

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the COWES TOWN COUNCIL held at Community Hall, Northwood House, Cowes on Wednesday, 1st December 2010 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillor Wells (Town Mayor) (Chairman)
Councillors Banks, Birch, Ellis, Hammond, Jones, McGregor, Matthews,
Mazillius, Peacey-Wilcox, Robinson, Sanderson, Thwaites and Wilcox

6400 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Walters.

6401 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No members of the public wished to ask any questions.

6402 REPORTS BY ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLORS

Councillor Peacey-Wilcox gave an oral report referring to the following:

- Messages of thanks for the new bench at Bailey's in Cowes High Street
- complaints of uneven pavements which she has passed to highways
- complaints about traffic misusing the pedestrian crossing on Mill Hill Rd
- attended a Remembrance Service in the Seychells (as part of a private trip)
- reports that the St Faiths church site will now be run by the Apex church.

PC Sizer asked for more details of the traffic problems at the pedestrian crossing on Mill Hill Road.

Cllr Peacey-Wilcox reported that cars speed from the Centenary end of this road, cars are parked on double-yellow lines. Older people feel anxious about crossing and Cllr Peacey Wilcox is concerned that there will be more cars now that an appeal to develop the site at the back of the Co-op with more industrial units has been upheld.

Councillor Ellis gave a written report referring to the following:

- Riverside centre – has contacted the centre following concerns from users. Re-assured that the centre will continue.
- Attended Remembrance Day service in Cowes and Gurnard. Thanked CTC for newly refurbished memorial.
- Contacted highways over several issues, potholes not being filled, mud on roads, road damage caused by buses using unmade roads.
- Suggested at full IW Council meeting that all members' interests be automatically available on-line.
- Car park permits - £150 permits for those living within 200m of their nominated car park. Other IW residents' permit allowing access to all car parks in £500.
- His appointment to the IW Council's Economy, Environment and Transport Committee
- Attended 2 IW Council planning meetings, 2 governors meetings, Cowes Older Voices meeting, Youth Re-organisation consultation,
- Met with trading standards
- Supported several residents with personal and domestic issues.

Councillor Brown gave an oral report referring to the following:

Preparations for the IW Council's savings.

- Exact figures should be known 2nd December following the Comprehensive Spending Review.
- IW Council expects to have to save £17m in the next financial year and a total of £32m over 4 years.
- The total discretionary budget is £107m. Discretionary spend is things like leisure centres, libraries, tourist attractions.
- Large numbers of jobs to be "put at risk". These are all hard working people and so the council will have to provide less service.

Financial pressures on the IW are influenced by demographic features of the population.

- The large number of older people on the Island require care and support
- significant portion of those of working age do not work.

Cllr Brown apologised for the lack of written report but he has been very busy with the above and want the cuts to be "fair cuts".

Question: Cllr Banks I understand that you (IW Council) will be looking for to councils to support services that IW Council can't do?

Answer: The IW Council will co-operate as closely as possible over those things that the town considers essential. They will be flexible over the assets of the IW Council which town councils would like to support.

6403 REPORT FROM THE LOCAL SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER

PC Mike Sizer reported on the following:

- PC Jamie Jupey is on attachment with him at the moment
- Burglaries have taken place. A suspect has been arrested and enquiries are on-going.
- Theft from vehicles continues. They are always from insecure cars and items are impossible to trace such as cash, i-pods and other consumer goods.
- Night time prowler – 3 house searches have taken place and enquires continue
- Baring Road – house full of stolen property was discovered
- Christmas over time – in place for extra officers to be in and around the shops.
- Leaflet drop – highlighting to residents that they are vulnerable to crime at Christmas.
- Use of mobile phones while driving – there will be a publicised operation to combat this.
- Drink driving campaign – in operation again during Christmas period.
- Northwood House Graffiti – have a suspect, evidence is being gathered to take the case forward.
- Local Action Group – well into planning and will be first meeting 16th December. Sought views on venues.
- Statistics – despite crime spikes November is looking good and crime is at a lower level than last 3 years.

Question: Cllr Matthews: Is the theft from cars in a particular area?

Answer: Cowes leading into Northwood.

Question: Cllr Thwaites sought PC Sizers advice over a dumping of needles up the road from Nunnery steps. Cllr Thwaites had been informed that this was rare.

Answer: The problem is not unknown. Police can take proactive steps and access methadone lists from chemists which can give useful intelligence if the problem persists.

Question / Comment: Cllr Banks. 18 months ago there was a spate of lead thefts. Given the value of lead and copper and considering the economic climate are the police giving people advice?
Answer: Smart water will be available free of charge to people and this has its own DNA. The police also have a right of entry to scrap yards to inspect records.

6404 REPORT FROM LOCAL ENVIRONMENT OFFICER

A written report was sent to the Town Clerk referring to:

- Graffiti - brick work is now being cleaned by the contractors they have a back log to do but are getting through it.
- Dog fouling - early/late patrols in place but if anyone can give us approx times these offences are happening would be of great help.
- New street cleaning service is still doing a good job had a few problems with leaf fall but getting on top of it now.

6405 MINUTES RESOLVED

1. The town clerk will verify the wording of the resolution on minute 6396b.
2. That subject to any change relating to the above that the Minutes of the Meeting held on 3rd November, 2010 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6406 MATTERS ARISING

a). Island Plan – Core Strategy consultation document (Min. No. 6398g refers).

Cllr Walters has passed comments to Cllr Peacey-Wilcox to in turn pass to county hall. Councillors commented that this was a large and specialist document requiring significant prior knowledge. It was also noted that other specialist agencies with paid and trained staff are looking at the plan in detail and will help formulate the final document. This is proving to be a robust process with other agencies commenting on some difficulties in the strategy.

RESOLVED

Not to pass formal comment on the plan as other specialists are better equipped to comment on such a technical and detailed piece of work.

b) New Town Council office accommodation (Min. no. 6397b refers).

Solicitors are drawing up an agreement to start on 1st Jan, with the storage space being taken up at the same time. This will be a 2year lease with a 1 year no penalty break clause.

RESOLVED

The Assistant Town Clerk is to contact BT to install phone line during first week of January.

Question: Cllr Jones: Is the Town Council property still at Northwood House able to remain there until new office is available?

Answer: Cllr Thwaites: The working party as soon due to start in the rotunda and I will find out if it needs to move again.

c) The 'Lights of Love' carol service (Min. no. 6389f refers).

Cllr McGregor declared a personal interest

Both Cowes Town Council and Cowes Business Association will present a cheque.

The deputy mayor will be officiating. This year the Trinity singers are not going to be able to sing at this event but through the hospice Cowes Town Council could apply for a licence to do this.

Cllr Wells suggested that he could organise a flutist and would welcome anyone who wanted to lead on this part of the project.

d) Cowes Week Fireworks funding (Min. no. 6363c refers).

RESOLVED

To honour the £1,000 underwriting for the Cowes Week Fireworks.

The Shoreside Committee has requested that Cowes Town Council consider funding the fireworks in future years. Currently, funding has been secured through an anonymous donor but this person's generosity in the past may not be able to continue into the future.

RESOLVED

To ask Cowes Week Ltd to make a written request for future funding to the finance committee.

e) Play area (Min. no. 6372f refers)

Following a letter from a member of the public over her concerns about dogs in the play area Cllr McGregor met with the dog warden to explore the use of dog control orders for the play area. A dog control order would require 6 – 12 months of evidence before it could be made and would also require regular reviews. The dog warden suggested that a dog hitching post would be a better starting point to support people to control their dogs in the play area and it was suggested that this be placed near the bin as dogs are currently not tied up or tied to play equipment. Some research into the availability of dog hitching posts has been done and none is commercially available. The dog warden was also keen to use the signs in the play area in other play grounds on the Island as they are an excellent design.

Cllr Banks suggested that the whole play area be fenced and gated to keep dogs away.

Cllr McGregor replied that the dog warden has specifically stated that this doesn't help as people just let the dogs through the gate and the cost of fencing would be prohibitively high and original funding was specifically for an unfenced play space for older children.

Cllr Banks offered to prepare a spec to create dog hitching posts so that accurate costs can be established.

RESOLVED

Cllr Banks will prepare a specification for the dog hitching post.

f) The Cut

Style of Wight magazine has offered landscaping services and awarded assistance. Cllr McGregor is awaiting full details of what can be provided.

Jane Popov has approached the Town Clerk to re-do the mural using the Island Games as the theme for a competition. On the wall for the mural at least half of the rendering has come off and needs re-rendering. Planning permission has been re-submitted and currently awaiting the outcome. Still aim to have this completed by summer 2011 – dependent on planning permission. Jane Popov has also suggested the brick wall of Day Lewis (with the owner's agreement) could have large picture frames with local artists' pictures in them and with some planting between the frames.

RESOLVED

1. That Cllr Banks offer to re-render this wall and sand blast off any old paint be accepted.

2. That Norton Project be instructed to work on phases 2 and 3 of this project with additional quoted costs of £2,300 for the preparation of tender documents.
3. That the next Town Improvement Committee consider Jane Popov's suggestion for the wall of Day Lewis.

6407 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

a) Northwood House

Cllr Thwaites gave a full report on the activities of the trustees of Northwood House during November. The full text is available at <http://www.northwoodhouse.org/news.htm> and click on 1 December 2010.

The Council discussed the offer by Northwood House Trustees to make available once again a room in the main house (The Albert Room) for Council meetings at a cost of £50.00 per session with the possibility of catering being available if required. Cllr Thwaites declared an interest in this item and took no part in the discussion

RESOLVED

To accept the offer of room hire at Northwood House but to decline the offer of catering on a regular basis.

Agreed by councillors to alter the running order of the agenda to enable item 8c to be discussed before item 8b.

c) IW Council Spending Review and Consultation and impact on Town and Parish councils

An oral report was given by Cllr Wells stating that he and the assistant Town Clerk had attended a meeting with other town and parish councils with the IW Council to review to budget position of the IW Council. It is anticipated that the IW Council will have £32m of cuts over 4 years, with £17m being cut in the first year. The pace of the cuts has been prescribed by central government. The cuts are a result of a 26% cut in the central government grant and funding will be withdrawn from non-statutory services. The IW Council are looking for partner organisations to take over the running of those services which are to be cut. The IW Council stated that "*We are not dumping on Town and Parish Councils*" the responsibility of running services but want local councils to identify those services which they want to maintain and councils can look at their precepts to cover the costs of running any closed services.

Residents may want Cowes Town Council to run services once it is known (7th December) which services are to be cut.

The final date for the precept to be sent to IW Council is now 28th January to allow councils longer to plan for any increases resulting from them running services. It is in the Cowes Town Council financial regulations that the precept must be set at the December meeting of the Town Council.

RESOLVED

1. To suspend as necessary the provision of section 2.2 of Cowes Town Council financial regulations.

2. To suspend Standing Orders to allow:

- a) the January Town Council meeting to be moved to 19th January and the February Town Council meeting to be moved to 10th February.

- b) Finance Committee to 9th November 2010

i) GRANTS

Cowes Concert Band has requested payment of a £200 grant for a performance which they cancelled due to inclement weather without authority from Cowes Town Council.

Assistant Town Clerk left the meeting for this item.

Assistant Town Clerk has requested to join the local government pension scheme and the Town Clerk has suggested that the IW Council be used to pay all salaries to staff.

Assistant Town Clerk re-joined the meeting.

Cllr Thwaites declared an interest in outcome of funding request for Cowes Bowling club and took no part in the discussion.

Cllr Jones and Matthews declared an interest in the outcome of funding request for Cowes Heritage and left the meeting. Cllrs Jones and Matthews re-joined the meeting

Citizen Advice Bureau has made a general request for a grant for funding and are a much larger organisation than Cowes Town Council. Any grant would be for the general welfare of IW residents and not specifically Cowes residents and any grant would be relatively small and make no difference to the sustainability of the CAB.

Cllr Hammond declared an interest in the Optio Volunatry Car Service and left the meeting.

Cllr Hammond re-joined the meeting.

RESOLVED

1. That as a gesture of goodwill, the Town Council make an ex gratia payment of £50 to the Cowes Concert Band.
2. That on completion of the assistant Town Clerk's probationary period of employment that Cowes Town Council would support the Assistant Town Clerks' membership of the local government pension scheme.
3. That Cowes Town Council use IW Council payroll facility for the calculation and payment of salaries.
4. To grant Cowes Bowling Club £500 towards the costs of a mower for maintaining the bowling green
5. To grant Cowes Heritage £200 towards the hire of premises for their latest exhibition.
6. To not grant IW Citizens Advice Bureau Assistance towards the costs of providing service on the Island
7. To grant Optio Voluntary Car Service a £200 contribution towards the cost of running the Island's voluntary car scheme

ii) Budget for Cowes Town Council 20011/12

RESOLVED

To hold another Finance committee meeting in the light of the cuts announced by the IW Council and present this on 19th January at the Cowes Town Council Meeting.

d) Precept Level for financial year 2011–2012

Deferred until 19th January 2011.

6408 ITEMS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN CLERK

a) To approve urgent purchase of training materials for Assistant Town Clerk

b) To consider membership of the SLCC (Society of Local Council Clerks) for the Assistant Town Clerk. Deferred.

- c). Miscellaneous correspondence.
- 9.17pm Cllrs Peacey-Wilcox and Wilcox left the meeting
- d) Street trading licence for Julie's Ices – no comments or objections as this is an island wide licence.
- e) Youth Centre extraordinary meeting to discuss the changes to the youth service in Cowes. Cllr Hammond to attend.
- f) temporary event notice for Cowes Primary School – no comment.

RESOLVED

To approve urgent purchase of training materials for Assistant Town Clerk

6409 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS.

Level of precept for Cowes Town Council 2011/12
Membership of SLCC for Assistant Town Clerk

(Mrs) Jane Randall
Assistant Town Clerk