

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Twenty Eighth Annual Town Meeting held in the Parish Room, St Mary's Church, Cowes on Thursday 19th April 2012 at 7 p.m., convened under the provision of the section 99 and schedule 12 of the Local Government Act, 1972.

Present :Councillor McGregor (Town Mayor) (Chairman)

Councillors: Banks, Ellis, Fuller, Hammond, Jones, Matthews, Robinson, Walters and Wells.
Sergeant Sizer and one member of the public.

171 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Birch, Mazillius, Peacey-Wilcox and Wilcox.

172 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the minutes of the twenty seventh Annual Town Meeting held on 20th April 2011, be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

173 REPORT OF THE BUSINESS OF THE TOWN COUNCIL

Councillor McGregor (Town Mayor) gave a slide show featuring some of the activities of the Town Council during the municipal year and submitted a report of the business of the Town Council during the past year as follows:

It has been another busy municipal year for Cowes Town Council as local Town and Parish Councils continue to take on new responsibilities in their local communities with the ever increasing budgetary issues that the public sector faces. We have to look at ever more creative ways of working and I must thank my colleagues for their immense time and efforts over the past year (all of course on a voluntary basis). As the American politician Bill Richardson said, "We cannot accomplish all that we need to do without working together". I am proud and privileged to be part of a Town Council that works together for the good of its local community, each Councillor bringing their own diverse skills and experience.

We have seen some changes to personnel over the past year. In July 2011 we had an election in the Cowes North ward following the resignation of Cllr Ann Thwaites and Cllr Paul Fuller was elected to this position. We appointed a new Assistant Town Clerk, Sue Waters in February 2012 following the resignation of Jane Randall in January 2012. Both are a welcome addition to the team and have been involved in the local community over many years.

The Town Council continues to highly value close partnership working with many local organisations (too many to name all personally!) but a particular mention should go to our Cowes Safer Neighbourhood colleagues who continue to ensure that we live and work in one of the safest areas in the country – we appreciate their monthly attendance at our Town Council meetings to update us and answer queries as well as the significant ‘behind the scenes’ work that they carry out day to day. The reports and dialogue that we have with our four Isle of Wight Councillors and the various IW Council officers that we work with remain vitally important and we thank them for their continued commitment to the local area. We have also benefited from presentations from a number of local organisations over the past municipal year which have included: Mainsail in regard to the Parade arrangements for AAM Cowes Week; Age Concern’s ‘Good Neighbour’ scheme – Mark O’Sullivan and Gwen Glover; bus shelter & road improvements Park/Granville/Terminus Roads junction – Kevin Burton IW Council Highways Dept; the Localism Bill – Sharon Attrill; Island Youth Water Activities Centre – Mike Acton and Martin Bean and, UKSA – Simon Davies and Simon Samuels. Councillors continue to sit on some ten outside organisation bodies as Town Council representatives reporting back throughout the year to the full Town Council – again a vital link with many local organisations. A number of new local organisations have been set up over the past year – the Supporters of Cowes Library, Community Bus Management Committee and Green Towns and, thanks should go to Cllrs Birch, Ellis and Brown for taking up the roles of sitting on these bodies as a Town Council representative.

The Finance Committee has been ably chaired by Cllr David Walters and thanks should also go to our long term member auditor, Cllr Paul Birch. Against a backdrop of the Town Council increasing the number of services it directly delivers, we have delivered a budget for 2012/13 with once again no increase in the level of the precept. Town Councillors are mindful of the significant pressures on households in the community and felt at this time it is imperative to not increase the amount that residents pay as part of their Council tax. The Town Council has awarded a number of grants to local organisations to support the work that they do in the community, following the implementation of a new grant application form. The grants awarded have included: £250 to Cowes Concert Band towards new instruments; £1500 to Northwood House Trustees towards a see-saw Northwood Park and, £500 to the Apex church for catering equipment & children’s equipment for a drop in facility for older people & a Noah’s Ark facility for toddlers & carers to name but a few.

The Planning & Licensing Committee has continued to be chaired by Cllr David Jones, with licensing applications being added to this committee in January 2012. Thank you to Cllr Jones for his continued commitment and time to a committee that requires much preparation and liaison with the planning department and local residents.

The Town Improvements Committee has been chaired by Cllr Alan Wells and myself over the past municipal year. The committee has delivered a number of projects to enhance the local community.

These have included: erecting dog signs at Arctic Park designed by local schoolchildren to encourage dog owners to act responsibly; street furniture maintenance which we now have an annual rolling schedule; replacement of Town Council flags in Franski place; the painting of the Island Games mural in the Cut which was facilitated and led by Jane Popov and,

provision of two picnic benches in Northwood Recreation Ground by the Adventure play area which the Town Council provided in 2010.

The most significant project to be delivered this year was the Multi-Use games Area (MUGA) in March 2012. This project was first mooted by Peter Almond and a group of 20 + young people attending a Town Council meeting, requesting an open access basketball facility. Much work has been carried out by the Town Improvements Committee to enable this project to come to fruition – consultation with the local community, funding applications, planning consents through to putting the scheme out to tender and choosing a contractor who we have been very pleased to work with. Over half of the funding for the MUGA has been from external grants that the Town Council have been successful in obtaining. The official opening of the MUGA by Lee Bradbury, a local Cowes boy who went onto a professional football career and was the former Manager of Bournemouth FC, was held on the 4th April 2012. It is fantastic to see so many children, young people and families using this facility – after all this is what it is all about. The local Cricket Club has very recently raised some concerns about the siting of the MUGA but we are working together to tackle these concerns.

We are about to deliver a number of other projects which includes: replacement of the skate park fencing; refurbishment of the toilets in Northwood Recreation Ground and working towards taking on a long term lease from the IW Council. There are also a number of future projects that are planned – upgrading of the Cut area, review of Christmas decorations in the town centre to name a few. The Town Council is always keen to hear from the local community of projects which they feel would improve the area of Cowes.

The Town Council set up a Queen's Diamond Jubilee Committee this year which has been chaired by Cllr Alan Wells to start planning for this historic event in 2012. We have 'ring fenced' up to £4000 funding to assist local organisations to put on events for the QDJ – we have granted funding to Lanesend School to hire a drama teacher for the children to put on a play looking at events over the past 60 years and to provide food and consumables for a street party. Funding has also been provided to the Cowes ASD Group to put on a Family Fun Day for children in Cowes with disabilities. These are the only two applications that we have received to date, despite repeated advertising. The Town Council also plans to plant an Oak tree on Mornington Green; put Union Jack bunting up all the way through the High Street from Birmingham Road to Bath Road and, are pursuing the possibility of a Horizon plaque on the Parade. Provision of a Delabole slate Queen Victoria plaque at the Parade is to be provided to replace the existing one in a more natural material as well as a matching Queen Elizabeth Diamond Jubilee plaque on the opposite side of the seawall. Our thanks go to Cllr Geoff Banks who has offered to fix these plaques free of charge. The Town Council has also agreed to provide Commemorative mugs for all children in the Cowes area attending pre and primary schools. Cllr Roger Mazillius is leading on the organisation of a QDJ Charity Concert at Cowes Yacht Haven to be held on Friday 1st June 2012, which looks to be a fantastic musical event showcasing local Island talent. Proceeds of this concert will go towards the Isle of Wight Music Service, Cowes Carnival and the Supporters of Cowes Library.

Other matters and events that the Town Council have been involved with over the past year, in no particular order are:

In May 2011 the Town Council submitted a formal consultation response to Northwood House Trust and later in the year met with the Charities Commission concerning the options of changes to the NWH Trust scheme.

The community bus service covering Cowes, Gurnard and Northwood officially started on 5th September 2011, with one of our Town Councillors, Cllr Stuart Ellis, training to become one of the volunteer community bus drivers.

The Town Council moved their main Town Council meetings to St Mary's Church Hall from October 2011 following a significant piece of work carried out by the Acquisitions Committee looking at suitable venues in the Cowes area. This committee was successfully chaired by Cllr Willie Sanderson and is reconvened as required.

The Town Council submitted a portfolio and the Town Clerk and Mayor attended an interview panel in January 2012 to gain Quality Status Reaccreditation. We are delighted to have 'passed' and were presented with our certificate at the April 2012 Town Council meeting by the Chair of Quality Status Committee, Mr David Langford.

Cllr Fuller and Robinson undertook some consultation by visiting local businesses in Cowes at the end of 2011 to find out their views and concerns and, subsequently produced a report. The Town Improvements Committee is due to review this report at their next meeting with the aim of producing an action plan. Clearly they will work closely with Cowes Business Association to implement positive actions to ensure that Cowes remains a town with thriving businesses.

Cllr Fuller has worked with Cowes Enterprise College to further the notion of a Youth Advisor Scheme. We plan to have a nominated 'youth advisor' attend future Northwood Recreation Ground committee and appropriate Town Improvements committee meetings so that the valuable input from our local young people can be heard.

The Town Council plans to update and enhance its website in the coming months and we thank in particular Cllr Birch and Matthews for their efforts to date with the website.

The Town Council submitted an application for funding from the IW Council's 'Economic Improvement Fund' earlier this year and we are delighted to have been awarded the maximum amount for the area of £19,332. The bid which was submitted was for match funding projects at Northwood Recreation Ground – MUGA, upgrading toilets, replacement of skate park fencing and two picnic benches. The bid also supports a project lead by Northwood House Trust to carry out refurbishment works to the Nunnery steps.

Cowes saw the official closing ceremony of the Island Games take place on 1st July 2011, where the sportsmen and women from islands across the world processed through the town and a party was held at the Yacht Haven.

Aberdeen Asset Management Cowes Week was another successful and busy year (in particular for the Mayor!) and we saw HRH Princess Anne visit Cowes during the week.

The annual Remembrance Service was held at the War Memorial in Northwood Park followed by a service in St Mary's church on the 13th November 2011. This continues to be an extremely well attended event by the local community paying tribute to our armed forces. The Town Council has purchased replacement matting to lay on the grassed area leading to the war memorial for those laying wreaths.

The now annual Lights of Love carol service in aid of the Earl Mountbatten Hospice was held in Franski Place on the 16th December 2011. This is a very poignant service held in remembrance of those who have passed away in our community and to fundraise for the

Earl Mountbatten Hospice. A total of £662.31 was raised which included donations from Cowes Town Council and Cowes Business Association, as well as a carol singing effort in the pubs and clubs by some of us.

We look forward to a programme of exciting events in both West and East Cowes, organized by the Friends of ORP Blyskawica Society which will take place over the weekend of 4th – 7th May 2012 to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the defence of Cowes by the Polish destroyer ORP Blyskawica. The Town Council has committed to underwrite the commemoration to the sum of £3,000 for activities taking place in Cowes. Cllr Geoff Banks has been an instrumental member of the organising committee and we thank him for his time and commitment to marking this important historic occasion.

And finally....I will be standing down as Mayor as of 10th May 2012, when a new Mayor will be elected by the Town Council. It has been a real privilege and honour (as well as a steep learning curve!) to serve the town in this role over the past year. I have thoroughly enjoyed meeting many diverse local organisations and people who give freely of their time to make Cowes the unique place that it is. It has been a hard year for me on a personal level, as many of you are aware, and I would like to thank colleagues for the unstinting support many of you have given me. In particular I would like to thank the Deputy Mayor, Cllr David Walters for playing such a supportive role and for being an excellent sounding board. I am sure that you would all like to join me in showing your appreciation to our Town Clerk, Roger Hendey (who is away enjoying his holiday) and Assistant Town Clerk, Sue Waters, who are very much the cornerstone of this Town Council – on behalf of the Town Council we thank them for their tireless work.

174 ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31ST MARCH 2012

Copies of the accounts for the year ended 31st March 2012 were circulated at the Meeting.

RESOLVED

That the accounts be received and noted.

175 ANNUAL SUMMARY – SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM

Herewith a report from the Cowes Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) to cover the period April 2011 to March 2012.

There was some change in the leadership of the team in the last year with Inspector Terry Clawson moving on and the team now being headed up by Inspector Andy Treagus. Andy also has responsibility for 2 of the response teams based at Newport and splits his time between the 2 stations.

The rest of the team is made up of Sergeant Mike Sizer (who also has responsibility for the East Cowes SNT), Police Constables Justin Pringle, Minka Armitage, Sarah Waldegrave, James Holden and Police Community Support Officers Lisa Paul and Steve Oatley. We are supported by our Special Constables, Jim Arkless and Julian Morgan and by 2 police volunteers, Lynne Morgan and Isaac Norvel.

We have had our local end of year performance figures published. It has been an excellent year with crime rates in Cowes falling right across the board.

2011 – 2012 statistics compared with 2010 - 2011

Violence against the person down from 201 reports to 185.

House Burglary reports down from 31 to 16.

Other burglary down from 39 reports to 22.

Theft from motor vehicle reports down from 65 to 38.

Criminal damage and arson reports down from 236 to 157.

Drugs offences are down from 70 reports to 50. (We have a 100% detection rate in crimes of this nature).

Our overall detection rate for all crimes reported is 30.35%.

We are determined to maintain high standards service to the public and when crimes are reported we will investigate them to the best of our abilities within the laws and rules that govern our profession.

In the past year your Safer Neighbourhood Team has secured prison sentences against several local criminals for crimes of theft from motor vehicle, burglary, drugs supply, assault and for brandishing weapons in public. Additionally we have secured the first disorderly house closure order on the Island against an address in Sun Hill. At another address in the High Street we worked closely with the landlord in evicting problem tenants.

We continue to support very effective Pub Watch, Shop Watch and Neighbourhood Watch schemes. We set up and commenced the first Local Action Group on the Island and through this forum we, and our council partners, have addressed issues raised to us which are of the most importance to the public we serve.

We continue to have excellent working relationships with the town council, parish councils and other volunteer groups and we have been resolute in our support of local projects such as the MUGA where we bid for and secured significant funding. We have increased our links into the maritime community and operate an intelligence and information sharing structure with this industry.

Working priorities are set by the constabulary and locally by both the Isle of Wight Commander and by the Cowes Local Action Group. The force priority remains Operation Nemesis 2 which is an operation designed to tackle those **who will carry out serious acquisitive crimes such as burglary, robbery and motor vehicle crime.**

Members of the public can view current performance figures and our current working priorities by logging on at:

<http://www.hampshire.police.uk/Internet/stats/iowocu/west/cowes.htm>

As a team we face an uncertain coming year with a probable relocation and the closure of Cowes Police Station. All I can say is that our new base will be within the Cowes town boundary. We expect to extend our means of communication by utilising social media such as Facebook and Twitter and we will strive to remain as accessible as possible locally.

I would like to take the opportunity to thank the town council for their continued support.

176 ANNUAL SUMMARY – I.W. COUNCIL

Unfortunately due to technical problems there was no report available.

Councillor Fuller issued a written report (attached) which outlined his own activities as a County, Town and Parish Councillor and took questions from the floor.

It was raised that in future as “best practice” all correspondence should be sent to both the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk.

177 QUESTIONS FROM THE MEETING

There were no questions from the meeting.

(Meeting ended at 7.50pm)

CHAIRMAN