



The Cambridge gun tower on Front Street, Pembroke Dock. PICTURE: Martin Cavaney

Dismay at move to sell off historic gun tower

A PEMBROKE Dock community group has expressed its deep regret at the loss of a once highly-praised attraction, following a decision to sell off a rare Victorian gun tower.

The Cambridge Gun Tower on Front Street, known locally as the Martello Tower, is being placed up for auction by Pembrokeshire County Council.

It is one of only three Cambridge gun towers in the UK.

Pembroke Dock County Councillor Josh Beynon said: "There was always uncertainty over the building, but I had been working with the museum trust in this time to try and save it.

"I am disappointed this is the current plan by the council, and I am hell-bent on ensuring everything is done to save the tower and retain it as a community asset.

By Bruce Sinclair

01437 761754
bsi@westerntelegraph.co.uk

"Pembroke Dock is rich in history and it would be criminal to sell off our most historical assets.

"The best thing for the county council would be to identify a suitable partner such as the town council or town team and let them decide how to use the asset going forward."

A Pembroke Dock Museum Trust spokesman said: "The Front Street Gun Tower - known locally as the Martello Tower - was refurbished by South Pembrokeshire District Council and opened as a tourist information centre and small museum by the Duke of Edinburgh in 1996.

"In 2001 it was leased by Pembrokeshire County Council to the Pembroke

Dock Museum Trust and was developed into a highly-praised town museum.

"The Museum Trust ran it very successfully with a team of volunteers for several years until major water penetration problems forced its closure to the public.

"It took some years for specialist work to be agreed and then carried out to prevent water ingress.

"In 2018 an application was made for a community asset transfer of the building to the Museum Trust, but this was turned down by the county council.

"There is great regret and disappointment that due to the financial climate affecting heritage and arts organisations and local government across the country, that there is no way for the Museum Trust to continue to operate the gun tower as a heritage attraction.

"Pembroke Dock's unique

history already brings in visitors from all over the world, contributing to the much-needed regeneration of this community.

"However, funding is becoming increasingly scarce and only a very small handful of high-profile organisations are able to achieve financial viability without support for paying some core costs.

"The Museum Trust will now continue to work with other heritage organisations to ensure that its collection of artefacts and memorabilia will continue to be cared for and made accessible to the public."

The county council said the tower is to be sold unless a "viable and sustainable offer is received."

A spokesman added: "We are still prepared to listen to any community group that wants to make such a proposal."