

GRACE HILL LIBRARY in Folkestone: Open letter of protest to Kent County Council

The groups listed below represent a diverse range of community interests.

We share a passion for learning and for our community.

Along with other members of the public, we wish to express our collective fury at the actions of Kent County Council and our elected representatives in failing to protect and maintain the Grace Hill Library and History Resource Centre in Folkestone.

This is an historic Grade II listed building, which is probably the earliest surviving purpose-built library in the County - in use for over 130 years

A library is more than a building: it is a symbol of community and learning.

That is why the threat to Grace Hill is a matter of extreme concern for all of us.

A full report setting out our views will be published for consultation as soon as possible.

We call on officers and elected members to put an IMMEDIATE HALT to any further actions which serve to dismantle the Grace Hill library facilities or determine the future of the building, pending a full and public inquiry.

We also call for any possible limited usage to resume as soon as possible.

We demand a public meeting and further information to explain:

- 1) The rationale for the KCC public statement
- 2) The state of play in exploring a range of options, which could include, for example:
 1. To retain the building under a different management model
 2. To review usage in tandem with the current review of service locations
 3. To consider this in the context of The Place Plan and other Folkestone public amenities
- 3) Why any significant building issues weren't picked up during previous major work programmes
- 4) How the assessment of works and costs has been carried out and the chronology of events
- 5) When officers became aware of these issues
- 6) When these were reported to KCC cabinet/councillors
- 7) How public communications and consultation have been managed

Alliance of Folkestone Residents Associations

Bayle Residents Association

Books for Change

Enough is Enough

Folkestone & District Family History Society

Folkestone & District Local History Society

Folkestone Art Society

Folkestone Art Trust

Folkestone Fishing Heritage & History Museum

Folkestone Fringe

Folkestone Literary Group

Folkestone Music Town

Folkestone Research & Archaeology Group

Folkestone Samuel Plimsoll Campaign Group

Folkestone Walking Tours

Friends of Folkestone Library

Friends of Leas Pavilion

Friends of Old Folkestone Cemetery

Friends of St Mary & St Eanswythe

Go Folkestone

Here Before Us

Hythe Remainers Book Group

Leas Pavilion Archive

Leas Residents' Association

New Folkestone Society

Pavement Pounders

Poets Corner

Save Folkestone Library

Shepway HEART Forum

Shorncliffe Trust

St Eanswythe Research Group

Strange Cargo

Sunflower House

Urban Room Folkestone

Wealden Strand

Write By The Sea