

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the COWES TOWN COUNCIL held in St. Mary's Church Hall, Cowes on Thursday, 6th February 2014 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor Banks (Town Mayor) (Chairman)
Councillors Corby, Cowan, Ellis, Fuller (8p.m.), Hall, Hammond, Jones, Matthews, McNeill, Nicholson, Peacey-Wilcox, Walters and Wardrop.

6857 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brown and Robinson.

6858 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 9th January 2014 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6859 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest at this stage.

6860 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

An opportunity was given for members of the public to ask questions but none were asked.

6861 REPORTS FROM ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLORS

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

- a). The challenges facing the I.W. Council in setting a budget for the coming financial year. In the past few weeks he and other members had met with representatives from the commercial sector, the voluntary sector, Council employees and local Councillors to look at ways of transferring or operating services in a smarter and potentially more efficient way
- b). That at the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Panel he had requested a presentation be held for members regarding the PFI.
- c). That the I.W. Council continued to push for recognition as an area for designation by Government for European Assisted Area status although the southern half of the Island had not been included in the consultation.
- d). That the planning application regarding the former Readers site had been re-advertised, an extension had been requested for the application for 99 dwellings in Place Road and the application for roof terraces at 23 0- 29 Cliff Road had been approved.
- e). That he had attended a Governors Training Event last month, which was based upon the Statement from the Director of Children's Services for Hampshire and the Isle of Wight. The report acknowledged that despite improvements in school attendance and small improvements in results, there continued to be a huge amount of work still required. The aim for the Isle of Wight was to ensure GCSE passes are 2% higher than the National Average (rather than 4% below, as it stands currently).
- f). That Digital Recycle, part of Computer Express (IW) had teamed up with the Footprint Trust to encourage the reclamation and recycling of personal computers, tablets, laptops and mobile phones.

Digital Recycle was Waste Electronic and Electrical Equipment registered. Individuals and organisations could support this scheme by donating old devices which would be reclaimed and recycled; all data would be securely erased for free.

g). That he continued to receive calls from residents about unwanted telephone calls from call centres. The Telephone Preference Service could block a large number of speculative calls, although not all. This service was free; for further information, please visit: <http://www.tpsonline.org.uk/>; or telephone: **0845 070 0707**

h). That he had voted against a proposal to freeze Council Members allowances as he would be happy to receive a smaller allowance.

i). A number of issues had been put under scrutiny by the Audit Committee last week including the PFI not reaching targets, sickness absence from the Community Safeguarding Team and the volume of FOI requests.

j). That he had dealt with other miscellaneous incidents in the last month.

Councillor Nicholson's written report referred to the following;

a). That the nuisance parking around the Place Side area had now been resolved following robust intervention from the police.

b). That new concerns had been raised about unfinished paving crossing Spinnaker Close; a resident had suffered a nasty accident requiring hospital treatment as a result of the unfinished surface. The road had not been adopted as Persimmon Homes had failed to enter and complete the adoption process; the I.W. Council and Island Roads would raise concerns over public safety with them.

c). That the passage of a motion regarding the local beer industry continued to build pace following support from the M.P.. It appears to be a sorely needed initiative judging by the enthusiasm and concerns raised by many from the industry who attended the first two trade meetings at the Riverside; a group forum from the industry had been formed.

d). That a deferred Police Motion had been passed by the I.W. Council with majority support at the January Full Council. There was already high level dialogue about how to mitigate the drastic cuts and the effects they may have, but the discussion needed to be devolved to a Ward and Parish level.

e). That a Complimentary and Alternative Health motion which had been deferred from November had been passed with majority support.

f). That concerns regarding the Fibrovia asphalt material being used by Island Road remained and a solution needed to be found by Island Roads. The problem was not only affecting equestrian road users but also had the potential to endanger other road users.

Councillor Peacey-Wilcox referred to the following:

a). That agreement had been reached between Little Love Lane Nursery and the I.W. Council that would enable the Nursery to move into the Love Lane site..

b). That she had received complaints about rubbish not being collected – now resolved.

c). That damage had been caused to the gates of two of her residents properties following the installation of new street lighting.

d). That new Traffic Regulation Orders for Cowes were to be considered before the end of March.

e). That she had attended a presentation regarding the possible re-introduction of parking permits and other parking issues; she considered that each town should be encouraged to determine their own parking strategy.

f). That a constituent had contacted her regarding trampolining at the Youth Club; it would be advisable to know who currently uses the site so that their interests could be safeguarded should the building be sold.

g). That she had alerted Island Roads to severe dog fouling in Smithards Lane; it was cleared up within one hour.

h). That she had received a draft housing strategy which will go for consultation; this would reinforce the point that Island residents should have priority for the limited social housing stock.

i). that she had been helping struggling residents with their benefits and claims.

Councillor Bertie submitted a written report referring to the following:

- a). That he had attended Full Council on 15th January; the main topic for debate was the forthcoming budget difficulties.
- b). The Chairman of the Etchells Association explained at a meeting on 17th January why they had opted for the Etchells World Championships to be held in Weymouth; many of the services being offered by Weymouth and Portland Sailing Centre were being offered free of charge (e.g. boats being lifted out of the water) which Cowes would find hard to match. However, there was a new Etchells event involving teams from many overseas countries starting this year which should bring benefits to Cowes and hopefully would become an annual event.
- c). That the Etchells example showed the importance to market Cowes; this could be achieved through the mini DMO 'Brand Cowes' although he had no further knowledge of the initiative.
- d). That he had attended the afternoon session of The Big Ticket tourist presentation; there were some fascinating figures presented, some of which did not bode well for Cowes. He had been the only person attending from Cowes; however, David Thornton was giving another presentation at the newly formed Island Business Forum at the Riverside Centre on 7th February at 10.30am.
- e). That the Conservative Group would be presenting a list of alternative ideas for the budget at the next full council meeting.
- f). That the Chapel site in Market Hill had still not started; he understood the developers were waiting for the signing of a warrant.
- g). That people were dumping rubbish on the open land at the bottom of Market Hill; he had alerted the I.W. Council and was awaiting a response.
- g). That he was concerned at the state of metal gratings covering the gutters in the High Street; he had alerted Island Roads as some were in a dangerous state of repair. He also noticed that in one stretch of about 4 feet the grating had been taken away and the gully filled with asphalt which would not help with drainage.
- h). That he had attended the Economy and Environment Scrutiny Panel on 5th February where he had questioned Island Roads about the drainage systems in Cowes and in particular why no gully cleaning had yet been carried out.
- i). That car parking had also been raised at the Scrutiny Panel meeting when they were again reassured that there would be full consultation before any changes were made. It was also suggested that individual towns/areas come up with their own parking suggestions as most towns have different needs; this would need collaboration between such bodies as the Town Council/CBA etc.

6862 REPORT FROM SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER

There was no police presence at the meeting.

It was agreed that a written report be submitted to future meetings should the police be unable to attend.

Following the meeting a report was received and circulated to members. It referred to the following:

- a). That crime in the Cowes/Gurnard/Northwood area was down by 15% during January from 46 crimes in 2013 to 39 in 2014. In respect of year on year, the crime figures were down by 16% from 476 to 398 crimes; very encouraging news.
- b). That cycling through the pedestrianized High Street had been identified as a Number 1 priority by the Local Action Group; they were continuing patrols of the High Street to prevent incidents re-occurring. Police had stopped 2 cyclists during January, taken their details, given verbal warnings and issued an educational letter. Enforcement action would be taken against any repeat offenders.
- c). That there had been no crimes worthy of particular note to report over the last month.
- d). That local beat surgeries would be held at the local police station on 1st and 3rd Thursdays between 6pm and 8pm. The local police station would be closed to the public outside of these hours.

6863 MATTERS ARISING

a). Destination Cowes (Min. No. 6827b refers)

The Town Mayor submitted a paper regarding the Destination Cowes proposal; the Town Council had opted not to participate, in part due to the non-participation of East Cowes Town Council.

In view of the above, the Town Mayor did not attend a meeting of the Destination Cowes Group held on 17th January although East Cowes Town Council was represented.

East Cowes Town Council had subsequently confirmed their position was unchanged; they have however, requested that two representatives from each of the two Town Councils and Business Associations meet to exchange views regarding Destination Cowes and in particular to determine what might be achievable for the money.

RESOLVED

That Councillors Jones and McNeill represent the Town Council at any future informal meetings with East Cowes Town Council and the two CBA's regarding Destination Cowes.

b). WW1 Commemoration (Min. No. 6854 refers)

Councillor Hall reported that she had attended the inaugural local meeting regarding WW1 commemorations held at Carisbrooke Castle Museum on 23rd January; representatives from the National Lottery and the Imperial War Museum had been present. The co-ordination of Island events had been delegated to one of the Directors of Carisbrooke Castle Museum and funding for local events would be available. Very few Town and Parish Councils were represented; however, representatives from both Northwood and Gurnard Parish Councils were present and they outlined their plans to research the War Dead from their villages.

Councillor Hall considered that the Town Council should engage in the commemorations and was prepared to continue to represent the Town Council at future meetings.

RESOLVED

- 1). That the Town Council does engage in the WW1 Commemorations; and
- 2). That the Town Council establish a WW1 Commemoration Working Group comprising The Town Mayor, the Deputy Town Mayor and Councillors Hall, Matthews and Peacey-Wilcox.

c). Trademark 'Cowes Week' (Min. No. 6827d refers)

Councillor Hammond questioned whether Councillor McNeill should have declared an interest when proposing at the 7th November 2013 meeting that the Town Council negotiates with Cowes Week Ltd. regarding the Cowes Week trademark as he had applied to sit on the Board of that organisation.

Councillor McNeill stated that he had not been appointed to the Board; he could not be sure if that was the case or whether he had an interest when he put his proposition forward.

It was agreed that Members should remain vigilant with regards to declarations of interest to avoid possible future errors or omissions.

6864 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

a). Supporters of Cowes Library Group

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Supporters of Cowes Library Group held on 13th January 2014 were received.

b). Town Improvements Committee

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Improvements Committee held on 13th January 2014 were received.

c). Northwood Recreation Ground Committee

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Northwood Recreation Ground Committee held on 13th January 2014 were received.

i). MUGA

RESOLVED

That the Town Council purchase a Shelter from Broxap for the sum of £2,656 plus VAT, delivery and installation.

ii). Toilets

RESOLVED

- 1). That the Town Council does not renew the toilet cleaning contract with Top Mops at the end of March 2014;
- 2). That with effect from 1st April 2014 a contract to clean the toilet block once per day and to lock and unlock each day (365 days per year) be awarded to Mr. R. Williams on a self-employed basis at a cost of £56 per week;
- 3). That the Town Council supplies all necessary cleaning products including toilet rolls and soap etc.; and
- 4). That builders John Groves (IW) Ltd. be employed to replace the store door to the toilet block in accordance with their quotation in the sum of £310 plus VAT.

d). IWALC Executive Committee

The Minutes of the Meeting of the IWALC Executive Committee held on 16th January 2014 were received.

e). Finance Committee

The Minutes of the Meetings of the Finance Committee held on 10th and 27th January 2014 were received.

i). Budget and Precept

(Councillors Fuller and Peacey-Wilcox declared pecuniary interests in this item as they were members of the I.W. Council ruling group and left the room during the discussions and voting)

Prior to commencement, Councillor Walters requested that in accordance with Standing Order 6.2, the Town Clerk records the names of Members to show whether they voted for, against or abstained on the final budget and precept proposal.

Councillor Hall had circulated a paper outlining the difficulties facing the Finance Committee in setting a budget and precept for the financial year 2014/15. Finally, following several meetings and over six hours of deliberations the Committee were suggesting two possible options.

Option 1 was set on a 'like for like' basis allowing only a small degree of flexibility. This option had no room for manoeuvre or the ability to support any services that may be withdrawn by the I.W. Council at any time during the financial year.

The second option set the budget and precept as prepared in option 1, but added an amount equivalent to £20 per Band D household as recommended to IWALC by the Deputy Leader of the I.W. Council. This would generate an additional £79,000 to be utilised for Town Preservation/Adoption of Discretionary Services.

Following much discussion it was finally

RESOLVED

- 1) That the Town Council accepts Option 2 and approves the following budget in the sum of £177,300 for the financial year 2014/15:

GENERAL ADMINISTRATION

Salaries/Tax/NI	23,000	
Office expenses	8,500	
Stationery/office supplies	1,000	
Office equipment including computer expenses	500	
Telephone/broadband	500	
Postage	400	
Travelling	400	
Conference fees	500	
Training	300	
Hire of rooms	300	
Subscriptions	1,300	
Insurance	2,000	
Audit and accountancy	1,600	40,300

MISCELLANEOUS TOWN EXPENDITURE

Town Mayors allowance	1,400	
Plants etc. (Coves in Bloom)	3,500	
Northwood Rec. – electricity	1,000	
Northwood Rec. – skatepark/MUGA	5,000	
Northwood Rec. – playpark	4,000	
Northwood Rec. – toilets	4,500	
Dog/litter bin emptying	3,600	
Newsletter	4,000	
Grants and special events	12,000	
Elections	2,000	
Contingencies	2,000	43,000

TOWN IMPROVEMENTS

Street furniture maintenance	1,000	
Civic – bunting	1,000	
Christmas trees	3,000	
New projects and services	10,000	15,000

TOWN PRESERVATION

Adoption I.W. Council discretionary services	79,000	79,000
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TOTAL **177,300**

2). That the Town Council makes a precept on the I.W. Council in the sum of £169,545 with the remaining £7,755 coming as transitional grant.

For the resolution: Councillors Banks, Cowan, Ellis, Hall, Hammond, Jones, Matthews, McNeill, Nicholson and Wardrop.

Against the resolution: Councillors Corby and Walters.

f). Planning & Licensing Committee

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning & Licensing Committee held on 27th January 2014 were received.

g). Coves Week Ltd. Shoreside Committee

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Coves Week Ltd. Shoreside Committee held on 16th January 2014 were received.

6865 ISSUE OF BACKGROUND PAPERS

Councillor Banks submitted a paper regarding electronic communications; although not approved at the time, it was an item that had been considered several years ago.

The paper stated that while it was a mandatory requirement to issue the summonses (agenda) in ‘hard copy’, any background papers could be sent electronically. Councillors could then print a ‘hard copy’ of any email information or simply store electronically as necessary. This would reduce the amount of printed matter Councillors may wish to generate and file.

RESOLVED

That in future the Town Clerk will only issue background papers for Town Council and Committee meetings electronically.

6866 MATTERS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN CLERK

- a). Details of an urgent decision regarding the Isle of Wight's attempt to secure Assisted Area Status.
 - b). *To consider whether or not the Town Council should comment on a proposed I.W. Council/Parish Council protocol.
 - c). Renewal of the Town Council's Data Protection registration.
 - d). Renewal of the Town Council's Associate Membership of the CBA.
 - e). *Details of miscellaneous correspondence.
- (* Copies circulated to all members)

RESOLVED

- 1). That the urgent decision taken by the Town Clerk following consultation with the Town Mayor regarding a letter of support for the bid to secure Assisted Area status for the Isle of Wight be noted and approved;
- 2). That any Councillor wishing to comment regarding the I.W. Council/Parish Protocol contact the Town Clerk;
- 3). That the Town Clerk be authorised to renew the Town Council's Data Protection registration; and
- 4). That the Town Clerk renews the Town Council's Associate Membership of the CBA.

6867 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

It was agreed that the following item be placed on a future agenda:

- i). Update regarding the Cowes/East Cowes chain ferry (Councillor Walters)

(The proceedings terminated at 9.00pm)

CHAIRMAN