**Sale of Bethlehem - Newport Town Council statement**

Newport Town Council has been informed by the agent dealing with the sale of Bethlehem that it will be sold by auction. This will not allow time for Newport town council to put in a bid.

The council has expressed a wish to look into Bethlehem being acquired for the community through a Community Land Trust or a Community Benefit Society. It has submitted an Expression of Interest to allow the community time to prepare a bid for the property and to review the key legal, technical, planning and viability issues of a development proposal. This time would have allowed us to thoroughly research and incorporate the community’s needs, potential funding avenues, and sustainable practices in our bid and business plan.

The Bethlehem chapel trustees have decided to sell the property by public auction and are grateful for our expression of interest but have explained that they cannot show favoritism to one party more than another, as they are charged to market the property in the most transparent method available to them.