



Minutes of the Thirty third Annual Town Meeting held in the Drawing Room, Northwood House, Cowes on Thursday 17 May 2018 at 6.15pm, convened under the provision of the section 99 and schedule 12 of the Local Government Act, 1972.

Present : Councillor Fuller (Town Mayor) (Chairman)

Councillors Adams (6.52pm), Brown, J Bartrum, R Bartrum, Bertie (6.40pm), Bustin (6.46pm), Ellis (6.48pm), Glendinning, Hammond (6.51pm), Jones, Oliver (6.37pm), Peacey-Wilcox, Taylor and Wardrop (6.51pm)

In attendance: Debbie Faulkner, Town Clerk; Kate Gibbs, Assistant Town Clerk and 5 members of the public.

**219 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

No apologies for absence were received.

**220 MINUTES  
RESOLVED**

That the minutes of the Thirty second Annual Town Meeting held on 18 May 2017 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

**221 REPORT OF THE BUSINESS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL**

Councillor Fuller provided a written report which was circulated to attendees.

Last May, it was an unexpected honour to be appointed as the thirteenth Town Mayor for Cowes!

I wish to say a huge thank you to all Councillors, to Deputy Mayor, Lora Peacey-Wilcox and my predecessor Cllr David Jones for their tenacious perseverance and their ongoing enthusiasm for making Cowes even better!

Our Town Councillors' enthusiasm provides the bedrock of what our Town Council achieves and campaigns for on behalf of our residents, visitors and businesses which we are all committed to serve. During the past year, I've been committed to ensure our community and their views lay at the very heart of all decisions we make.

I would like to place on record my gratitude for the support and the steadfast patience of Debbie and Kate.

This year has proved to be a rollercoaster of a year for Cowes Town Council, following the bedding-in and transferral of functions and public services to the Town Council by our local authority. This commitment to retain those most important services has been furthered by the Town Council increasing our precept. However, our Council are mindful of the importance of being open and transparent about what we provide by relaying this for feedback through our Town Council newsletter.

In the last year myself and town councillor colleagues have:

- Commemorated events for the 75<sup>th</sup> and 76<sup>th</sup> Anniversaries where the ORP Blyskawica defended our town from the events of May 1942.
- Supported remembrance events and Christmas events including the Lights of Love and when Alan Titchmarsh turned on our town's Christmas Lights.
- Hosted, built upon and underpinned friendship links with Deauville, France; Chesapeake, Maryland USA and Bulls, New Zealand.
- Provided updates to shopkeepers, residents and visitors on the availability of access to cash machines in Cowes.
- Lobbied for a central post office counter and improved banking facilities in town.
- Supported the upkeep, running costs and maintenance of Public Toilets, Green Spaces, Recreation Areas, The Library and school crossing patrols.
- In addition, the Town Council has supported the costs of the Environment Officer, who continues to work in partnership taking action to reduce fly tipping, litter and fouling.
- Undertaken tree planting and tree awareness initiatives. Councillor Fuller thanked Councillor Taylor for his help with these initiatives.
- Supported work to ensure access and mobility is enhanced for residents and visitors. Councillor Fuller thanked Councillor J. Bartrum for her role in addressing access and mobility issues.
- Provided a new shelter for Egypt Esplanade, town centre enhancements and cleansing, whilst we look forward to updating, enhancing and ensuring the Cut becomes a central feature for our town.
- Actively attended events, meetings and partnerships with the Cowes Shoreside Committee, Cowes Harbour Commission, Cowes Business Association, Destination Cowes, the Northwood House Trust, Cowes Heritage and the Friends of Northwood Cemetery.
- Cowes Town Council has worked alongside and in close partnership with neighbouring Northwood Parish Council, Gurnard Parish Council; East Cowes Town Council and Newport Parish Council.
- Supporting Floating Bridge stakeholders.
- Met with the police to discuss anti-social behaviour concerns.
- Making formal representations to the Isle of Wight Council on planning, licensing, regeneration and highway issues. Most notably this has included calling a special meeting and providing feedback on the Medina Yard application and proposals for the St Mary's Roundabout.
- Discussions continue with the Isle of Wight Council and key stakeholders on supporting Cowes Week.
- Cowes is in the process of doing more to make the town 'Plastic' and 'Pesticide Free'. This will be furthered later this year during Cowes Week and September's Isle of Wight Day being hosted in Cowes.

This provides only an iceberg's tip of some of the projects, initiatives and commitments which our Town Council has pursued. Please note that I am very mindful that outside our meetings Councillors are involved in a multitude of other activities that improve our town, and what it offers to our community.

With the onset of planned future projects, regeneration initiatives and events taking place in the coming year, 2018 has the prospect to be a fantastic and positive year for our residents and for our wider community. From our perspective, Cowes continues to have very stiff competition from our competitors and this is something that we should not and cannot afford to lose sight of.

Thank you again, to all Councillors, partner organisations, those who have and continue to invest in our town and our community, and to our life-blood that is our residents for keeping positive and ensuring Cowes builds upon its reputation as a proactive can-do, will-do community which for the past year I've been proud to play an important part of.

Questions were invited but none were asked.

**222 ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2018**

Copies of the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018 were circulated at the meeting. Ms Debbie Faulkner (Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer) was available for any questions but none were raised. It was:

**RESOLVED**

**That the accounts for the year ended 31 March 2018 be received and noted.**

**223 ANNUAL SUMMARY – SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM**

A written report had been circulated prior to the meeting. Police Constable Dollery was unable to attend the meeting and sent his apologies.

**224 ANNUAL SUMMARY – IW COUNCILLORS**

Written reports were received from Councillors Bertie, Fuller, Nicholson and Peacey-Wilcox.

**Councillor Paul Bertie (Cowes North)**

Local Initiatives. This year, I have become much more active with other local Cowes 'stakeholder' committees, including Destination Cowes, Cowes Week Shoreside Committee, Cowes Business Association, and attend other group's committee meetings when required.

Destination Cowes. This group is now the only group that exclusively markets Cowes to potential visitors and tourists, the lifeblood of the town. The group has produced an informative town map (50,000 copies) to be distributed mainly in the South East of the UK, which has been identified as the area from which most 'casual' visitors will come to the IOW. A Cowes promotional video is planned for release in June. DC also has the aim of attracting up to 20 cruise liners a year to Cowes. The challenge facing Cowes now is how to keep the visitors from these cruise liners in Cowes.

Rope Walk. I am working with others to try and reinstate this Cowes trail as a means of offering visitors 'something to do' in Cowes. It would also be a useful tool for school children and could teach them about their town and Cowes heritage.

Cowes Maritime Museum. Apart from its importance from a maritime heritage point of view, this could be a major tourist attraction. I am more than happy to support its initiative to get funding (circa £25M) to build a brand new state of the art museum.

Cowes Week. The 'Cowes Week Trademark' issue still persists, and both CTC and CBA are still not happy with the situation, but probably lack the will to take this issue head-on. There is a new agreement proposed between IWC and Cowes Week Ltd over the control of The Parade area during Cowes Week. I am not particularly happy with the agreement in its present draft form, and will continue to address this matter.

Gateway to Cowes. I fully support this initiative. This proposed development could bring a much needed boost to the very centre of Cowes. With strategic development, it could also very easily link to other initiatives such as improved access, car parking, genuine park & ride areas, the Cut development, etc.

IWC Regeneration Committee. With other possible major developments taking place in the Cowes area, I have requested a position on this important committee which at the moment has no Cowes representative.

Isle of Wight Council. All Councils continue to face challenging times, but by all parties working together, the IWC has managed to meet its budget without any noticeable reduction in statutory services. New initiatives, such as property investments etc, are bringing in much needed funds.

Cowes Tourism & Events. I am hugely concerned at the massive drop in sponsorship for large events in Cowes. The 'big picture' for Cowes needs to be urgently looked at, not just for yachting events, but for other events such as the Isle of Wight Literary Festival (a great success) etc. The town needs some new initiatives, and the recent successful new Cowes Spring Classics event shows what can be done with a little effort.

Waste Recycling. With most waste (including glass) now being collected from the kerbside, I am questioning what happens to it. The old bottle banks in St Mary's Rd car park seemed to be a good 'separator', and I am seeking assurance that our waste is being handled correctly. Brexit. Although I believe that the Island will benefit from a higher level of tourism because of Brexit, at the moment, there seems little appetite to face up to the Brexit challenge.

Open for Business. The new IWC administration has already held a very successful summit with more to come. The administration is showing great initiatives in getting involved with attracting new businesses to the IOW, the new Acensos building in Cowes being an obvious example.

An Island University? As fanciful as this may sound, I would support such an idea. We must stop the drain of young people from the Island.

Car Parking. This continues to remain a big problem in Cowes. The 4 IWC Councillors who represent the Cowes area are now meeting on a regular basis to find solutions to Cowes problems, and car parking is currently at the top of the list.

Local Issues. Alexandra House is now being developed to a high standard, but the open ground area at the bottom of Market Hill is an ongoing eyesore. The owner needs to be brought to account.

Island Roads. Parklands Ave. has finally been resurfaced, but other important areas, particularly Terminus Road, still need to be addressed, and I am questioning how quickly these areas will be done.

Cowes Business Association. I continue to be an active member, and a new banner scheme is currently underway. Many Cowes traders are also being supportive of a hanging baskets initiative, something I first started about 20 years ago. The effect transformed the High Street area.

### **Councillor Paul Fuller (Cowes West and Gurnard)**

In a Nutshell: Some of the key issues I've been pursuing since last year:

For details of these and other issues please visit [paulfullercc.blogspot.com](http://paulfullercc.blogspot.com)

#### **April 2017**

- A crowdfunding initiative needed to take place to safeguard the Cowes Primary School crossing patrol. Thank you to all who contributed!
- Complaints relating to anti-social Parking were resolved. The most common concerns related to parking outside schools and high sided vehicles.
- Naming of new roads by pupils of local schools for the new development at Place Road was approved.
- The new Range store opened in Place Road. Initial parking issues, visibility splays and lighting complaints were resolved, with improved pedestrian access provisions still pending.
- A contentious Planning Application was withdrawn. This was followed up by plans more in keeping with the area and was then approved. This is an example of how talking before submitting plans can both save time and money, whilst at the same time overcoming neighbours' concerns and distress.

## **May**

- Replacement seating took place in Church Road and Worsley Road, Gurnard.
- The Planning Application for eight dwellings adjacent to Dottens Farm was approved despite objections raised by both myself and residents.
- With stakeholders, I assisted supporting a mobility audit for Cowes and Gurnard.
- I supported residents living in flats to resolve issues regarding communal waste.
- I was re-elected!! Thank you to the 1,145 residents who voted Independent!

## **June**

- Remedial action was taken following litter bins becoming overfilled in Gurnard.
- A letter-drop to shopkeepers took place following cash machines running out of money in Cowes. The campaign to reinstate both a bank and the Post Office in the town continues.
- Untaxed and abandoned vehicles were reported and subsequently 18 vehicles have been taxed or removed.
- Following complaints, a number of local rural roads had skid resistance improved.
- The footpath linking Battery Road with Egypt Esplanade re-opened following earlier landslips taking place.

## **July**

- A consultation took place with residents to designate Shore Road a Conservation Area.
- The IW Council reconsidered its policy concerning trailers at Lynnbottom following complaints relayed.
- The IW Council supported action following requests concerning discarded barbecues.
- Support was provided to by a resident incorrectly accused of a noise nuisance complaint.
- Yarn Bombing came to Gurnard!!

## **August**

- Following consultations and false starts reconstruction of Parklands Avenue began.
- Gurnard Beach was closed following the Pumping Station requiring new parts.
- Complaints were received concerning traffic and parking during Cowes Week. These were fed back and I've been assured that lessons can be learnt for 2018.
- It was a privilege, as Town Mayor spending time during Cowes Week promoting our town and listening to residents, businesses, visitors and sponsors about making the Cowes experience better.

## **September**

- Complaints were received, and vandalised public toilets were repaired in Cowes.
- The marine police were contacted following complaints of jet-skis occurring. Action was taken by the police to address this problem.
- 88% of those voting supported Gurnard's Neighbourhood Plan at referendum. Later the Cabinet confirmed this new supplementary planning guidance for the village.
- Solent Fibre Telecom work took place on land adjacent to Cooks Bay, Gurnard.

## **October**

- Not before time, Gurnard won the Isle of Wight Best Kept Large Village award.
- Following concerns raised by Gurnard Parish Council, The IW Council agreed to install bollards to protect the children's play area on Gurnard Green.
- I arranged a meeting for the Meadow View developer to meet with Place Road residents to provide an update on proposals for the housing scheme. The developer advised of his intention to increase numbers to 92 dwellings, whilst at the same time mitigating concerns of this four phased proposal.

## **November**

- I joined residents and landowners to the English Coastal Path Drop-In sessions.

- Support was given to Crossfield Avenue residents following Firework party complaints. As a consequence, the venue apologised and action taken to ensure no recurrence happens.
- Blackberry Lane received a white line following safety concerns being made.
- I attended Remembrance Events at St Mary's Church, All Saints Church and Cowes Primary School.

### **December**

- I supported proposals for a Post Office Counter to be located in Cowes Town Centre.
- The programme to replace railings on Gurnard/Cowes Seafront commenced.
- At Full Council, I supported all Isle of Wight Councillors being DBS checked.
- Following consultation and feedback initiated in 2017, The IW Council introduced wheelie bins or recyclable sacks for Garden Waste. It is envisaged this will provide a £100k saving, as well as giving greater flexibility to gardeners.

### **January 2018**

- I requested Egypt Hill was gritted in icy conditions.
- Cowes Medical Centre Information leaflets were distributed this month. I supported over 20 local residents who did not receive theirs.
- The Cowes Traffic Order was publicised. 15 residents commented on proposals. Comments received were largely against proposals elsewhere in Cowes.
- A planning application which received considerable interest to rebuild the Watersedge Café in Shore Road, Gurnard was later withdrawn.

### **February**

- Cowes Town Council held a special meeting to consider plans to reconfigure St Mary's Roundabout. The Council raised concerns on 13 aspects of these proposals.
- Following feedback during the election, at Full Council I supported increasing voting rights to 16 and 17 year olds.
- I met with and supported Cowes residents, taking action to reduce fly-tipping.
- I supported reducing the cost of Councillors' Allowances by suggesting these should only be means tested.
- I voted against proposals to increase Council Tax by 6%.

### **March**

- Following enquiries, officers confirmed that the only vehicles with access to use Cow Lane are those with permission from households in the lane.
- On behalf of Cowes Town Council I spoke against plans to redevelop Medina Yard. Concerns raised were linked to the lack of affordable homes, lack of parking and the potential loss of marine industries.
- The IW Council approved changes to school term times. Despite personal concerns, I supported proposals which gained a positive response to reduce the summer holiday by one week in favour of an extended half term holiday.
- I met with volunteers from Mornington Woods in order to initiate a long term plan to ensure the woodland and nearby facilities are properly safeguarded.
- I met with Blackberry Lane residents to resolve longstanding local issues.

### **Councillor John Nicholson (Cowes South and Northwood)**

Nuisance Parking Being Addressed. After years of campaigning a new policy was introduced at the end of last year to deal with abandoned cars in a robust manner, which is a significant step forward. Now we need to push for this policy to be extended to cover any nuisance car vehicle, like those that are parked without tax or MOT, but that are not, technically abandoned, because their owners can be traced.

Utility Roadworks Being Addressed. Again, after years of campaigning, movement is afoot. With general recognition and agreement that the continuous disruption caused by Utility repairs, often of poor quality, through lack of maintenance, is unacceptable, I am assured that this message has been meaningfully communicated and the threat of lane hire or roadwork permit charges have the offender's attention. I will believe it when I see it having effect!

Highways Public Safety Policies Being Implemented. At long last, this campaign is delivering. With continued accidents and injuries through repeated and avoidable poor practice, particularly concerning scaffolding, with the support and help of Island Roads and the IW WWT HSE backed construction safety group, and the determined support of the Leader of the Council, we have, not before time, a robust policy in its final draft before it is imposed. The introduction of this policy is agreed by peers of the industry and this lead will be a significant first step in controlling, improving and supporting best practice in the construction industry, something that I believe all Councils should be doing through positive steps, as abdication from this responsibility is, in effect, doing the complete opposite and a betrayal to those in the industry who strive to uphold best practice and standards, and who, also, pay their taxes and rates, and fulfil all the other duties of a bona-fide employer.

Lanesend School Traffic Concern Being Resolved. This seems to have been a year for movement towards resolution since, again, after years of campaigning the joint efforts of myself and colleague Cllr Lora Peacey-Wilcox are set to bear fruit as our suggestion for improved traffic management controls regarding Lanesend Primary School have been accepted and are in programme for implementation.

Drugs Concern Addressed. The persistent concern over drug related anti-social activity in Love Lane at last seems to have been brought to a head, following years of complaints and campaigning by myself and others, and especially with the support of the Town Council.

Cowes Post Office Update. After a hard-fought campaign to persuade the Post Office to reconsider its decision not to withdraw from the town centre, the Post Office has agreed to seek application for a town centre site again. Unfortunately, a change in ownership of the favourite site has led to their becoming ineligible – but the search continues.

Taking a Proactive Lead in Promoting and Coordinating Our Town. I am campaigning for recognition and agreement that the Town Council should be taking a proactive lead in promoting, facilitating and developing its town for the benefit of the town and its people. Whether this is being actively involved in promoting our town through events and visitors, or in seeking useful information regarding our business so that we can be better placed to represent them so that they prosper and bring further benefit to the town and its people. There may be other groups or organisations that are dedicated to particular functions, but it is the Town Council that has the ability to be an overall coordinator as the governmental instrument to represent the people and whose members are elected by the people, and it is my assertion that we, the Town Council should step up to fulfil this role and responsibility in its full.

Current opportunities for leadership are in promoting the town to visitors and events, planning to resolve parking issues, supporting an improved Gateway to Cowes scheme, starting to work with our businesses under the offer of a Regeneration pilot, and developing a wellbeing programme.

#### **Councillor Lora Peacey-Wilcox (Cowes Medina)**

As always, I write monthly updates both to the Town Council and via Island Magazines' website.

The biggest issue this year has been PARKING, or rather lack of it. Particularly around the roads closest to town and Red Jet.

I am working to have double yellow lines reduced to single yellow lines, to enable people to at least come home at night and park outside, instead of driving around for hours looking for spaces, as they do currently.

Dog Pooh is always an issue. It begs belief that people really allow their dogs to foul anywhere, and the issue of why they pick it up and then leave the bag around in the hedges, is incomprehensible.

Planning, well it was the big one we have been dreading for years.....Medina Yard. I worked with so many people to help fight this application. I tried my best, it utterly drained me; sadly, only 5 councillors REALLY understood the application and issues in the area. If you wish to read what has happened and what I have been dealing with on a monthly basis then please log into the following:

Visit: <http://www.islandmagazines.co.uk/>

As always, please feel free to contact me with any issues: [lora08@sky.com](mailto:lora08@sky.com)

Questions were invited but none were asked.

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### QUESTIONS FROM THE MEETING

A member of the public felt that the town is going into decline and that residents aren't seeing any actions; they asked how shop owners and the public can get involved.

Councillor Glendinning summarised actions since the Town Council's meeting on 5 April and outlined current plans to improve the visual appearance of the High Street with additional hanging baskets, subject to permission from the Isle of Wight Council and Island Roads. Shopkeepers and Cowes Business Association have pledged financial assistance with the project which, if successful, can be built on next year.

In relation to proposed enhancements at The Cut, Councillors were asked if there was any scope for public input into the plans. The current scheme has been an agenda item since 2014, following requests from a public survey to enhance The Cut and provide a location for a regular market. Any concerns the public have with this project can be raised at the Projects Committee.

A local trader felt that trade in the High Street is 50% down since October 2017 and requested that all stakeholders get together to come up with ideas to increase trade in the town. They considered that the new Destination Cowes brochure was the best we have ever had, but that Destination Cowes is still unknown to the majority of locals and businesses in the town. The brochure was compiled to promote the Island to mainland visitors and the majority will be distributed on the mainland. There was disappointment expressed that cruise ship visitors were transported via coaches straight out of the town to other areas of the Island, resulting in no benefit to local traders.

The late night Christmas shopping event had been a huge success and needs all stakeholders to take the idea forward to repeat and grow the event. Talks will commence after Cowes Week to develop plans to hold further late night events, which will hopefully suit more shopkeepers as there was concern expressed at the short notice of the previous event. Late night shopping also avoids parking charges.

The Mayor advised that all four Isle of Wight Councillors for Cowes are having ongoing discussions regarding regeneration of the town and feels there is a need for businesses in Cowes and East Cowes, along with East Cowes Town Council, to have a consistent view to move forward ideas to regenerate the area. Parking issues were also being discussed and the Mayor will circulate ideas raised as widely as possible.

It was suggested by a member of the public that Cowes Business Association (CBA) needs to be more supported by local businesses and in turn needs to be more supportive of local

businesses. It was hoped that many would attend the CBA's Annual General Meeting scheduled for the following week and that businesses would join the CBA's committee.

The proceedings terminated at 6.58pm.

**CHAIRMAN**