

Minutes of the Meeting of the COWES TOWN COUNCIL held at Northwood House, Cowes on Wednesday, 2nd March 2011 at 7.02pm

Present: Cllrs Banks, Birch, Ellis, Hammond, Jones, Matthews, Mazillius, McGregor, Robinson, Sauderson, Thwaites, Walters and Wells
2 members of the public, Councillor Fuller

6433 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllrs Brown Peacey-Wilcox and Wilcox.

6434 QUESTIONS FROM MEMEBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no questions from members of the public.

6435 REPORTS FROM IOW COUNCILLORS

Cllr MAZILLIUS circulated a written report referring to the following and then gave a verbal up date on some items (below).

WIGHTBUS

The new schedules from 17th April show the removal of the 9am service and the discontinuing of the Saturday service but, the service will now continue until 2nd September. Southern Vectis has offered to fully train volunteers as PSV licence holders who will drive buses supplied by the company and make the replacement service financially viable.

LIBRARIES

After the consultation period ended earlier this month over 1500 responses were received and five bids by community groups to run local libraries are now being evaluated. The Cabinet paper makes 4 recommendations.

1. IW Council run libraries would continue in **Cowes**, Freshwater, Newport, Ryde, Sandown and Ventnor. Other libraries will be extended until 30th June when those groups which placed bids will run libraries.

2. Part of the library HQ budget would be devolved to these eleven libraries; and Newport and Ryde would be used to trial a modern self-service system.

3. The IW Council will lease transfer the library building where community groups have agreed to take over their local library.

4. Where a group establishes a case for a new library the IW Council will support this with a core stock of books, materials etc and training.

Local members have been invited to meet with Cllr. Brown and Astrid Davies on 28th February (Monday) to discuss the more detailed future of Cowes Library.

PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

The Council currently operates 67 P.Cs and sought the public's views on initial proposals to reduce that number to 35 by transferring responsibility or closure. The present number costs £581.000, consultation and the receipt of expressions of interest in many of the sites, means up to 52 sites may now be retained from April this year.

There are no changes being made to the proposals relating to Cowes toilets. The operating costs have now been supplied for the Park Road toilets. An interest has been registered in the Council retained Cowes Parade toilets.

COUNCIL BUDGET 2011/12

The Conservative administration's budget was passed by full Council on 23rd February. There will be no increase in Council Tax for the next year. Resources will be directed to those areas for which the Council has a legal duty and on which the most vulnerable residents rely. The Council will also have to find a further £8m in spending reductions due to loss of grant for 2012/13.

COUNTY HALL REFURBISHMENT

Payback on this investment should be achieved in 1.5 years based on the costed refurbishment programme amounting to £4m (receipts from the disposal of surplus

buildings of £1.225m + revenue savings £1.81m per annum). Work will be completed by next March.

POLLING PLACE REVIEW

This has now been published with comments regarding the suitability of the Northwood House Community Hall as a Polling Station leading to a recommendation that, subject to Health and Safety checks, the main rooms at Northwood House be used again. Also a suggestion that St Faith's Church Hall be used for polling for the Cowes Medina Ward will be checked for suitability.

VERBAL UP DATE

Libraries up date – cabinet passed extra 50K for libraries; Cowes will be allocated a sum equal to an additional 3.5 hours per week. Freshwater, Cowes, Ryde and Newport will remain IW council run, the remaining 6 have had support from community and will not close.

Toilets up date – 52 sites have been increased to 55 and include Park Road site.

BBC Inside Out PFI program - IW council will be making a formal complaint as it contained fundamental inaccuracies

Q What is the interest in the toilets on the parade? Is this someone taking over the running or re-locating the toilets?

A. This is an expression of interest that has been registered but no details are available but those toilets remain in IW Council management. Currently this is a confidential expression of interest but if it is worked up to a full proposal then it will be made public. Anybody can register an expression of interest. They are public and remain owned and run by IW council.

Q I have been trying to find out what is happening to the heritage service but have been unable to do so.

A. There is a substantial and thorough review of this service on-going at present. There will be a full consultation in the near future. We want to maintain the most popular records on the Island but we have many documents that are not used or rarely used on the Island. All the major archive material will remain here.

Q The paintings that used to be at Northwood House should be displayed and could be displayed at Northwood House again.

A Contact Cllr Brown to remind him.

Q Can you explain the 3.5 hours per week additional funding for Cowes library?

A 21 paid hours for 2 staff at Cowes and with the extra 3.5 hours this is for 2 staff making 24.5 total. That can be added to by helpers who will be trained up by the IW council library service. Dept Culture Media and Sport considering inviting IW council to take part in a national examination of good practise in devolving libraries to local groups.

Cllr FULLER gave a verbal report referring to the following:

- Independent budget retained in full libraries, toilets, music, residents parking permits, life guards, heritage, community bus service funds.
- Northwood Gurnard Cowes Community bus 20+ people have registered an interest in becoming involved in this project. Thanks to Cllr Mazillius and highways team for new bus shelter.
- Two members of parliament for IOW and this is a good decision.
- Sale of woodland has concerned local residents and this has been reversed by central govt.
- No cold calling – NPower and heat seekers have been referred to trading standards.

- 55 Baring Road – have supported this planning app

Q Regards to cold calling two people followed-up a letter sent by EON. Was informed by consumer by direct that the “no cold calling” stickers have no legal status. A Six main energy suppliers should be undertaking through a voluntary code of practise to not knock on doors in no cold calling areas.

Q Pot holes in Ward Avenue are appearing once again. There is either a lack of specification or inspection on these works as it’s the same holes all the time. The repeated filling of pot holes is costing all council tax payers a lot of money.

A I have been following this type of issue up but I will be following this up once again.

Q Further pot holes were reported in Baring Road on to Queens Road.

A I will report to Highways and let Cllr Brown know about this

Cllr Fuller was asked to send a written report.

Cllr PEACEY-WILCOX gave a verbal report referring to the following:

- Supporting residents in Artic Road, Mill Hill Road and Newport Road mostly litter and parking issues.

6436 REPORT FROM THE LOCAL SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER

PC Justin Pringle gave a verbal report referring to the following:

Anti-social behaviour – year on year this is down on last year’s figures.

Vehicle crime – there have been further thefts and damage in Cowes, Gurnard and Northwood. Youths have been identified and arrested on this matter.

CCTV – assault investigation has used. 2 incidents of criminal damage and public order all picked up through CCTV

Q Break-ins at Western Road. I saw one investigation and was told there had been 5 break-ins in this area.

A No arrests at this time and investigations are continuing.

6437 REPORT FROM LOCAL ENVIRONMENT OFFICER

No report was provided.

6438 MINUTES RESOLVED

That minutes no 6430d be changed to “councillors expressed concern.”

That minutes of meeting 9th February 2011 subject to the above change are approved.

6439 MATTERS ARISING

a) Community Transport Forum

Cllrs Hammond and Ellis had not been able to attend meeting. Cllr Hammond has stepped down for personal reasons. Cllr Ellis has confirmed that his family difficulties have passed and he would like to take responsibility for this forum.

Marc Morgan Huws from Southern Vectis has buses which they use for school runs and which then do nothing for the rest of the day. They are prepared to offer one of these buses for community use, will train volunteer drivers for PSV licence. This would provide a year-round central Cowes service linking with the main bus service. No financial commitment from town council but town council would need to be the enablers of this service and Southern Vectis see this as an opportunity to put back into the community. 6 drivers would be needed. Need to work out a route for the bus service with Southern Vectis, taking account of the Northwood and Gurnard route.

RESOLVED

That Cllr Mazillius be a second person available to attend these meetings.

That a working party be established consisting of Cllrs Ellis, Mazillius, Wells, Sanderson.

b) Wire around the base of the War Memorial

Royal British Legion have requested a wire which will provide stability for poppy wreaths that tend to blow down.

Concern for safety was expressed and it was noted by councillors that wreaths are generally fine, members of public have been seen to put them back up.

RESOLVED

To not provide a wire around the base of the war memorial.

That the Town Clerk write and explain the council's reasons to the Royal British Legion.

c) Public Liability Insurance

It is necessary to increase the public liability Insurance to £10 million in order to comply with the lease for basketball court with IW council. It is expected that the increase will cost an extra £140 pa

d) Information about development of Basketball Court

Cllr Banks declared a personal interest

i) Archaeology of site

Will be a 2 phase contract as planning consent requires that an archaeological survey is carried out then if anything is found the contract can be suspended. Part one will be the Harrison fencing and signing to protect the trees. This part of the contract needs to start by end of March 2011 so that grant stream can be used in this financial year. Second stage will then proceed. .

ii) Lease – should be with the solicitor at present.

iii) Funding Applications

Waiting to hear from awards for all £10,000 and Tesco's for £4 000 and about to make a bid to Blue Lamp Trust (police backed trust)

iv) Tenders for Basketball Court

Basketball court has gone out to tender to IMP House Ltd, Graham Atrill civil engineering, PK contracts and G J Banks. Need to appoint contractor in week beginning 21st March so suggested start date of 28th March can be met.

Suggest 22nd or 23rd have a meeting as part of a planning committee to appoint a contractor as can't wait to appoint until April meeting

e) The Cut – Appointment of a Project Mnaager

Mike Wheeler from Norton Projects is unable to continue with the project and will forward basic drawings and budgets. Need to appoint new manager, but probably will not be able to progress this before summer 2011 and look to tender PM over summer to draw up specification, agree specification with council and bill of quantities, liaise with IOW council, highways, prepare tender docs, support in selection of contractor, apply to IW council for TPO.

Mural – Contact with Jane Popov will be progressed and put in place for the island games and summer season. Sports unit have agreed £500 towards this project, will pay for Jane to run the project and admin costs. £370 still required materials There was discussion over which budget the money should come from for this as this aspect of the project is encompassed in the planning permission and then this was removed from the project due to offer for re-doing the mural.

RESOLVED

To increase public liability insurance to £10million.

That the assistant town clerk will get quotes for project managing the “The Cut” from a range of potential project managers.

That £370 be taken from The Cut ring fenced budget to pay for artist’s materials.

d) Community Governance Review

Cowes is exempt from July 2011 review of boundaries as have had these reviewed recently. Review included location and suitability of polling stations. Concern about low level of light and poor ramping at Northwood House. Was recommended that the IW Council consider moving back into main rooms at Northwood House and to check the suitability of the hall at St Faiths church.

6440 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

a). Northwood House

Councillor Thwaites gave a report in her capacity as chairman of the Northwood House Charitable Trust referring to the following:

- Work preparing the Park for spring had begun; permission had been given to start remedial work on the trees and shrubbery and this work would start shortly. The contract for grass maintenance was now in place and the leaves had been regularly cleared from the open areas.
- In the House, careful work had begun on the Rotunda interior; it had been only 5 months since the I.W. Council had left the premises but in that time the Trust had achieved their immediate objectives of making the House itself safe in various ways including keeping out the elements and unblocking drains and gutters that had been blocked for years.
- Addressing the perception that Northwood House had closed down had also been a priority; signage in the grounds had been updated and recent publicity had resulted in enquiries for bookings although the best publicity would come from meetings, exhibitions and various successful events that had already been held. The Northwood House website was updated constantly with news of events and activities. The informal Jazz evening that had been organised by the Friends of Northwood House would take place on 6th March and was already a sell out; they hoped it would be the first of many musical evening at the House or in the Park.
- Janet Allen had been welcomed as a new Trustee nominated by the Friends; she had previously been a Trustee and would bring to the Trust useful experience and skills,
- The task of the Trustees was to find and work for a sustainable future for the House and Park and that work would continue.

The full report is attached to these minutes; the most recent report to the Town Council can also be viewed at www.northwoodhouse.org/news.

b). Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee held on 11th February 2011 were received.

c). Finance Committee

The Minutes of the Finance Committee held on 28th February 2011 were received.

i). Applications for financial assistance.

Northwood House Charitable Trust.

Funding of dog and litter bin emptying in Northwood Park.

(Councillor Thwaites declared a personal and prejudicial interest on the grounds that she was Chair of the Northwood House Charitable Trust and left the room for this item only).

RESOLVED

- 1). That subject to approval from the Northwood House Charitable Trust, the Town Council enters a contract with the service providers for the emptying of dog and litter bins in Northwood Park for an initial 12 month period to a maximum cost of £5,000; and
- 2). That the Town Council re-considers the position regarding future funding of the contract in 12 months but at that time would require a minimum of 3 months management accounts and a set of the Trusts most recent annual accounts for Northwood House.

Cowes/Deauville Twinning Association.

Assistance with the cost of hosting a reception in June 2011 to welcome French guests from Deauville.
(Councillor Banks declared a personal interest in this item on the grounds that he was a member of the Twinning Association)

RESOLVED

That a grant of £250 be made to the Cowes/Deauville Twinning Association to fund the reception for their French guests from Deauville.

ii). Preparation of accounts.

The Town Clerk requested authority to invite Bright Brown, Chartered Accountants, to undertake the preparation of the final accounts for the financial year 2010/11.

RESOLVED

That Bright Brown, Chartered Accountants, be appointed to undertake the preparation of the accounts for the financial year 2010/11.

6441 COMMUNICATION

Councillor Thwaites questioned whether all communications should be sent electronically now that all Councillors were on email.
The Assistant Town Clerk confirmed that legislation had been altered; it was now acceptable to send summonses and other associated papers for meeting by email; however, individual Councillors would still need to download hard copies at their own expense.

Following further discussion it was

RESOLVED

- 1). That the Town Clerk would continue to send hard copies of agendas and where possible, all other associated paperwork for Council meeting; and
- 2). That all other items of interest and information for circulation to Councillors should be issued via the Town Clerk.

6442 MATTERS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN CLERK

- a). Application for a Street Trading Consent – Applicant Artesanos.
- b). *Details of I.W. RCC training events.
- c). The appointment of ROSPA for the annual skate park inspection.
- d). *Quotes for computer equipment for Town Council Offices.
- e). *To receive details of miscellaneous correspondence.
- f). *Consultation in respect of local bus services.
- g). Application for a Premises Licence – Wine Therapy, 28 High Street.
- h). Affiliation to the I.W. Sports & Recreation Council.
(* Copies circulated to Councillors)

RESOLVED

- 1). That the Town Council has no objection to the grant of a Street Trading Consent in respect of Artesanos;
- 2). That any Councillor wishing to attend the RCC training events should contact the Town Clerk;
- 3). That the Town Clerk be authorised to appoint ROSPA to undertake the annual inspection of the skatepark;
- 4). That following discussion with the Town/Assistant Tow Clerk, Councillors Birch, Matthews and Wells be given delegated authority to take a decision regarding the supply of computer equipment;
- 5). That the Town Council's representatives on the Community Transport Forum be authorised to comment on behalf of the Town Council regarding the consultation in respect of local bus services;
- 6). That the Town Council has no objection to the grant of a Premises Licence in respect of Wine Therapy; and
- 7). That the Town Clerk be authorised to renew the Town Council affiliation to the I.W. Sports & Recreation Council.

6443 TRAFFIC ISSUES

The Town Clerk submitted a letter from Traffic Management which stated that when the I.W. Council received correspondence from members of the public regarding traffic or parking issues they would advise the sender to also raise their concerns with the relevant Town or Parish Council. The I.W. Council would also email the Clerk to make them aware of the request; however, they would not give personal information regarding who had contacted them. They would merely refer to the location and the nature of the request enabling the Town Council time to consider and comment on the issues prior to any final decisions.

(The proceedings terminated at 9.26pm)

CHAIRMAN