



Minutes of the meeting of the **COWES TOWN COUNCIL** held in St Mary's Church Hall, Cowes
on Thursday 4 October 2012 at 7pm.

Present: Councillor Banks (Deputy Town Mayor) (Chairman – in the Mayor's absence)
Councillors: Brown, Ellis, Fuller, Hammond, Matthews, McGregor, Mazillius, Peacey-Wilcox,
Robinson, Sanderson and Wells.

6663 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Jones

6664 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A member of the public questioned that "why are Cowes Town Councillors not showing the interest of the people of Cowes in regard to the safety issues of the proposed Asphalt Plant. Councillors should stand up for the rights of the people of Cowes.

Councillor Peacey-Wilcox left the room as she declared a personal and prejudicial interest as her home is close to the proposed plant and the house price will be dependent on the final outcome of the planning application.

Councillor Banks advised that the CTC are awaiting all the reports, which should be ready towards the end of November.

Councillors Wells answered in saying that the applicants have a large advertisement in the IW County Press tomorrow which should provide a lot of answers. CTC feel they should wait until they have all the facts to enable them to make an informed decision.

Another question was asked about why was there not an environmental impact study – the IW Council have reported that this was unnecessary as they are not worried. This has been demanded by several members of the public but IW Council say it is not warranted.

One resident who had attended the presentation by the applicant (which was held one week after the close of the consultation period) advised that the security was very heavy handed and that people were only allowed to ask one question and no collective questions were allowed. The company were unable to answer any questions including those asked about how the dust could affect asthma sufferers The IW Council website had crashed after receiving 900 complaints about the application.

Councillor Mazillius answered as IW councillor for Northwood and Cowes South – the proposed plant would be in his ward. He has kept abreast of the application and noted the objections. He has reported to local residents and shares their concerns, but, the planning department is a quasi-judicial process where members have to look at all the evidence and prepare a report. This is no doubt that this is a complex and emotive situation. It could be that after the given time, they are not in a position to grant permission as they do not have all the relevant information. The IW Planning Authority speaks for the whole IW and they

have to decide on all applications using planning legislation and history. All members share the public concerns, it is not a “done deal” and no councillors have a vested interest. A member of the public who attended the meeting advised that the company told them it was as IW Council told them to put the plant there.

Another member of the public asked that CTC should request that Andrew Turner (Member of Parliament for the Isle of Wight) should submit a question to parliament to review the Town and Country Planning Act, as it is favourable to business and not the environment. Councillors Banks advised that the application should follow due process and that once all the evidence has been reviewed, he will be able to properly represent the views of his constituents.

Councillor Sanderson advised that CTC should follow due process and at this time they could not follow the request.

A member of the public advised that “is legislation right to protect the environment?”

Councillor Fuller left at this point (7.15pm) as he is a member of the Planning Committee.

Councillor Wells advised that it is not appropriate for CTC to make a resolution.

Another member of the public advised that she was “worried by the response of councillors who are awaiting the outcome of the report as she has little faith in reports. There was one carried out about the how the plant traffic would affect the cycle traffic. This report was carried out on 06/03/12 between 7am and 7pm – this was not in the summer period when cycling increases dramatically especially during the cycling festival. She feels that CTC needs to be better informed.

Councillor Walters arrived at 7.20pm.

Councillor Sanderson said that CTC needs to take a much broader view than just a few residents.

A member of the public said that CTC should be representing the views of the electorate and not their own personal views.

Councillor Banks asked can a resolution be formed this evening?

Councillor Walters, apologised for his lateness and advised that CTC has a planning committee who has to listen to the pros and cons of every planning application, and would not be able to vote if they had a pre-determined position.

Councillor Brown set a proposal that “ CTC writes to Andrew Turner to act on behalf of the people of Cowes who are effected by the Asphalt Plant to raise concerns.

The vote was 5 members for and 5 against, 1 abstention so the Deputy Mayor used his casting vote as chairman and voted against. The motion was not supported.

Councillors Fuller and Peacey- Wilcox re-entered the meeting after this item.

Another question was raised by a member of the public – she had sent an email to the Clerk of Cowes Town Council declaring an interest in becoming a co-opted member of the Council. It was explained there was a problem with this address, so her application would be considered along with the others received.

She also provided written evidence regarding the legislation to support her objection to the loss of playing fields at Lanesend Primary School. This will be discussed later on in the agenda.

A written report was received from Councillor George Brown**ECONOMY****Tourism**

Given its importance to the Island's economy, I would firstly like to address the latest visitor figures. It is prudent to emphasise the IW Council's firm commitment to supporting the tourism industry. Contrary to some reports, there has been no reduction in marketing and promotional activity this year. The Council has organised, with its partners in the industry, a marketing and promotional campaign for 2012. This began at the turn of the year and has cost in the order of £300,000. The campaign was similar to those of the last three years but with enhanced notable elements such as promotional screens at London rail terminals.

The Council has also confirmed its support for the new Visit Isle of Wight destination management organisation, led by the industry and guaranteed £3 million support over nine years (£340,000 a year) from the Council. This is substantial investment to commit at a time when other areas of Council expenditure are being reduced to meet budget pressures. An additional £100,000 on marketing and promotion is proposed in the interim budget measures tabled at Full Council.

Town Councillors will be aware that the Council organises three major walking and cycling festivals a year, which bring a significant number of visitors – and public profile – to the Island.

Together, these Council activities provide a very significant contribution to the Island's tourism industry. We do, however, recognise that – in common with other areas in the UK - this has been a difficult year. Unquestionably, poor high-season weather, continuing economic uncertainty, the Olympics and Paralympics have all had an impact on visitor numbers. There is no reason why numbers should not climb back in more normal years. In Quarter 2 (Q2 - 2 April to 15 July 2012), the total number of domestic overnight staying visitors decreased by 16% from the four year high in the same period of 2011, when the same campaign strategy was followed as this year. Day visitors fell by 5%. Disappointing as this is, whilst Visit Britain has not yet produced comparator statistics for this period, anecdotal information suggests that the drop in visits to other UK resorts has been similar or even more marked.

The IW Council will be examining this season's data with the Board of Visit Isle of Wight, chaired by Simon Dabell, and the recently appointed Chief Executive, David Thornton. David joined the DMO from a similar organisation in the Peak District. In addition, two new companies have joined the DMO Board, bringing in further private sector investment and expertise.

This new organisation, coupled with our long-term support and the one-off £100,000 financial injection, will leave us well placed to understand the implications of the current season and respond with vigour in the marketplace.

Events

The Council has been busy over the summer period supporting the delivery of high profile events that are important to the promotion and profile of the Island and therefore its overall economy. In July the visit of Her Majesty the Queen to Cowes drew 12,000 people to the town. Aberdeen Asset Management Cowes Week in August was also considered another

successful event. It was supported by the IW Council's quick action to secure the Parade Village when its delivery contractor went into administration a week before it was due to begin.

Lessons learned during the 2012 Festival were put to good effect in developing and delivering plans to mitigate the impact of more than 55,000 people attending this year's Bestival. This demonstrated the capability of the Island and its infrastructure to host large scale national and international events. The importance of these events to the tourism economy – and indeed the Island's economy in general – should not be dismissed.

Employment

The number of unemployed on the Island, measured by those claiming Job Seekers Allowance (JSA), was 3.5% (2,959 individuals) in August, a figure unchanged from July. This compares to the national (GB) rate of 3.8% and a South East rate of 2.5% (both also unchanged from July).

The number of young (18-24) unemployed people grew slightly from 8.2% in July to 8.4% (870 individuals) in August. This compares to the national (GB) rate of 7.5% and a South East rate of 4.8% (both unchanged from July). This age group remains an on-going concern and priority for the Council.

A number of Council funded initiatives aimed at providing opportunities for these young people are underway. The pre-apprenticeship programme targeted at those young people Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET) has now had 50 starts, with a number of these being converted into full apprenticeships. This means a further 20 placements can be created. These additional placements are being worked on with local businesses and work based learners.

In addition the full apprenticeship initiative commenced in July, making grants available to local companies which accept a young unemployed person into their business. The Council has also recently concluded an agreement with the Chamber of Commerce Tourism and Industry to deliver business start-up support and mentoring. The scheme also includes an enterprise hub to assist young people looking to set up their own company. Working with Job Centre plus 12 potential applicants have already been identified for the scheme.

PLANNING AND REGULATORY SERVICES

Recent Government Announcements on Planning

The Government has recently announced a number of changes intended to promote/stimulate economic growth in general and specifically within the housing sector. Whilst there has been much comment about the role of the planning system in bringing forward development, it is important to note that the performance of local authorities generally in determining applications has improved over the last twelve months. The IW Council continues to monitor its own performance against set timescales and these remain on target. Particular attention is focused on delivering decisions on applications that accord with overall regeneration aims.

There has also recently been mention of a potential relaxation of national rules in respect of greenbelt land. There are no areas on the Island subject to greenbelt designation. The Council has an adopted policy base that affords a high degree of protection to its designated AONB. It also provides for appropriate sustainable development within key regeneration areas, smaller regeneration areas and rural service centers. This policy base should allow for

future levels of housing (including affordable) to meet demographic needs and the required employment and social facilities on the Island.

Appeals

For the period covering 1 April 2012 to the end of August 2012 the percentage of dismissed appeals stands at 70.3% with 29.7% being allowed. This performance sits well with the national target of 30% of appeals being allowed. Analysis of appeal decisions has confirmed that since the adoption of the Core Strategy and publication of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) that the protection offered to areas such as the AONB has been maintained through the new policy framework.

ECONOMY AND REGULATORY SERVICES GENERAL

Assets

After many months of negotiation, the Council has agreed terms with the RNLI regarding a land transfer to enable the construction of a new in-shore lifeboat station at Lane End Bembridge. The new station, which is bigger than the existing building, will accommodate the new, larger class of lifeboat, and will provide better crew and ancillary facilities. In order to create this extra space the RNLI needed to negotiate the acquisition of the Council's public toilets (which form part of the current lifeboat building). In return, the RNLI will construct for the Council a new freestanding toilet block as well as permitting public use of the accessible toilet facility with their new lifeboat station.

Leisure

Works to refurbish the Heights Leisure Centre, Sandown and construct a new gym at the Westridge Centre, Ryde are progressing well and on schedule. The new gym at Westridge will open to the public on Thursday 11th October whilst Phase 1 at the Heights opens on Monday 15th October.

Phase 1 of the Heights refurbishment will include a fully refurbished main pool, wet side changing rooms, cafeteria and a new activity studio. Two new accessible changing areas have also been created. The gyms at both the Heights and Westridge are being equipped by Pulse Fitness and will feature state of the art equipment, which should encourage residents to participate in physical activity and lead a healthier lifestyle.

Sports Development

Following the success of the 2012 Olympic and Paralympics Games, the Sports Development team will be launching its Legacy programme this autumn. Securing external funding from Sport and Play England the team will be administering grants to the voluntary sector to help encourage and develop more activities in local sports clubs. The Programme will focus on coach and volunteer development, increased participation and promotion.

Cremator Replacement Programme

The Cremator replacement project is progressing well and is on time and budget to complete in 2013. Shelton's, the contractor, is working closely with Mansells on final structural changes prior to decommissioning the old cremator units and installing new units in October.

Councillor Brown also spoke about the planning process in view of the number of questions from the public about the Asphalt plant.

The process starts by the applicant making an application to the planning department. This application is then advertised on the IW Council website for members of the public to make comments. The duty of the Planning Authority to investigate the application, write a report and come up with a recommendation as to whether they can recommend or not the

application. Therefore they cannot put forward a recommendation for the Asphalt Plant until the report has been produced. This report will be in the public domain and the Planning Committee will make a decision. There is a right of appeal to the Secretary of State if the application is turned down, but there is no right of appeal if it is accepted.

A written report was received from Councillor Paul Fuller

Access to Cowes Medical Centre.

I was asked to intervene following concerns were raised that the local bus service used by local residents would be diverted away from Cowes Medical Centre following the recent road closure of Newport Road.

Prior to this road closure, I spoke to the Medical Centre who advised they had heard nothing formal from the contractors, despite a reassurance made to the IW Council's Head Of Highways that local people would be notified.

With support of the Medical Centre, Southern Vectis were persuaded to divert Service 32 to call closer to the Medical Centre returning to Cowes via Three Gates Road, Seaview Road and Bellevue Road. I understand this diversion is being well received by residents of the Westbury Estate...

School Collections/ Drop Off's.

Following the start of the new school term, I met with the Head Teacher, to address residents' concerns over school drop off and collection's at Gurnard School, Baring Road.

I have asked for more enforcement to be undertaken by Parking Enforcement Officers, to assist the school in addressing this problem; In addition to my efforts on this, Gurnard School is in the process of establishing a Parents Forum, to discuss parents ideas further. Following this meeting, I intend addressing outcomes with Highways.

At Cowes Primary School, I've noted there has been less of a problem (so far). However, I am looking forward to talking to the school about this when I meet with staff in the coming weeks.

Cowes, Local Action Group.

- CCTV on Princes Green was successful this summer, with less offending over Cowes Week because of this.

- A discarded syringe was found in Birmingham Road. It was unclear whether drugs paraphernalia mapping was continuing. This would be requested, if this was not the case.

- Speeding in Newport Road continues to be an issue. The Police would be requested to undertake speed checks and Enforcement action taken where appropriate. Cllr Peacey-Wilcox, would also be notified.

- Only one complaint was received about gatherings on Gurnard Beach this year. This is as a result of work by the PCSO's, better monitoring of Social Networking sites and inevitably the inclement weather.

- Incidents had reduced in Northwood Recreation Ground following the closure of the toilets in the evenings.

- There had been incidents of Youth Nuisance and Anti-Social Behaviour in local shops. Shopwatch in partnership with the Police are dealing with these incidents, which consist of a group of unruly youths entering shops.

- It was reported that items of washing had been stolen from a home in Newport Road.

The next meeting is scheduled for Wednesday 14th November.

Planning and Licensing Issues.

On the Licencing Committee, I supported extending the Licence to open the **Porter Club** (formerly Lake Working Mens Club). This application was controversial insofar as over 20 residents had objected to the extended hours. That said, Environmental Health advised that no complaints had been received from residents when the former club was open from 2007 until 2010. Because there were no formal complaints, the Committee felt they should

approve the application, however I asked for a condition to be imposed for the club to keep a book to monitor complaints.

The Planning Committee was held over 2 nights this month to deal with a high volume of applications being considered.

I supported applications for a new **Bay Primary School** which will serve Sandown over one site at Grove Road, and proposals to expand **Christ The King College, Carisbrooke**. The most controversial aspect about the Christ The King College application were objections over the retention of the Sports Hall, which local residents complained resonates sound. Because there was no objections from Environmental Health and because conditions were being advised to limit use to school times only, and due to the fact that Government funding had been approved to enable a more permanent expansion- I felt that any refusal would not be sustainable.

Elsewhere, in **East Cowes** I supported proposals to create 4 retail units and accommodation opposite Waitrose.

Like most other members of the Planning Committee, In the last few weeks I have received a number of representations concerning the **Asphalt Plant** proposal.

As yet, no date has been set to consider this application.

Locally, I was asked to intervene on pre-application discussions for replacing **13 Shore Road, Gurnard**. Because of public opinion regarding these proposals, I am advised the applicants are re-thinking their proposals.

Health and Community Wellbeing.

This offered me an opportunity to ask questions in relation to publicising better **NHS Check-ups for men over the age of 40**, and raising residents' issues over the availability of car parking at St Mary's Hospital.

Regarding the availability of **Car Parking**, I was advised that changes to appointment times throughout the hospital to lessen the extent of bulges throughout the day were to be implemented. We were also advised additional car parking would provide up to 100 additional spaces.

I attended the most recent meeting of the IW Council's Health and Community Wellbeing Scrutiny Committee.

It was reported there was progress in enabling **NHS Dental treatment**, and that the new practice in East Cowes will offer provision to 5000 patients. It was highlighted that NHS treatment, was not as difficult as it had been previously. From April 2013 the **NHS Helpline 111**, will offer advice on dental care, and steps were in place for the **Tooth Bus** to visit the Island, allowing an opportunity for residents who were not registered to receive a consultation.

St Mary's Hospital is holding a **crutch amnesty**, due to a current shortage of walking aids on the Isle Of Wight.

Junk Mail and Nuisance Calls.

I've been asked to re-publish contact details for the Telephone and Mailing Preference Services. This follows a recent abrupt increase of tele-marketing.

You can contact the TPS on 0845 070 0707 and the MPS on 0845 703 4599, or by writing to both services who are based at 70 Margaret Street, London. W1W 8SS. Both sites also have websites for registering on-line.

In addition to this, if you are fed up with Royal Mail's distributed Junk Mail, you can do this through their Door-To-Door opt out scheme. To do this, you first need to ask Royal Mail to send you an 'Opt Out Confirmation Form' by sending an e-mail with your name and full address to optout@royalmail.com. You can also contact the Royal Mail by post to: Freepost RRBT-ZBXB-TITS, Door-To-Door Opts, Royal Mail, Kingsmead House, Oxpens Road, OXFORD. OX1 1RX.

All of this information, I obtained via the stopjunkmail.org.uk website. This site has advice and a 'Junk Buster', where on-line you can contact up to five other opt-out services at the same time.

In the coming month:

· Following Gurnard's recent success as the Island's Best Kept Village, in Isle of Wight In Bloom, there will be a village tidy up (which I'll be donning my Marigolds!!) **10am, Saturday 20th October** from Gurnard Village Hall. If you wish to know more please contact Cllr Jill Sivell on 07966 819952.

· Newport Road (between Northwood and Parkhurst) will have a Stop & Go Board in operation for 'drainage works' from Monday 8th October 'til Saturday 13th October. After this, I anticipate the same stretch of road will have traffic lights in operation for remedial resurfacing for the Newport Road for up to a month afterwards. This was planned to start this week, however as yet, I've received no confirmation when this is to happen.

Japanese Knotweed.

I have been contacted by a number of residents from Cowes and Gurnard, who have contacted me about concerns over the perceived spread of Japanese Knotweed. Matthew Chatfield from Parks and Beaches has advised that I circulate the following statement:

Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) on the Isle of Wight

Japanese knotweed is an introduced and invasive plant which causes damage to property and wildlife. It is not poisonous but causes damage by smothering natural vegetation and by its rapid and strong growth which can damage structures such as highways, foundations, walls and drains. Japanese knotweed grows very fast, is extremely persistent and capable of regeneration from very small parts of the plant. Roots can remain viable for years without producing shoots above ground.

What to do if knotweed is threatening land you own or manage

- Initially, an approach should be made to the occupier or owner of land on which the knotweed is growing.
- It is best to act soon and agree a plan to eradicate the knotweed. In almost all cases, a commercial herbicide contractor will be needed to do the job properly. Over-the-counter herbicides are rarely effective enough and can make the problem worse if they do not succeed. Cutting, crushing, and especially strimming the plant whilst it is alive is not advised as it scatters fragments and spreads the problem wider.
- If the knotweed is posing a direct risk to your property you may be able to get assistance from your buildings insurer. Some insurers provide help to make a claim against a neighbour in such situations.
- Knotweed is not a weed specified in the Weeds Act so if the landowner refuses to act, your only recourse is to take legal action against them yourself. The Isle of Wight Council or the government has no power to become involved. You should get legal advice from a solicitor before you take any such action.
- Any herbicide use on or near water including streams, rivers, lakes, ponds and any running water must be licensed by the Environment Agency and a certificate issued.

Knotweed and the law

It is an offence to plant knotweed in the wild, but more often the knotweed spreads from somewhere else. Managing Japanese knotweed is the responsibility of the owner or occupier of the site. It is not illegal to have knotweed on your land, and there is no legal obligation on a landowner to control knotweed, although if this is not done and the knotweed causes damage to somebody else's property, the landowner might have to pay compensation for the damage. Allowing Japanese knotweed to spread onto somebody else's land could be considered to be a private nuisance but not a statutory nuisance. Therefore resolving such problems is a private matter between the landowners involved.

Disposing of knotweed once it has been removed is also controlled by law. All parts of the plant (including soil with root fragments in it) are controlled waste and must be disposed of

correctly: burning on site is often the best way. On a domestic scale, if burning is not possible, the knotweed material should be put into a polythene sack, which is then put into a further sack & secured. This can then be taken to a Civic Amenity Site with the prior agreement of the site provider. You must tell the staff at the site about the knotweed to ensure proper disposal is carried out. Japanese knotweed should not be put in with other green waste. For commercial operations your waste contractor must be made aware of the knotweed before taking it away. Disregard of the requirements for controlled waste can be a criminal offence.

Notifying the council of knotweed

There is no legal obligation to notify anyone of knotweed. However the council does keep a record of knotweed infestations if they are reported. This does not mean that action will necessarily be taken, but does allow the extent of the problem to be monitored.

Knotweed: The IW Council's Position

The council has no powers to take action against knotweed on land it does not control itself; but the council as landowner recognises the problem posed by knotweed on its own land and does take action against it. The extent of the problem means that there are many places where infestations remain. Knotweed control work is limited by available resources so is prioritised. A high priority is put on areas where knotweed is causing or likely to cause damage to designated nature reserves, or buildings and other structures, but in cases where no such damage is occurring, work does not always take place immediately.

The council is able to give advice on control methods, but will not normally take action against knotweed where it is not growing on or affecting land in which the council has an interest.

In the last month:

- I was asked to put my name forward for co-option on to Gurnard Parish Council. This came about due to the number of vacancies, the short length term of office and the fact that I'm closely involved working with Gurnard Parish Council on a number of projects (i.e Gurnard Neighbourhood Plan, Gurnard Playing Field acquisition etc.)
- I've requested a number of bus stops to be cleaned and disinfected.
- The Man Hole cover in Princes Esplanade has been repaired, whilst new guttering is on order for the public toilets on Gurnard Green
- I attended a follow-up meeting at Briary Court, arranged for officers from the IW Council's waste team to visit to offer advice about recycling and I continue to make a case for the Dial-A-Bus to pick residents up from the door.
- I have attended meetings with IW Council Directors to discuss opportunities for next years' budget.
- Residents continue to complain to me about stray Golf Balls from bad Golfers... I have visited Baring Road residents and am discussing this with the Secretary from Cowes Golf Club!
- I received complaints from residents about what is thought to be anti-social behaviour in Spencer's Copse, and complaints of car for sale in Place Road that was causing an obstruction, and subsequently removed.
- I'm talking to Officers about simplifying entitlement of Concessionary Passes for long term disabled residents.
- I have passed on complaints concerning dog fouling, overgrown hedges this month Baring Road, Place Road, Woodvale Road and Tuttons Hill.
- I've met with two sets of residents who are having issues with the same social landlord.

There were no questions regarding Councillor Fuller's report.

A written report was received from Councillor Roger Mazillius

Sport provision at Lanesend Primary School.

Following the concerns expressed by a parent at last month's Council meeting I have been advised by Council Officers that the area specifically provided for this provision more than adequately meets the needs of the present pupil roll. There may have been some confusion because the space allocated would not be sufficient for the full potential roll of 420 but as the present roll is nearly 200 short of this, there is sufficient provision for the foreseeable future.

I also confirm that the remaining sport space is available as before for community use which would include the school if they were holding a special event which required additional space

Academy Status for Northwood Primary School.

There will be a parents meeting at the school on 4th October at 6pm to discuss the consultation document giving full details of the proposal to move the school to a self-governing Academy. The consultation will run until 5pm on 26th October and I have urged all parents to take part. The document can be obtained by email from the Clerk to the Governors markgoswell16@hotmail.com or by calling into the school. This is a big step for the school to take and I am sure colleagues will be most interested in the reasons for such a change in school management because it could well be that Cowes Primary schools will also be considering Academy status.

IW Council Budget

The Council has been successful in delivering significant reductions in on-going expenditure with back office efficiencies and additional income achieving over 90% of the savings in the 2012/13 budget. Restructuring within the Council and reduction in senior and middle management posts with pay or allowances being frozen for another year will save £2.3m annually helping us deliver our 2012/13 budget strategy whilst maintaining reserves and general fund balances at healthy and sustainable levels. I believe it is important that in these difficult financial times, the Isle of Wight Council does all it can to keep levels of Council Tax as low as possible.

Asphalt Plant - Medina Wharf

This planning application was re-advertised on 31st August with 21 days to make further comments. Again I am confident that residents who have concerns about several aspects of this complex application will make those known or indeed will repeat the concerns they have already expressed. I hope the Case Officer's report will be available during late October/early November. It will naturally be published as a public document and I expect to meet with residents at County Hall before the Committee meets to discuss my view of any recommendations contained in the report. I would be pleased also to meet separately with colleagues to discuss the report and recommendations at a mutually convenient time or preferably at a special meeting of the Town Planning Committee.

I understand in excess of 900 comments have been made in respect of the original and the re-advertised application including those who have commented several times. Possibly a record for any local planning application.

IW Grain Depot - revised drying application

This report is now ready for decision and as local member I have requested a Committee determination rather than a delegated decision. So I would expect a determination later this month.

Closure of Newport Road between Mill Hill and Somerton for seven weeks from 24th September.

Southern Water are renewing the deep sewer underneath the middle of this part of the road also to accommodate the extra demand from the Aldi Store development. Nearby residents should have received a notice about the closure. I have been assured there will be continued access to the Medical Centre and the Park and Ride. The contractors, without our

knowledge or permission erected poorly written notices which apparently showed the road from Northwood Garage to Somerton would also be closed. As I am sure colleagues know this is not the case and that part of the road with access to all local homes and businesses will be fully open. I have however asked that this be further clarified with a notice or notices stating that all local business from Northwood Garage to Somerton are fully accessible.

Proposed changes to Council Tax Benefit

The coalition government is ending the current scheme - which it funds - and asking each local authority to formulate a local council tax support scheme to replace the present costly scheme which has risen over the past decade by I think over £10,000,000,000 (£10billion). So the government is also reducing the amount it provides to fund this benefit, leaving in our case a shortfall estimated at £1.9m.

The scheme my Cabinet colleagues and I considered for public consultation requires those currently in receipt of council tax benefit to pay at least a some part of their council tax bill. However pensioners and vulnerable residents who face additional barriers to employment such as the disabled or those with mental impairment would continue to receive this benefit as before.

Our view was that this approach coupled with ending relief for second home owners was fairer than either transferring the entire burden of the £1.9m shortfall onto those who already pay the charge in full; increasing council tax or reducing services.

The IW Council agreed this approach on 19th September so a full public consultation was launched on 24th September. Given the widespread scope of the options and their potential impact, I will be urging residents to take part. I will also be reporting on this again in the next Northwood News.

Retirement

It is not without a deal of regret that I have decided not to seek re-election as local I.W. and Town Councillor in the Council elections next spring. I will then be in my 75th year and would have represented Northwood for 15 years and ideally a younger person could then represent the Ward for at least the following four year term of office. If there are any volunteers out there, please contact me!

With this impending retirement (and I am standing down as a Cabinet member at the end of November) we are downsizing from our present large bungalow and garden and having been approached by an Island resident "out of the blue" who was keen to buy our property, we have now sold and will be renting a nice little house in Cowes until we find a suitable smaller local property to buy. My telephone number of 295556 remains the same and I can still be reached via roger.mazillius@iow.gov.uk or mobile 07976009487 or at Harbour Vista, 2, Crown Court, Sun Hill, Cowes, PO31 7UZ

Of course I will continue to be a fully active member of the Council until the May elections and continue to represent residents to the best of my ability. This is important to me as there are several major decisions to be taken with a strong local context including (of course) the asphalt plant planning application; issues surrounding educational provision at local schools and the constant highways issues to name but three.

Some discussion took place about what happens if Northwood Primary is successful in obtaining Academy Status. Councillor Mazillius advised that it would be taken out of the control of the IW council expect for Ofsted inspections or if the school is failing.

A written report was received from Councillor Lora Peacey-Wilcox

NEWPORT RD CLOSURE: I requested that the IW Council put up signs mill hill road end to advise local people that the medical centre was still accessible. This has proved most helpful to people. I must thank Southern Vectis who now switches off their engines while waiting in the lay by. Residents had complained of the noise. Southern Vectis also move the bus to

allow cars to enter/exit the cemetery. I have to say, MANY people still travel up the road thinking they can get through and then have manoeuvre back out again!

VICTORIA RD/MILL HILL: Again another 2 accidents since my last report. Despite passionate pleas to the IW Council; because the accidents are mostly caused by driver error they feel it is not appropriate to spend any more money on the junction; I am requesting larger signs (local people are happy to put money in, so concerned are they); saying STOP at the top of Victoria Rd. With the diversion from Newport Rd, I can only see the situation getting worse. It has been suggested to put traffic lights during the detour.

ASPHALT PLANT: Like Roger I too receive daily correspondence. This is forwarded to the relevant people.

Councillor Peacey-Wilcox wished to add to her report that many residents of the Westbury Estate have complained about the increased traffic using Seaview Road due to the road closure at Somerton Roundabout.

6666

REPORT FROM SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER

Sargent Mike Sizer attended the meeting. He asked if there were any questions regarding the presentation from Sargent Voller last month.

He spoke about the recent introduction of a £20,000 reward leading to information about the disappearance of Damien Nettles in 1996. He handed out posters for circulation – please telephone 101 with any information regarding the investigation.

He spoke about the recent accidents at the top of Victoria Road- they do not appear to have been caused by the road diversion. His officers will increase their patrols in Seaview Road.

There is a new Superintendent for the Isle of Wight who will be visiting Cowes at some point. He has raised concerns about the detection rate on the Island which is only 35%, Cowes is better than this at 41.85%. PSCO's are trying to increase their communication with victims of crime and keep them informed of the progress of their investigations.

There has been a recent rise in Anti-Social behaviour in the High Street. Four young people have been spoken to and were questioned in school with their parents.

Councillor Fuller asked if these young people have been charged – Sgt Sizer advised that three have signed an acceptable behaviour contract but one has refused, this is the first step towards an ASBO. A parenting order can be placed on the parents via court if required.

Councillor Peacey-Wilcox spoke about a resident who had his £140 scooter stolen from his front garden and when reported to the Police was told "it happens all the time". Both she and Sgt Sizer will investigate further.

Councillor Robinson said that after Cowes Week a lot of bollards were left in the town. He has collected them and stored at his house – Sgt Sizer will arrange for their collection.

Sgt Sizer was asked about the Damien Nettles case - and confirmed that the case will remain open indefinitely.

It was also reported about the lack of signage for the new diversion at Three Gates Road.

66667

REPORT FROM THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT OFFICER

A written report was received from Neil Perry.

I have still got Gurnard, Northwood and Cowes for my area. East Cowes, Whippingham area is covered by another member of the team now.

If you draw a line from Cowes down to Chale just skirting west of Newport, everything West of that line is mine to look after. So it means I have half the IOW to cover now.

Our new role is still graffiti, waste, toilets etc. But the street cleaning, litter bins, dog bins, street furniture, grassed areas are not our remit, and been taken over by highways/PFI
You will have two officers known as Cyclical Officers. The one covering our area is Stuart Marlton.

I hope I can continue to give my help when needed, but won't be in Cowes every day. Once I get to grips with this large area I should be able to get a suitable rota going.

The increase in Neil's area and change in responsibilities was discussed and in view of this it was :

RESOLVED: That in future Councillors will prepare a report for the Environment Officer with their concerns about issues in Cowes, rather than requesting one from him.

6668

MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the Meeting held on 6 September 2012 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the chairman.

6669

MATTERS ARISING

a). To receive an update regarding the two Councillor vacancies on the Town Council (Min. No. 6659a refers).

There are three potential candidates. It was

RESOLVED: That councillors be invited to attend the interview for all three potential candidates.

b). To consider whether or not the Town Council should comment on the loss of part of a playing field at Lanesend School (Min. No. 6654 refers).

This is an IW Council matter, but there was much discussion about the size of playing fields allocated to schools. Cowes County Primary has much less, although Gurnard Primary has much more.

Discussion was also around the intention of the IW Council – is it for the community use or for the proposed Behaviour Unit at the Love Lane school site.

Councillor Hammond left at 8.15pm.

Discussion was also about the erection of a fence and this would impact the potential use by Lanesend.

Councillor Mazillius advised that Lee Matthews (IW Council Sports Officer) has been involved in the discussions. It was :-

RESOLVED : That Cowes Town Council supports Lanesend Primary School to retain the playing field as it was previously.

c). To receive information regarding the inclusion of a Youth Councillor on Town Council Committees (Min. No. 6655 item f) of Councillor Fuller's report refers). This had previously been resolved in minutes number 6594L on 01/03/12.

d). To consider the implications of the Community Right to Challenge under the Localism Act 2011 (Min. No. 6661 refers) (paperwork previously circulated).

This is a very detailed report with a lot of paperwork.

Councillor Peacey Wilcox left at 8.30pm.

Cowes Town Council is able to identify services that would be run better by themselves rather than the IW council. A good example of this is the various projects at Northwood recreation Ground. CTC

needs to consider if there are any further projects, discuss them and then ask for the “Right to Challenge”. This should be carried out by the Acquisitions Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Assistant Town Clerk set up a date for the meeting of the Acquisitions Committee.

e). To decide on issues that are important for Cowes which should receive consideration by the I.W. Council in their preparation of the Medina Valley Area Action Plan (MVAAP) (Notes of a meeting of the Sub Committee held on 4th September 2012 and a report from Councillor Jones herewith). This is a very detailed report prepared by Councillor Jones. This needs to be considered and approved by IW Council.

RESOLVED : That a meeting be held with Mr Boulter (IW Council) and the MVAAP Committee.

f). Members may raise for discussion any other matter arising from the last minutes.

There were no other items discussed.

6670

REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

a) Northwood House

The Assistant Town Clerk had received a written report from the Chairman of Northwood House Trustees which was circulated to all members by email and hard copies distributed at the meeting.

b) Northwood Recreation Ground Committee

The minutes of the Northwood Recreation Ground Committee held on 17th September were received.

c) Town Improvements Committee

The minutes of the Town Improvement Committee held on 2nd October were received.

Outdoor Gym Equipment

i) **RESOLVED: Once the lease has been agreed by full Town Council, the Mayor and the Assistant Town Clerk have the authority to sign the grant paperwork on behalf of Cowes Town Council.**

Horizon Plaque

ii) **RESOLVED: The list supplied by Cllr Matthews of items to go on the Horizon Plaque should be the final list and a panoramic view design produced by A.F.X Design at an additional cost of £105.**

The Cut

iii) **RESOLVED: To delay any further discussion on the project until advised by the Isle of Wight Council Highways department about the full financial implications of the PFI project.**

Christmas Arrangements and Bunting

iv) **RESOLVED: That one additional sleeve is installed this year at the bottom of Market Hill and the second one will be discussed next year.**

v) **RESOLVED: That Bison Entertainment is commissioned to remove the bunting after the October half term holiday in preparation for the festive lights at a cost of £450.**

6671

MATTERS REQUESTED BY COUNCILLORS

To consider the implications of unwarranted postings on facebook or other social networking sites (Councillor Banks)

This was discussed and the source is now known – not anyone in the room. Councillor Banks is confident it will not happen again, but, asked all councillors to be aware and bring any information of the attention of the Town Clerks.

6680

MATTERS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN CLERK

a) **RESOLVED : That BDO LLP have been appointed as the Town Council’s external auditor for a five year period commencing 2012/13.**

b) Notification that Councillor Matthews represented the Town Council at the local Good Neighbours Volunteers meeting held on 4th October and to appoint a representative for future meetings. Councillor Matthews gave a short report about the 22 groups now running across the Isle of Wight with 340 volunteers who have provided 19,500 hours of service.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Matthews be appointed as the Representative and the Year Book is updated.

c). To appoint a representative to Home-Start IOW Annual General Meeting to be held on 18th October 2012 in Quay Arts Centre commencing at 3.30p.m.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Wells will attend the next meeting and report back to see if a long term representative needs to be appointed.

d). To consider a request from Cowes Business Association for them to share office accommodation with the Town Council.

After discussions concerning lack of space within the Cowes Town Council office, possible conflicts of interest and the additional costs of changing the lease it was

RESOLVED: That Cowes Town Council cannot offer office space to the Cowes Business Association.

e). To receive details of training events being organised by Community Action Isle of Wight (herewith).

6681

ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

a) Review of Standing Orders.

ACTION: The Assistant Town Clerk to circulate all previous emails concerning this to all councillors ahead of the next meeting.

The Deputy Major wished to announce that following her probationary interview, Mrs Sue Waters had been offered the permanent post of Assistant Town Clerk for 10 hours per week.

(The proceedings terminated at 8.50p.m.)

CHAIRMAN