits of new initiatives have been clearly demonstrated.

Yours sincerely,

John Ratcliffe

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