

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Cowes Town Council held in the Library, Northwood House, Cowes on Thursday 3 March 2016 at 7pm.

Present: Councillor Jones (Town Mayor) (Chairman)
Councillors Banks, Brown, Cowan, Fuller, McNeill, Nicholson, Peacey-Wilcox, Slade,
Spalding & Wardrop.

Prior to the start of the meeting the Town Mayor, Councillor Jones, referred to Councillor Robinson's recent resignation due to ill health. Councillor Jones thanked Councillor Robinson for his contribution to the Town Council and wished him well for the future.

7218 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bartrum, Corby & Hammond.

7219 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Banks declared pecuniary interests in Min No. 7212c2, Min No. 7224b (926) & 7224c (39b).
Councillors Fuller & Peacey-Wilcox declared a pecuniary interest in Min No. 7225.

7220 REPORT FROM THE LOCAL SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER

PC Adam Dollery provided a written report which was circulated to all Town Councillors. He attended the meeting and went through his report detailing crime statistics for the last 31 days – Assaults 20; Burglary 1; Criminal damage 11; Theft 8; Theft from a motor vehicle 1. PC Dollery explained that 20 assaults may seem a lot but if more than one person is involved in an assault then each assault is recorded; a number of assaults relate to incidents at Cowes Enterprise College. The burglary recorded was from a non-dwelling property.

Speeding in Mill Hill Road is one of the police priorities and Councillors commented that visibility at the junction of Victoria Road and Mill Hill Road was a problem due to parking around the junction. Once committing to enter Mill Hill Road it is difficult to see if a car is speeding down towards this area. PC Dollery stated that he would watch this junction area for parking. Councillor Peacey-Wilcox stated Speed Watch training is being undertaken and perceived problem areas will be monitored; two areas mentioned were Park Road and Newport Road. Councillor Jones thanked PC Dollery for attending the meeting.

7221 MINUTES RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 4 February 2016 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7222 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There was one member of the public present, being IW Councillor Paul Bertie.

Q. Minute No. 7210 stated that Cowes Town Council would call an extraordinary Town Council meeting to discuss the Cowes Week Trademark and a representative from Cowes Week Ltd should be invited to make a presentation. Has this meeting taken place?

A. A representative from Cowes Week Ltd was invited to make a presentation but is unavailable to meet with Councillors in the near future. Councillor McNeill offered to brief Councillors at an informal meeting, to include IW Councillor Paul Bertie, Councillors agreed to this proposal and a meeting will be arranged, as soon as possible.

7223 REPORTS FROM ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLORS

Written reports had been received from Councillors Fuller, Nicholson & Peacey-Wilcox and were subsequently circulated to all Town Councillors.

Councillor Bertie was in attendance and gave a verbal report. He commented that he had attended a Visit IOW Tourism Conference at Gurnard Pines on 2 March 2016 and was surprised to see that he was the only Cowes Councillor in attendance. Information about future events can be found on the Visit IOW website and the Town Clerk agreed to sign up to receive their newsletter and disseminate information to all Town Councillors.

Councillor Peacey-Wilcox's report made reference to the Medina Yard fire, Power Boats, Marine Industry, St Mary's Hospital, Amey Rubbish Collections, Sea Cadets, Youth Speaks, the Queen's 90th birthday, Scouts, Speed Watch, Tree pollarding & Gift to Nature. With regard to the Power Boats coming back to Cowes in September, Councillor Peacey-Wilcox stated her support of the event; as she is not on the Finance Committee she will have no input in regard to their forthcoming grant application.

Councillor Fuller's report made reference to the IW Council budget and listed the savings from each service area to be made over the next financial year and the savings that were not supported for 2016/2017. With regard to making savings Councillor Fuller was asked about the Independent Remuneration Panel, which he confirmed is still in existence and reviews Councillors allowances on an annual basis and he also stated that the subject of less Councillors formed part of the devolution discussions. He also referred to the Amey Waste Contract (as the Executive member with responsibility for waste), Devolution: Combined Authorities Working Together, and local matters including Westwood Close, Dog walkers views sought (via an online survey), Island Roads resurfacing schedule for 2016, Traffic Regulation Orders, along with various activities undertaken during the last month including reporting of potholes and many other local matters.

Councillor Nicholson's report made reference to new road surface inspections, problems in resurfacing Place Side due to illegally parked cars, an update on County news including the budget and a section on Community Wellbeing.

7224 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

a) IWALC Executive Committee

The Minutes of the IWALC Executive Committee meeting held on 21 January 2016 were received and noted. Councillor Fuller reported that at the IWALC Executive Committee meeting he had been criticised for attending IWALC meetings on behalf of Cowes Town Council and asked whether this was a conflict of interest with his IW Councillor role. Cowes Town Councillor's agreed that Councillor Fuller should continue as their representative on IWALC Executive Committee.

b) Planning & Licensing Committee

The Minutes of the Planning & Licensing Committee meetings held on 4 February 2016 & 25 February 2016 were received and noted.

c) Projects Committee

The Minutes of the Projects Committee meeting held on 9 February 2016 were received and noted. It was:

RESOLVED

1. That Cowes Town Council agrees to mount the Cowes Deauville Twinning Association plaque in Cowes Parade's bandstand.
2. That Cowes Town Council agrees to liaise with Cowes Deauville Twinning Association as regards to the format, wording and siting of the plaque on the bandstand.
3. That Cowes Town Council makes representation to the Isle of Wight Council for permission for siting of the plaque.
4. That Cowes Town Council obtains costs for the manufacture and fitting of the plaque.
5. That Cowes Town Council sets aside a sum of £750.00 + VAT for the project.

d) Amey Community Waste Forum

The notes of the Amey Community Waste Forum held on 9 February 2016 were received and noted.

e) Cowes Town Council & Supporters of Cowes Library

The notes of the meeting of Cowes Town Council & the Supporters of Cowes Library held on 15 February 2016 were received and noted.

f) Cowes Town Councillors' Training Workshop

The notes of Cowes Town Councillors' training workshop held on 23 February 2016 were received and noted.

g) Finance, Acquisitions and Staffing Committee

The Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions and Staffing Committee meeting held on 24 February 2016 were received and noted. Councillor Fuller abstained from Resolutions 3, 8 & 9. Councillor Peacey-Wilcox abstained from Resolution 3. It was:

RESOLVED

1. That applications for 'ring fenced' 3 year event support funding must be applied for on an annual basis.
2. That applications for 'ring fenced' 3 year event support funding must comply with the same criteria / guidelines that have been approved for all future grant applications.
3. That Cowes Town Council does not financially support the Isle of Wight Walking & Cycling Festivals 2016.
4. That Cowes Town Council receives the consultant's invoice on behalf of the Gateway Cowes Stakeholder Group.
5. That Cowes Town Council re-charges each member of the stakeholder group with the appropriate consultant fees and disbursements.
6. That Cowes Town Council accepts Cowes Business Association's contribution of £5,000 to the Solitaire Bompard – Le Figaro event, to ensure good governance on their behalf in relation to the organisers providing the shore side events as promised.
7. When the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee receive and are satisfied with the details of which shore side activities are being provided by the organisers the payment of Cowes Town Council's £10,000 donation and Cowes Business Association's £5,000 donation will be released.

8. That Cowes Town Council enters into a public convenience cleaning contract for 2016 / 2017 with Contractor A, being All Round Cleaners, for the sum of £21,894.44.
9. That Cowes Town Council advises the approved cleaning contractor that all public conveniences in Cowes and Northwood Park toilets should have an additional visit during Cowes Week which will incur an additional cost to be advised.
10. That Cowes Town Council annually reviews the public convenience & Northwood Park toilet cleaning contract.
11. That every three years Cowes Town Council will request three quotations for the public convenience and Northwood Park toilet cleaning contract, for consideration by Members.
12. That Cowes Town Council will ensure that appropriate signage, including Town Council contact details, are placed in the four public conveniences and Northwood Park toilets.
13. That the Assistant Town Clerk continues to work and be paid for an additional two hours per week, over and above the 10 hour per week contract, until her retirement on 29 September 2016.

7225 DISCRETIONARY SERVICES & IW COUNCIL SUPPORT

Councillor Banks presented a report regarding comments and letters in the local press relating to the number of IW Councillors 'running' the unitary authority although their responsibilities are regarded as significantly reduced. This is in light of the increased burden on parish and town councils in taking on discretionary services which County Hall no longer support. Town and Parish Councils have been forced to increase their precept in order to manage the devolved discretionary services.

At present there are 40 IW Councillors and for the period 1/4/14 – 31/3/15 their allowances totalled £461,458.65 which includes basic allowances, special responsibility allowances, travelling and subsistence, co-optees' allowances and childcare expenses. Allowances were reduced in April 2015 with a saving of £21,000 (2.6%). Town Councillors discussed whether IW Councillors should receive a further reduction in their allowances to compensate for their lesser responsibilities and thereby save money. These savings could be passed on to Town & Parish Councils to ease the burden of services being devolved and the additional staffing costs to manage these devolved services. A counter argument suggested that IW Councillors are actually working harder as there are less IW Council staff employed to undertake the work required. A number of recommendations were considered:

1. That Cowes Town Council accepts the status quo and ignores those concerns of its electorate.
2. That Cowes Town Council asks the Isle of Wight Council's Independent Remuneration Panel to give consideration to recommending a further reduction in the allowances made to all IW Councillors by 25% overall. *(Or to a figure as recommended by Town Councillors)*
3. That Cowes Town Council requests of the IW Council that any savings, resultant from any agreement for reduced councillors' allowances, is made wholly over to parish and town councils.

Councillors Fuller & Peacey-Wilcox left the room for the vote, which was as follows:

Councillors voted against recommendation 1, Councillor Nicholson abstained.

There was not a seconder for recommendation 2, thereby the motion failed. As recommendation 2 failed, recommendation 3 did not apply. Therefore no resolutions were made.

7226 NHCTCL HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND FIRST WORLD WAR BID

Councillor Jones reported that Northwood House Charitable Trust Co. Ltd have asked the Town Council to write a letter of support for their forthcoming Heritage Lottery Fund bid. If successful the funds will be used to tell the story of the House as a Red Cross VAD hospital. The project will include interpretation boards, children's activities and an oral histories / media project in partnership with the Studio School in East Cowes. The children's activities will include a dressing up box with uniforms of nurses and soldiers so that children can recreate pictures taken in the House during the First World War. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council writes a letter of support for the NHCTCL Heritage Lottery Fund First World War bid.

Councillor Cowan left the meeting at 8.36pm

7227 RESPONSE FROM ISLAND ROADS REGARDING THE TRAFFIC LIGHTS AT THE JUNCTION OF BIRMINGHAM ROAD & MILL HILL ROAD (Min No 7188 refers)

The Town Clerk wrote to Island Roads about the traffic lights at the junction of Birmingham Road & Mill Hill Road following Councillors concerns that they were placed too close to the junction and rarely used due to safety concerns of crossing there. Island Roads were asked if the lights were legally placed being located so close to the junction. Island Roads responded by saying that they have checked their casualty data for the area and have confirmed that there is no evidence of personal injury collisions occurring on the crossing that was installed to aid the safe passage of pedestrians some years ago. They state that the design criteria does change from time to time but in the absence of any collision data it is unlikely that the local authority would consider the need to make any alterations or re-locate the crossing at this time. Councillors were concerned that Island Roads had not answered the question of whether the lights were legally placed.

RESOLVED

The Town Clerk will write again to Island Roads to ask for a response to the question of whether the traffic lights are legally placed.

Councillor Wardrop left the meeting at 8.40pm

7228 VACANCY IN COWES WEST WARD

Mr R.E. Robinson resigned from Cowes Town Council on 15 February 2016 resulting in a vacancy in Cowes West Ward. The Town Clerk has placed the official notice on the town noticeboard stating that if ten local government electors for the West Ward of Cowes give notice in writing on or before Tuesday 8 March 2016 to the Proper Officer at the IW Council that they wish an election to be held to fill the vacancy, then a by-election will be held. If an election is not called then the vacancy can be filled by co-option. The Town Clerk will advise Councillors of the outcome when the deadline of 8 March 2016 has passed.

7229 POLICY FOR THE AUDIO RECORDING OF TOWN COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEETINGS

The Town Clerk presented a draft policy for the audio recording of Town Council & Committee meetings which was discussed, considered and amended by Councillors. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves and adopts, with the agreed amendments, the Policy for the Audio Recording of Town Council & Committee meetings.

7230 ORP BLYSKAWICA 75TH ANNIVERSARY STEERING GROUP

Councillors considered an invitation for a representative and deputy representative from Cowes Town Council to sit on the ORP Blyskawica 75th Anniversary Steering Group in order to plan ahead for the 75th anniversary on 4th / 5th May 2017. It was:

RESOLVED

That Councillor Jones will be Cowes Town Council's representative on the ORP Blyskawica 75th Anniversary Steering Group; Councillor Banks will be the deputy representative.

7231 COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S MEMBERSHIP OF IWALC

The Town Clerk reported that Cowes Town Council's membership of IWALC was due for renewal for 2016 / 2017 in the sum of £1,000. Councillors discussed the advantages of being members of IWALC. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council renews its membership of IWALC in the sum of £1,000.

7232 ASSISTANT TOWN CLERK'S MEMBERSHIP OF SLCC

The Town Clerk reported that the Assistant Town Clerk's membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) was due for renewal. The current arrangement being that Gurnard Parish Council pay 2/3rds of the membership, as the Assistant Town Clerk's main employer, and Cowes Town Council pay 1/3rd in the sum of £55.11. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council pay for the Assistant Town Clerk's membership of the SLCC in the sum of £55.11.

7233 MAYOR'S QUARTERLY NEWSLETTER – PERMISSION FOR PRINTER

The Town Clerk reported that the printer of the quarterly Mayor's newsletter has requested to add the company name and contact details to the bottom of the final page of the newsletter. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council gives permission for the printer of the quarterly newsletter to discreetly add the company name and contact details to the bottom of the final page of each quarterly newsletter.

7234 MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

The Town Clerk circulated a list of miscellaneous publications and correspondence to all Town Councillors.

7235 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

No future agenda items were received.

The proceedings terminated at 8.52pm.

CHAIRMAN