

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the COWES TOWN COUNCIL held at Community Hall, Northwood House, Cowes on Wednesday, 3rd November 2010 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor Wells (Town Mayor) (Chairman)
Councillors Banks, Birch, Ellis, Hammond, Jones, McGregor, Matthews,
Robinson, Sanderson, Thwaites and Walters

6390 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Mazillius, Peacey-Wilcox and Wilcox. A letter of resignation from Cllr Gifford who has regretfully resigned due to family commitments had been received. The Town Clerk would advertise the vacancy.

6391 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Question: Referring to item 6379 from minutes of last meeting which was reports by IW Councillors – in particular Councillor Fuller’s report. Item f: Northwood House. Following concerns over the management of Northwood House and Park, a meeting was called between all four Isle of Wight Councilors, The Council Leader and Director, Davina Fiore on the future of Northwood House. All Councilors were supportive of the future of Northwood House, gardens and access to facilities.

Is Cowes Town Council proposing to take a more prominent role in securing a sustainable future and management of the park?

Answer: Cllr Wells Yes, The Northwood House sub group intends to put forward proposals and recommendation which has recently been discussed which have recently been discussed. This will be discussed further at item 8

Question: To the Mayor and Cllr Walters can you confirm or deny reports that you called for the removal of the trustees and for them to and be reported to the charity commission? These comments would be prejudicial and I would ask that you both step down from the sub-committee if indeed they are true.

Answer: Cllr Wells No, that is not true and I can also speak for Cllr Walters. That was not said at the meeting and not recorded in the minutes of the meeting. There is a mechanism by which trusts work and how this works was discussed at the meeting and a process to be followed if something went wrong with the trust. There was no call at all for the trustees (of Northwood House) should resign.

Question: The public have paid council tax to pay for Northwood House and park. Given Cowes Town Council’s reserves will Cowes Town Council uses these for Northwood House Park? If not will we get a tax rebate?

Answer: The total un-ring fenced amount is around £35, 000. This will be discussed further at item 8.

Question: Can we see the minutes of the meeting (of Northwood House sub-group)?

Answer: Cllr Wells The minutes are circulated tonight, it’s a public documents and yes you are entitled to see them.

Question: (To Cllr Wells) Did you or did you not ask someone to report the trustees to the charity commission?

Answer: Cllr Wells No I did not and nor did any other member.

Question from Cllr Jones Perhaps sub committees should be open to the public and press and I am not sure that this one was open to the public and the press. Also it is a shame that the proper officer did not attend to take minutes.

Answer: Cllr Wells All our sub committee meetings are open to the public and the press. On some occasions the Town Clerk attends to take minutes but on this occasion he did not. Cllr Sanderson stated that once the minutes had been accepted by the full Town Council then they could be made public and would be available on the Town Council website.

6392 REPORTS BY ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLORS

Councillor Brown sent his apologies.

Councillor Mazillius circulated a written report referring to the following:

- a). That he would support a Gurnard, Northwood and Cowes joint initiative in respect of a Community Transport scheme.
- b). The suggestion of a joint Gurnard, Northwood and Cowes initiative in respect of Northwood House. I.W. Council issued parking permits would not be valid in the Park Road car park from 13th November.
- c). The important consultation regarding the Island Plan – Core Strategy.
- d). That a speed measuring device would be installed in Three Gates Road.
- e). An application to develop a five turbine wind farm south of Wellow and Thorley was expected soon; this was of interest to the whole Island.
- f). That the Solent Local Enterprise Partnership had been given the go ahead by Government to succeed SEEDA.
- g). That the Highways Private Finance Initiative (PFI) had been approved in principle by the Government subject to a scaling back in the total funding available.
- h). That the I.W. Council was consulting on the proposed changes to the eligibility criteria in respect of Adult Social Care.

Councillor Peacey-Wilcox had nothing further to add to Councillor Mazillius' report.

Councillor Fuller circulated a written report referring to the following:

a) Island Plan Proposed Submission Core Strategy is open for public consultation until 10th December. The plan for the Medina Valley area is to:

- i) Identify development sites for 1255 dwellings
- ii) Provide at least 35% affordable housing
- iii) Revise development envelopes in the AAP boundary as required
- iv) Identify and allocate suitable sites for Gypsies, Travellers and travelling show people
- v) Determine whether additional employment land is needed
- vi) Identify employment sites with deep water frontage and see if existing sites need further protection.
- vii) Establish whether further retail space is needed
- viii) Review town centre boundaries and primary retail frontages
- ix) Define and protect the areas between Cowes, Newport and East Cowes to prevent coalescence.
- x) Determine how lack of green infrastructure can be addressed
- xi) Identify type and location of waste facilities needed to accommodate new development

- xii) Establish nature and level of renewable energy from proposed developments.
 - xiii) Consider feasibility of improving sustainable transport routes on both sides of Medina.
 - xiv) Establish the junction improvements needed to accommodate proposed development.
- b) Cowes Secondary School Planning Application – approved by the planning committee on 26th October
- c) Community Governance Review: Following last meeting with Cowes Town Council the proposal to merge with Gurnard and Northwood parish councils was discussed by Northwood and Gurnard Parish councils at their recent meetings. No support was found to take this further. I suggest a better way of recognising the common needs of the three councils is to have liaison meetings for topics like Northwood House, local plan/design statements, housing issues, planning, transport.
- d) Northwood House Car Park – The IW council will no longer operate the car park on Park Road and this will be instead operated by the Northwood House trustees through a contractor. Council permits are no longer usable in the Park Road car park and people can get a refund on any unused portion of their permits.
- e) Baring Road – still getting complaints about the volume and speed of traffic on this road.
- f) Road works – There is a high volume of road works at present as the council are committed to doing non-urgent works in busy times. There have also been concerns raised about the condition of Park Road, Ward Road and Parklands Ave. These are being monitored and works are due to begin in 21 days at Park Road.
- g) Crossfield Estate – There is a fence on the estate which has been erected without permission and planning enforcement officers are involved as this goes against the principal of non-enclosure and enforcement could follow. The IW council believes that if the fence remains this could change the estate beyond recognition.
- h) Older Voices Following a meeting from last month I have been advised that the Cowes Medical Centre are taking a more flexible approach. An accessibility audit done by the older voices members has been passed to Cllr Edward Giles, it highlights several areas for improvement in the Cowes locality. Cowes Town Council has been invited to attend the next meeting of the Cowes Older Voices group on 18th November, 10am IW Community Club, Park Road.

Question: Cllr Walters SP3 documents makes no mention of re-development of housing site at site of chain ferry and development 8.8 hectares at Stag Lane which could cause major traffic problems.

Answer: Cllr Ellis Councillor Brown is probably the best person to ask about this.

6393 REPORT FROM THE LOCAL SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER

- a) Halloween – passed without a major incident. Extra patrols have been planned for Bonfire night. PSCOs are proactively looking for shops selling fireworks in the locality. None were found but this proactive approach will continue with the plan to check licences.
- b) Thefts from Motor Vehicle – there has been a spate of these over a 4 day period with items stolen from unsecured cars. 2 suspects have been identified and bailed after the pattern was identified by the Cowes team.
- c) Licensing – Union Inn has a 3am closing time and there have been complaints of noise. This is to be investigated by both the police and local Environmental Health officers.
- d) Local Action Group – following a trial in East Cowes there is to be one set up in Cowes. The group will task the police with priorities and raise concerns. The group will consist of 10-12 people with a range of backgrounds. 1 councillor was requested to join as well as members of the public who can see the issues facing the whole community and not just themselves as individuals.

All the councillors warmly welcomed the development of the Local Action Group. Councillors would inform the Town Clerk if they wish to have their names put forward for the Local Action Group.

Question: Cllr Walters asked what affect the spending cuts have?

Answer: The frontline including the PCSOs should be the last to be impacted. Savings are to be made through the amalgamation of units with the mainland. Civilian staff are also to be reduced and warranted staff are to be reduced through natural wastage and not filling existing vacancies.

Question: Cllr Walters asked about the input the police have into licensing decisions – referring specifically to the problems around the Union Inn

Answer: Since 24 hour licensing was introduced there has been a presumption of granting licences and then dealing with problems later.

7.40 Mike Sizer leaves.

6394 REPORT FROM LOCAL ENVIRONMENT OFFICER

A written report was sent to the Town Clerk.

- a) Persistent graffiti with an NSF tag – these have all been cleaned but one required a specialist contractor to clean it.
- b) 2 fly tipping incidents in the Moorgreen Road area. These were both quickly cleaned up.
- c) Dog mess remains a problem – those areas with high levels are having early morning and evening patrols. To date no one has been identified as an offender.

6395 MINUTES

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 6th October, 2010 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6396 MATTERS ARISING

a) The Cut (Min No. 6313c refers)

Cllr McGregor informed the council that The Cut has been entered into the “Style of Wight” magazine competition to win £1 000 for a community project to improve a local area. Martin Halyes (architect) is due to apply for new planning permission for the cut – the issues with highways have been resolved, although the town council will be required to fund the TRO. The aim is still to complete this project by 2011 (subject to planning). Jane Popov has offered to organise a mural competition for the cut using the Island Games as a theme – this needs further discussion with her.

Question: Cllr Walters the Cowes Yacht Haven entrance is being re-done and will this be in keeping with the cut.

Answer: Cllr McGregor stated that the entrance is part of the phase 2 of the works and the Town Improvements committee will contact Cowes Yacht Haven when ready to do the cut to ensure that the works are in keeping with each other.

b) Quote for repainting of CCTV mast (Min No. 6372g refers)

The Town Council have received a number of complaints about the impact of the new CCTV mast. A quote from Southern Electric has been sought to cover the costs of repainting the mast in an effort to make it less noticeable (£232 + VAT). Cllr Wells suggested painting a light grey/blue colour like other masts in the area.

Several ideas were forth coming from Councillors on how to proceed. The public present were asked for comment and none of those present had ever found the current mast particularly noticeable and pointed out that more complaints could follow if a mast in a good state of repair was repainted. It was also suggested by Cllr Sanderson that changing the colour would once again make it noticeable. Cllr Wells to write and inform residents of the council's decision to not repaint at this stage but will consider a colour change in the future.

RESOLVED

To leave the CCTV mast as it is and to not re-paint until required.

c) Update on War Memorial Project and details of annual Remembrance Day Parade (Min No. 6384c refers)

Town Clerk has booked spaces at in church and booked a wreath. Contractor is to lay matting around memorial and then to be stored at Northwood House. Cllr Banks confirmed that the memorial will be completed by 14th November 2010.

RESOLVED

To make a £100 donation to the Poppy Appeal for the wreath.

d) Up date on Town Crier (Min. No. 6386 refers)

Cllr Hammond stated that ex-councillor Slade has put herself forward for the role of Town Crier. Following an item in the Beacon Cllr Wells has been contacted by Shirley Ballard (Town Crier for the Isle of Wight) who could operate anywhere on the Island, she has a uniform and is a member of the Guild of Town Criers.

RESOLVED

To ask the Isle of Wight Town Crier to act on behalf of Cowes when events required.

A representative of the Island Games Committee would attend Cowes Town Council Meeting on 5th January 2011

6397 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

a) Northwood House 18th October 2010

Cllr Thwaites declared a personal and prejudicial interest and left the meeting a 8.11pm, she asked to speak prior to discussion of the committee's report but was refused as this was not in keeping with the agenda.

Cllr Wells stated that the Northwood House sub group meet on 18th October and recommended that the following proposal be made to the Northwood House Trustees: *namely that Cowes Town Council take over the management of the Ward Avenue Car Park and with the proceeds manage the parkland attached to Northwood House including all the current services. Open book accounting could show all income for the car park and all costs to maintain the park and at each year end excess funds from the car park income would be paid over to the Trustees for use in developing the future of the house.* (taken from Minutes of the Meeting of the Northwood House sub-group meeting 18th October 2010)

A lengthy discussion followed with several key points being made by councillors.

- The car park at Denmark Road which Cowes Town council has experience of running was managed by the IW Council.
- The sub-committee meeting was invalid as neither the Town Clerk nor his assistant was present as proper officers to record the minutes of the meeting.
- The sub committee has made only recommendations and not decisions
- The offer to the trustees is an attempt to offer practical support so that they can concentrate on the house as their main priority.

- That the trustees would probably receive around £100, 000 per year after the costs of running the grounds had been taken from the car park fees.
- There is a lack of clarity over the costs of running the park, although this is due to difficulties that Northwood House Trustees have had in getting information from the IW Council so all figures are estimated.
- The precept could be increased to cover the costs of running the grounds of Northwood House
- The people of Cowes appear to have greater concern about the grounds and not the fabric of Northwood House
- Cowes Town Council would offer the administration of the grounds and contracts relating to the grounds and car park at zero cost to the trustees, using the precept to cover these costs.
- Offering surplus car park funds to the Northwood House Trustees on an annual basis could cause the trustees financial difficulties and that this should be offered more frequently.

Cllr Hammond requested a named vote. The Town Council voted on a proposed amendment to the resolution the phrase *at each year end* be removed from the resolution. Councillors were reminded that if they voted to accept the amendment to recommendation that this would have the effect of the whole recommendation in its altered form would become a resolution.

RESOLVED

To offer to the Northwood House Trustees that Cowes Town Council take over the management of the Ward Avenue Car Park and with the proceeds manage the parkland attached to Northwood House including all the current services. Open book accounting could show all income for the car park and all costs to maintain the park excess funds from the car park income would be paid over to the Trustees for use in developing the future of the house.

The following Councillors voted for the amendment:

Robinson, Sanderson, Wells, McGregor, Banks, Birch, Matthews, Walters

The Following Councillors voted against the amendment:

Hammond, Ellis, Jones

Cllr Thwaites returned to the meeting at 8.50p.m.

Cllr Thwaites read a report of the Northwood House Trustees and circulated this prior to the meeting. This can be found in full at:

<http://www.northwoodhouse.org/documents/REPORT%20TO%20CTC%203%20November%202010.pdf>

In addition to the circulated report Cllr Thwaites stated that:

The proposal from Cowes Town Council has come too late as a contractor has already been identified to manage the car park and contract is in place. Believe that this is in the best interests of the trust Cowes Town Council were requested to remove any belongings from Northwood House by the end of the week but other space can be offered for the council until 20th November. This will allow for the kitchen area to be deep cleaned.

Excellent progress has been made by the trustees, volunteers and advisors since the departure of the Isle of Wight Council a month ago.

Question: Cllr Walters Who painted the lines and why are there double yellow lines at the entrance to the Rotunda?

Answer: Cllr Thwaites These have been painted for safety concerns and to ensure proper management.

Cllr Walters reported a conversation with a traffic warden who believed that he could enforce traffic violations in this area. Cllr Thwaites responded that it cannot be enforced by the local authority as this is private land.

Cllr McGregor offered clarification around the potential raising of the precept as it was discussed in 2009 at a public meeting. The majority of people agreed to an increase but the people who were there did not represent a full demographic profile so further consultation would have to involve the whole of community. Any increase would need a full referendum of all the people of Cowes.

Cllr Thwaites was supportive of these views.

Cllr Wells Town Council's funds are limited and there is concern that managing the park is not just a 1 year project. He also apologised for any implication that Cllr Thwaites did not understand council financial matters.

Cllr Walter page 4 of your emailed report refers to changes of the trust and its documents are under discussion with the charity commission. (last paragraph of page 3 on the web link) I can see that you are amending item 4.4 of the later charitable documents that the trustees must not undertake any permanent trading activity? Do you propose to amend your trust?

Answer: Cllr Thwaites yes we intend to alter our term of trust with charity commission as needed and are receiving legal advice on this matter.

Question: Cllr McGregor asked about how to get a permit for Park Road car park.

Answer: Cllr Thwaites the website contains information and can be used to purchase a permit as can a mobile phone to update tickets. First time this technology has been in place on the Island.

Standing Orders were suspended due to meeting time over running

b) Assistant Town Clerk Working Group 13th October 2010

Cost of Denmark Road offices are £135 per week for two units including all utilities and storage space. Cllr Hammond questioned the necessity for hiring two units and also requested a named vote on this issue.

Cllr Thwaites declared a personal and prejudicial interest and left the meeting at 9.25pm

Cllr Birch emphasised the need for office space, felt that Denmark Road is only solution at present but does not need to continue indefinitely and does preclude a future Northwood House office base. The Town Clerk reminded the council of the issue of lone working at Northwood House. Cllr McGregor noted that the IT facility grant required computer space and space was needed for meetings without incurring an hourly cost.

RESOLVED

- 1). That the Town Council enters a twelve month lease agreement for the offices and storage space in Demark Road at a rate of £135 per week.
- 2). That the Town Council utilise the grant received for IT equipment as soon as they access the new offices and that part of these funds be used to buy a new digital recorder and IT equipment for use at future Planning meetings.

The following Councillors voted for resolution 1 above

Walter, Matthews, Birch, Banks, McGregor, Wells, Sanderson, Robinson

The following Councillors voted against that resolution

Ellis, Hammond, Jones

6398 ITEMS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN CLERK

a) Urgent decision

i) The Assistant Town Clerks registration for “Working with Your Council” training

b) The need to explore a joint community transport scheme for the Gurnard, Cowes and Northwood council areas.

c) Consultation on the IW council’s draft “Sex Establishment Licensing Policy” Cllr Banks was concerned that the stalls be removed from the policy and that more frequent reviews of licences was needed and he recommended annual review of licences rather than bi-annual.

d) “Local Council Review” subscription – agreed to discontinue this subscription

e) Miscellaneous correspondence

f) Netguides runs website cowes.co.uk wants to put plans of Cowes which the Town Council owns onto that website and was requesting permission.

g) Island Core Strategy is open for comment – Town Clerk is to email link around to councillors ready to comment on the strategy at the December Town Council meeting

h) Isle of Wight Council budget consultation workshop on 18th November 4 – 7pm at County Hall. Cllr Walters to attend

i) Youth Club – Requested promotion of Youth Club especially girls only nights on a Tuesday and Year 9 only night on a Friday.

j). Gurnard and Northwood Parish councils have suggested that they work with the Cowes Town Council to support the Northwood House trustees.

It was felt that this would make an unnecessarily beauracatic system and that each council could individually support the trustees.

Cllr Thwaites agreed with this.

RESOLVED

1). That the action taken in respect of the Assistant Town Clerks training be noted and approved;

2). That Councillor Hammond represents the Town Council regarding a joint Community Transport scheme;

3). That the Town Council recommends an annual review of licences take place under the Sex Establishment Policy.

4). That the Town Council does not renew their subscription for the Local Council Review;

5). That permission be granted to Netguides for use of the Cowes map on the Cowes.co.uk website; and

6). That Cowes Town Council would continue to support the Northwood House trustees directly.

6399 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

Island Core Strategy December 2010

Presentation by a representative of the Island Games Committee - January 2011

(The proceedings terminated at 9.49pm)

CHAIRMAN