



Minutes of the Meeting of the COWES TOWN COUNCIL held in St. Mary's Church Hall, Cowes on Thursday, 25<sup>th</sup> July 2013 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor Banks (Town Mayor) (Chairman)  
Councillors Corby, Cowan, Fuller, Hall, Hammond, Jones, Nicholson, Peacey-Wilcox, Robinson, Walters and Wardrop.

## **PRESENTATION – DOG FOULING AND REFUSE ISSUES**

The Town Mayor introduced and welcomed Mike Rowlands, I.W. Council Senior Environment Officer, to the meeting; he had attended to outline the work of the Environment Team and to receive comments regarding dog fouling and refuse issues for the town and to discuss the possible means of tackling those problems locally. Mr. Rowlands confirmed that at present his team consisted of seven active Environment Officers; their duties were extremely varied and ranged from the ability to issue fixed penalty notices for dog fouling and litter offences, the inspection of play areas, toilets and graveyards and dealing with all waste related issues. Dog fouling was a major problem that affected all areas of the Island; his officers would target specific areas based on information received but they did require concrete evidence of an offence before they could act. He confirmed that very few fixed penalty notices had been issued in the past twelve months for dog fouling offences.

In respect of waste problems, Mr. Rowlands stated that his officers would sift through black bin bags seeking the evidence that would enable them to take action against an offender.

Various questions and comments were then offered by members including:

Q. As there were many second homes in the town and owners often visited for weekends putting their rubbish out before they left, was there any possibility of reverting back to a Monday refuse collection day from the existing Thursday?

Q. There was a particular problem in St. Mary's Road car park regarding the dumping of all sorts of refuse and waste; the Town Council had offered in the past to supply and pay for a compactor skip for that location for waste but this offer had been refused. Could this be reconsidered?

Mr. Rowlands would refer both of these suggestions to his senior management and respond to the Town Council in due course.

The Town Mayor thanked Mr. Rowlands for his attendance and for clarifying a number of points regarding serious dog fouling and waste issues locally; members should contact Mr. Rowlands if they were aware of specific issues in their areas.

## **6780 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brown, McNeill and Matthews.

## **6781 MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 13<sup>th</sup> June 2013 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **6782 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillors Jones and Peacey-Wilcox declared pecuniary interests in agenda item 8d on the grounds that they were Secretary and Life Member respectively of the Friends of Northwood Cemetery.

## **6783 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

A member of the public raised a concern regarding the potential danger to pedestrians from those cycling through the pedestrianized High Street.

The Town Mayor stated that there was an agenda item regarding this issue; it would be discussed later in the meeting.

## **6784 REPORTS FROM ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLORS**

### **Cllr Fuller had submitted a written report referring to the following:**

- a). The funding difficulties facing local Councils in the coming years; with income reducing and many service costs increasing, the budget setting for next year would be very challenging.
- b). That the MP would be holding his summer surgery between 12.15pm and 12.45pm at the Cowes Co-op, Carvel Lane on 12<sup>th</sup> August.
- c). That since Island Roads had taken over the grass cutting contract he had received complaints regarding grass verges not being cut by contractors; the contract had been altered accordingly to cover those missed areas including verges in Cliff Road and Place Road.
- d). That he had raised issues with Highways including overgrown hedges in Baring Road and Place Road, ambiguous signage on Queens Road, glazing replacement at bus shelters and the enactment of Cowes' most recent traffic regulation order.
- e). That he was in the process of collating a list of surplus signage for Island Roads to remove.
- f). That he had looked around the new Cowes Enterprise College; it was still scheduled to open in September but prior to that, parents would be invited to see all that the College offered.
- g). That the I.W. Council were currently investigating options for a future parking strategy for the Island.
- h). That he had dealt with other miscellaneous incidents in the last month.

### **Councillor Nicholson referred to the following;**

- a). That he had met with residents with concerns over the yellow lines in Arctic Road and he had received complaints regarding underage youth motorcyclists using the Medina cycle path.
- b). That the campaign for Love Lane pre-school had been well received; efforts by the school were recognised as exemplary and even life changing.
- c). That he had met with the MP for an overall briefing and exchange of views regarding the proposed asphalt plant.
- d). That yellow lines had appeared on the rise in Arctic Road to Newport Road; these have emanated from a four year old Traffic Order.
- e). That he had received very responsive attention to a list of minor road concerns he had identified.
- f). That there were signs of encouraging progress and a level of co-operation starting to emerge between members at County Hall!!!!

### **Councillor Peacey-Wilcox referred to the following:**

- a). That she had requested an additional light for the cut between Shamblers Road and Newport Road.
- b). That she had received complaints regarding the build-up of litter at the skatepark.
- c). That she had requested a number of roadway repairs in Cowes; in particular on Newport and Mill Hill Roads.
- d). That the lease on the Whitegates pontoon would run out in 2015; she would welcome thoughts on whether the I.W. Council should renew the lease.
- e). That a dangerous metal grid at the cemetery had been replaced by the I.W. Council.
- f). That she had met with a representative from the I.W. Council regarding the yellow lines in Newport Road between Bellevue and Stephenson Roads; she hoped a compromise solution could be agreed.
- g). That she had requested the removal of a dead tree on Newport Road.
- h). That she was endeavouring to have a disabled bay re-painted for one of her constituents.

## 6785 REPORT FROM SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER

### **Justin Pringle reported as follows; Lisa Paul was in attendance:**

- a). That Sgt. Sizer had been seconded away from the SNT until September; he had been appointed Acting Sergeant and would cover with Sgt. Gary Knight from East Cowes until Sgt. Sizers return.
- b). That PC Jackson had moved from the Cowes SNT to another team; she would be replaced but prior to that, there would be a significant police presence during AAM Cowes Week.
- c). That statistics showed that crime had increased by 1.79% for the year; however, this still represented a good figure as the previous year had been the lowest on record.
- d). That there had been a spate of thefts from insecure vehicles in various areas; two suspects had been arrested. The SNT were seeking to educate motorists regarding the security of their vehicles to help reduce this type of crime.
- e). That the three priorities identified by the Local Action Group were thefts from motor vehicles, cycling in the High Street and cars using the High Street outside permitted times.
- f). That the police had conducted an operation targeting cyclists and vehicles breaching the 'rules' of the High Street; most of the cyclists had no idea that they were in breach!! The police had used the exercise to educate rather than penalise cyclists in the first instance. A lack of suitable signage had been identified as a major problem in respect of cyclists and the operation of the 'rise and fall' bollards would solve the issue of vehicular access.
- g). That a drugs operation at the Red Funnel terminal with a drug sniffer dog had been undertaken.
- h). That a public meeting would be held at the Methodist Church on 31<sup>st</sup> July between 6.30pm and 7.30pm regarding a potential move to the Cowes Enterprise College.

In response to a question about the dangerous practice of delivery vehicles reversing down Shooters Hill from Birmingham Road Acting Sgt. Pringle stated that the police had warned a number of drivers.

## 6786 MATTERS ARISING

### **a). Cycling, bollard and banner issues in the High Street (Min. No. 6739b and 6760c refer)**

In the report from the Safer Neighbourhood Officer, Acting Sgt. Justin Pringle had already stated that an operation had been undertaken targeting cyclists and vehicles breaching the 'rules' of the High Street; a lack of suitable signage had been identified as a major cause for this problem. At a subsequent meeting between the Town Council, Police and Cowes Business Association (CBA) it was agreed that the Town Council determines the practicalities of a dedicated cycle route through the town as well as improved signage for cyclists.

In respect of vehicles, it was agreed that use of the 'rise and fall' bollards would solve the problem; the CBA would enquire whether their members could undertake this task and the Town Council would make a similar enquiry of Island Roads.

With regard to banners and bunting, Island Roads had stated that such items crossing the highway must be a minimum 16'6" above the carriageway and that all fixing points required a 'strain test' certificate; they were further maintaining that installation and removal of banners from a ladder was not acceptable. Risk assessments and Method statements were being obtained from the contractor undertaking the work; these would be submitted to Island Roads for approval.

In the meantime, further meetings were being planned; it was agreed that a representative from the Planning Department and Licensing would be invited to these meetings.

(Councillor Fuller entered the meeting at 8.00pm)

### **b). Medina Valley Area Action Plan (MVAAP) (Min. No. 6689b refers)**

The Town Mayor referred to the MVAAP which the I.W. Council were preparing; the plan would be required to comply with the Island Plan Core Strategy and the National Planning Policy Framework but once adopted would provide a vision and blueprint for the whole Medina Valley. He stated that East Cowes Town Council had engaged consultants to work for them on the production of a Design Statement/Town Plan; this was not a Neighbourhood Plan but would provide an evidence base to inform

the I.W. Council for policies within the MVAAP for East Cowes. When the Planning Policy Officer had attended the last meeting of the Planning Committee he had argued that East Cowes had specific major issues to address; he did not believe there was a necessity for Cowes to go down that route. However, it had been agreed that the Town Council would produce a questionnaire for Cowes that could be circulated to all residents for their comments; it would be incorporated in the first edition of the quarterly newsletter in September.

**RESOLVED**

That the Town Council approves the necessary funding to produce an MVAAP questionnaire for circulation to all local households.

**6787 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS**

**a). Supporters of Cowes Library**

The Minutes of the meetings of the Supporters of Cowes Library held on 10<sup>th</sup> June and 8<sup>th</sup> July 2013 were received.

**b). Town Council/SNT/CBA High Street Working Group**

The Notes of a meeting of a Town Council/SNT/CBA High Street Working Group held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2013 were received.

**c). Planning & Licensing Committee**

The Minutes of the meetings of the Planning & Licensing Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July and 22<sup>nd</sup> July 2013 were received.

**d). Finance Committee**

The Minutes of a meeting of the Finance Committee held on 2<sup>nd</sup> July 2013 were received.

**i). Grant application procedure.**

Whether the procedures in respect of the consideration of grant applications were as robust and consistent as was necessary.

**RESOLVED**

That the Chairman of Finance together with the Town Clerk study all future grant applications in detail prior to their submission to the Finance Committee for consideration.

**ii). Applications for grant.**

**a). Changing Lanes.**

A small charity based at Lanesend Primary School that had been set up to support parents within the community of the school; the charity offered counselling for a minimum of 12 weeks to some of the most vulnerable parents.

**b). Friends of Northwood Cemetery.**

The group requested funding for a heavy duty hedge trimmer to assist them in the maintenance and restoration of the cemetery grounds.

**c). Victim Support.**

The grant would enable them to recruit and train volunteers to provide a service to Cowes residents.

**RESOLVED**

1). That grants be made to the following organisations in accordance with the amounts shown:

a). Changing Lanes	£1,000
b). Friends of Northwood Cemetery	£ 350
c). Victim Support	£ 150

(Councillor Fuller declared a non-pecuniary interest in item b) as he was a Trustee of the Friends of Northwood Cemetery)

(Councillor Hammond declared a non-pecuniary interest in item c) as her daughter was receiving counselling through Victim Support)

2). That the balance in the budget of £8,600 be kept in reserve pending further applications which may be received.

### **e). Town Improvements Committee**

The Minutes of a Meeting of the Town Improvements Committee held on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2013 were received.

#### **i). Horizon Plaque**

##### **RESOLVED**

That the quotation from DMR Engineering in the sum of £1,009.40 to supply and fit a baseplate and fit the plaque to the seawall on The Parade be accepted.

#### **ii). Town Guide**

Councillor Wardrop circulated copies of the Cowes Port Handbook which contained the majority of information that the Town Council would wish to include in a Cowes Town Guide.

##### **RESOLVED**

That the Town Council investigates with the Cowes Harbour Commission the possibility and cost of adding additional pages to the Port Handbook; this could then be distributed as a 'town guide'.

#### **iii). Newsletter**

##### **RESOLVED**

- 1). That a quarterly newsletter is produced for free distribution at the most economic cost to replace the monthly Town Council Beacon article; and
- 2). That the first issue to be produced during September 2013 would include a questionnaire regarding the Medina Valley Area Action Plan (MVAAP).

#### **iv). Skatepark.**

##### **RESOLVED**

That JR Fencing repair the damaged skatepark fence at a cost of £300.

#### **v). Christmas arrangements.**

##### **RESOLVED**

- 1). That the Town Council purchase four 15ft. Christmas trees from Shide Trees for erection in the four existing sleeves in the town;
- 2). That the installation of additional sleeves be considered at a later date in time for Christmas 2014; and
- 3). That the Cowes Business Association must satisfy the Town Council that any future grant towards decorative lighting would be spent in a meaningful way prior to any further donations being awarded.

## **6788 PUBLIC OPEN MEETINGS**

The Town Mayor submitted a paper regarding Public Open Meetings; it stated that there were many local issues of concern to local residents and therefore the need for positive communication was essential.

##### **RESOLVED**

- 1). That the Town Council holds public open meetings as necessary on weekday evenings at the Cowes Methodist Church during the autumn to spring months;
- 2). That light refreshments will be served free of charge by the Town Council;
- 3). That other local bodies will be invited and given time restricted spots to participate; and
- 4). That the Town Council advertise such events in the Beacon magazine, the Town Council notice board, Cowes Island magazine and in the I.W. County Press under their Village Talk and Official Notices sections.

## **6789 HIGH STREET SHOPS**

Councillor Wardrop submitted a paper and analysis of the shops, restaurants and other outlets through the town; she maintained that in the summer there was a rash of yachting related shops and drinking venues the majority of which closed during the winter to leave a 'ghost town'. Neither of these scenarios enhanced the town for local residents.

It was agreed that the Town Council seek the views of local residents on what they would like to see in the town at one of the proposed open meetings in the autumn.

## **6790 STANDING ORDERS**

A recommendation for additions and changes to the Town Council's Standing Orders was proposed and seconded.

### **RESOLVED**

That in accordance with Standing Order 23.2 the proposal to add, vary or revoke Standing Orders shall stand adjourned without discussion to the next ordinary meeting of the Council.

## **6791 FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST**

Councillor Walters referred to a Freedom of Information request in respect of a letter to the Town Mayor from five Town Councillors referring to events that lead to the resignation of the Deputy Town Mayor. He maintained that the letter was written to Councillor Banks in his capacity as Town Mayor and therefore, should have been available to all members and the Town Clerk.

However, the Town Mayor had confirmed in writing that it had been a personal and confidential letter to him that he had destroyed prior to any request for disclosure.

Following discussion surrounding the issue it was agreed by members that the Town Council move to next business.

## **6792 TRAINING**

Councillor Banks submitted a paper regarding the need for Councillor training in respect of the various aspects of their roles; he also suggested that the Town Council develop and adopt a Statement of Training Intent.

Details of IWALC training being arranged for September, October and November 2013 was circulated to members.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1). That the Town Council develops and adopts a Statement of Training Intent; and
- 2). That Councillors notify the Town Clerk if they wish to attend any of the IWALC training.

## **6793 'LIGHTS OF LOVE' CAROL SERVICE**

Councillor Banks outlined the background to the annual 'Lights of Love' carol services which were held throughout the major Island towns in order to raise awareness and funds for the Earl Mountbatten Hospice.

Attendances at the Cowes event have dwindled in recent years; last year the carol service was cancelled due to a lack of attendance and the inclement weather. A possible solution would be to hold the service indoors possibly at one of the local churches.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Town Clerk contacts the Cowes Methodist Church with a view to combining the 'Lights of Love' carol service with their annual Christmas Tree Festival.

## **6794 HEALTH, SAFETY AND WELFARE ISSUES**

Councillor Banks referred to the requirements of the Health & Safety at Work Act and in particular the endless regulations that govern the work we have to undertake; he outlined the various volunteer activities that were carried out for the Town Council by those who would be considered 'at risk' and also recommended that checks be made on contractors prior to being employed on Town Council works for adequate insurance cover and job specific risk assessments and method statements.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1). That the Town Council determines from their insurance company whether the insurance covers volunteers and non-company operatives undertaking work on behalf of the Town Council; and

2). That the Town Council compiles job specific risk assessments and method statements for the various tasks undertaken.

#### **6795 ACCESS TO THE TOWN COUNCIL OFFICE**

Councillor Banks submitted a paper regarding access to the Town Council office and records; office keys had been issued in the past primarily to the Town Mayors and Committee Chairmen although at present only two councillors had possession of keys.

Councillor Banks considered that either all Councillors should be issued with keys or that there should be no access to the office unless the Clerks were present.

#### **RESOLVED**

That no access to the office would be available to Councillors unless the Clerks were present and any keys in circulation should be returned as soon as possible.

#### **6796 MATTERS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN CLERK**

a). \*Whether or not the Town Council should seek the reinstatement of any lost services to the town.

b). Attendance of Town Clerk at the SLCC conference in Leicester between 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> October.

c). \*To consider a name for a new estate road off Egypt Hill.

d). Notification of the inaugural AGM of the NHS Trust on 31<sup>st</sup> July 2013.

(\* Copies circulated to all members)

#### **RESOLVED**

1). That the Town Council does not seek the reinstatement of any lost services to the town at this stage;

2). That the Town Clerk be authorised to attend the annual SLCC conference to be held in Leicester between 17<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> October and that his reasonable expenses and conference fees be met by the Town Council; and

3). That the Town Council recommends 'Admiralty View' as a suitable name for the new estate road off Egypt Hill.

(The proceedings terminated at 9.15pm)

**CHAIRMAN**