

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Projects Committee Meeting held in the Town Council Office, Northwood House, Cowes on Tuesday 21 November 2017 at 6.15pm

Present: Councillors Taylor (Chair), Adams, J Bartrum, Brown, Nicholson

In attendance: Kate Gibbs (Assistant Town Clerk), Councillor Wardrop (non-voting), Zoe Stroud (Visit Isle of Wight) (left the meeting at 6.45pm)

160. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fuller and Peacey-Wilcox.

161. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a) Councillor Nicholson declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No. 164(a) as Chairman of the Isle of Wight Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA).
- b) No written requests for dispensation were received.

162. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Projects Committee meeting held on 17 October 2017 were taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

163. UPDATE ON EXISTING PROJECTS

a) **The Cut**

Martin Hayles, the Council's architect for The Cut project, has been liaising with Island Roads regarding the project. Martin will now complete the Schedule and send to Island Roads for pricing.

Designs for a new mural on the wall by the seating area at The Cut have been invited from local school children, with designs to be received by the end of this school term. Designs have been received from another mural designer, which were discussed.

Action: The Assistant Town Clerk will contact the mural designer regarding the current position.

b) **The Shelter**

The new foot rails are due to be fitted to the seafront shelter by the end of November 2017.

c) **High Street Pedestrianisation and Bollards**

The amendments to the Prohibition of Driving Order in Various Streets, Cowes have been signed off by the Isle of Wight Council. The changes extend the prohibition of driving in the pedestrian precinct in Cowes High Street from Midnight to 7am and 10am to Midnight, except for access to off-street premises. Island Roads are ordering revised signage and scheduling the works, which are estimated to be completed by the end of November 2017.

d) **Northwood Recreation Ground – Maintenance of the Skate Park**

Quotations for the sand blasting and painting of the underside of the ramps at the Skate Park are being sought. Maintenance of the existing equipment is considered to be a priority at this time; expansion of the Skate Park is considered to be a longer term project which can be considered when the current equipment reaches the end of its viable life.

- e) **Access Audit of the Town**
Representatives from Cowes Town Council, Gurnard Parish Council, the Isle of Wight Council, Island Roads and Isle Access had met to discuss accessibility in the town and neighbouring areas. Island Roads are considering and incorporating reasonable adjustments to their programme of works, in line with the implications of the Disability Discrimination Act. As the issues are not limited to the Cowes area, Island Roads feel there is scope for a corporate accessibility forum to be set up to look at access issues across the Island.
- f) **Tree Planting and appreciation / National Tree Week 2017**
National Tree Week will run from 26 November to 3 December 2017. To celebrate the launch of the Charter for Trees, Woods and People by the Woodland Trust, guided tree appreciation walks are being held in Northwood Park and Northwood Cemetery during National Tree Week. On Sunday 26 November, 10.30am to 11.30am, there is a guided tree appreciation walk at Northwood Cemetery, starting at the Chapels (just off the main road). On Sunday 26 November to Sunday 3rd December Tree dressing will take place. The chosen tree is the English Yew at the corner of Northwood Park close to the churchyard wall and Park Court. On Saturday 2 December, 2pm to 3pm, there is a guided tree appreciation walk at Northwood Park, starting at the steps leading up from the Rose bed (at the bottom of the main car park). The events are promoted on the Town Council's website and Facebook page. The Woodland Trust have provided an attractive poster for National Tree Week which Councillors feel should be mounted and framed.
Actions:
1) Councillors Adams and Taylor will work together to create a promotional poster for the guided walks and tree dressing.
2) The Assistant Town Clerk will obtain the cost to produce a ceramic plate of the Woodland Trust's information poster, to include the Town Council's logo and Charter branch status.
- g) **Activities to promote Cowes Town Council**
Various designs of table top display stands were provided for consideration. Following discussion, it was decided to purchase one portrait table top panel display stand which can be used to promote the Town Council at various local events. Councillors feel that further consideration is needed regarding the design and content of a floor standing retractable display stand. It was:
RECOMMENDED: That Cowes Town Council approves the cost of £238.00 plus VAT for a portrait table top panel display stand, with the cost being met from the 'New Projects' budget heading.
Action: The Assistant Town Clerk will produce designs for a floor standing retractable display stand, including costs, to be considered at the next meeting.
- h) **Promoting use of the Outdoor Gym**
Discussions have taken place with Age Friendly Island regarding the possibility of promoting the use of the outdoor gym. It is felt that this should be deferred until the Spring, when the better weather will encourage users.
- i) **Cowes Webcam**
There was no update on this project.
- j) **Empty Shops**
A survey of empty shops in the High Street has been undertaken. Two empty shops have been identified, with one believed to be in the process of changing ownership. The other

was felt unsuitable for displaying local artists' work due to the Georgian window design. There being no further action on this item, it will be removed from the agenda.

k) **Railings on the steps at Northwood Park**

A request for the installation of a central railing on the steps leading from the Rotunda car park into the Park had been raised with the Northwood Park Sub Committee. The Sub Committee felt that, as the steps were a design feature approved by Historic England, they were considered to be shallow and wide enough not to warrant a design change. There being no further action on this item, it will be removed from the agenda.

l) **Themed Weekends**

Councillor Adams presented her report which introduced the idea to hold a treasure hunt in the town, to encourage visitors out of the main tourist season. A similar activity had been successfully undertaken in Scunthorpe earlier this year. Councillors were supportive of the idea and felt that further research needed to be carried out before any proposal can be discussed.

Action: Councillor Adams will continue to research this item and report back to a further meeting.

164. NEW PROJECTS

a) **Opportunities to promote the town (Beer, Buses and Walks Festival)**

Councillor Nicholson presented his report, following a successful Classic Beer, Buses and Historic Walks weekend. The popularity of this event has been growing since its inception, with numbers taking part increasing from 4,000 in the first year to around 12,000 taking part in this year's event, 85% of whom are from off the Island. The event is completely run by volunteers, with the Island being split into regions, overseen by a lead volunteer. Councillor Nicholson is the lead volunteer for the Cowes region, which expands as far as Porchfield and The Stag public house. Three local sailing clubs had opened their doors to visitors for the event this year, which had proved very popular. Organised historic walks in Cowes, Gurnard, Shanklin and Ventnor showcased areas of historic and cultural interest in the towns. Zoe Stroud from Visit Isle of Wight attended the meeting for this item. Zoe volunteers her own time to help with the event. The large number of visitors that the event attracts brings extra trade to Island businesses outside of the main tourist season. A large percentage of the visitors stay the whole weekend in local accommodation across the Island. Visit Isle of Wight's website contains useful links to accommodation providers and to the Destination Cowes organisation. More will be done shortly to promote local accommodation, as people are already booking for next year's event. Zoe felt that the event is almost at capacity. The buses were full this year and there needs to be an increase in the number of activities for visitors to enjoy when not on the buses. Several pubs had put on entertainment in the form of live music to encourage people to stay longer at their establishments. Southern Vectis offered a special 4-day ticket promotion for those who had bought the official Beer and Buses programme. This encouraged visitors to stay for a long weekend, to use their transport to see other areas of the Island, and to take them to and from the ferry ports. This year's event was held on the same weekend as the Literary Festival, which provided another area of interest for those taking part. It is not yet known if both events will fall on the same weekend next year. The Harbour Master is keen to expand on opportunities to promote the harbour. Councillors asked what role the Town Council could have in the event. They felt that Cowes Business Association should be working with local businesses to encourage their promotion and participation. Visit Isle of Wight would like to see more activities organised in the form of guided walks, for which volunteers will be needed to lead.

Action: The Assistant Town Clerk will merge this item with 'Themed Weekends' for the next agenda under the heading 'Opportunities to promote the town'.

b) **Railings at the War Memorial in Northwood Park**

The railings are showing signs of weathering and deterioration to the paint finish. A quotation for repainting has been received in the sum of £170. It was:

RECOMMENDED: That Cowes Town Council approves the cost of £170 to repaint the railings around the War Memorial in Northwood Park, with the cost being met from the 'New Projects' budget heading.

165. MAINTENANCE ISSUES WITH EXISTING PROJECTS

a) **Street Furniture**

The Town Clock on Shooters Hill has been repainted. The new 'Tourist Information Centre' finger post is on order.

166. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

Resident and Visitor Parking Matters – Councillor Nicholson

The proceedings terminated at 7.40pm.

CHAIRMAN