

Deadend-on-Sea film could solve our cash crisis



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I BEGIN with a disclaimer. This week's column does not set out to bash Southend Council. I don't believe in kicking councils when they're down, and anyway, these days Southend is so poor, it's not worth the effort of mugging it and rifling its pockets.

You won't even find an old baked potato or two, now that councillors have got to pay for their own lunches. Times are indeed grim.

Theatres and community centres are on the hit list. Chairman Howard Briggs has resigned. There's even talk

of selling the council chamber as a cloakroom for all those new casinos.

Happily, even the darkest times can give rise to spots of glee, and the council's economy drive is no exception. In its desperate search for extra sources of revenue, the council has tried everything short of charging council tax on garden gnomes. (Gosh, I hope I'm not putting ideas in their heads!)

However, they made a big mistake when they tried to charge location fees to the Westcliff Film and Video club. The club's film makers were so

incensed, they hit back with the strongest instrument at their disposal – a film.

The result, *Deadend on Sea: the Last Resort*, comprehensively rubbishes everything about the town. It is being screened all over the South East, and I've heard whispers about a faithful professional remake starring a TV entertainer as 14th town drunk.

The council won't like this one little bit, of course. Yet if they're sensible, they will view *Deadend on Sea: the Movie*, not as an insult, but as a golden opportunity. It's not every day

you get to star as the villain in a movie. Those who do should offer up a special twirl of their moustache to heaven.

Hollywood regularly casts Brits as baddies. This usually gives them the chance to act the stars off the screen and generally steal the movie. In addition, they come home with boatloads of cash. An entire local authority as baddie is a novelty. Southend Council should get itself an agent, then wait for the offers.

That's Southend's financial crisis solved, then. Next.