

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the COWES TOWN COUNCIL held in Northwood House, Cowes on Thursday, 4th September 2014 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor Banks (Town Mayor) (Chairman)
Councillors Brown, Corby, Cowan, Ellis, Fuller, Hammond, Jones, Matthews, McNeill, Nicholson, Peacey-Wilcox, Robinson, Spalding and Wardrop.

6946 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Walters and Councillor McNeill had reported that he would be late for the meeting.

6947 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at this stage.

6948 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 31st July 2014 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

6949 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Q. A member of the public referred to works to the old Chapel, Union Road; although there had been initial concerns regarding commencement delays, the contractors now appeared to be doing a brilliant job. However, when the works were completed it would increase the number of cars using the area and put additional pressure on parking. As the road was very narrow with no pavement on the Chapel side, would the Town Council consider erecting 'Old town – please drive carefully' signs at each end of the road.

A. The Town Mayor stated that traffic warning signs came under the jurisdiction of the I.W. Council; the Town Council would request that they install suitable signage.

Q. Another resident referred to cycling in the High Street during times of prohibition; he questioned what action could be taken to prevent this practice?

A. The Town Mayor stated that appropriate signage was in place; enforcement of the prohibition was a police matter. However, the police had a limited amount of time to devote to this issue despite it being the number 1 priority identified by the Local Action Group. Nonetheless, they had stopped several cyclists over the last few months, taken their details and given them a verbal warning; if the same persons were to re-offend then formal action would be taken.

It was agreed that the Town Council would contact the Cycle Hire Shop requesting they notify their bicycle hire customers of the prohibition; they would also convene a further meeting of agencies with an interest in the High Street in an attempt to determine what further action could be taken to resolve the problem.

(Councillor McNeill entered the meeting at 7.06p.m.)

6950 REPORTS FROM ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLORS

Councillor Nicholson's written report referred to the following;

- a). That security standards and the provision and maintenance of public facilities during AAM Cowes Week appeared to have been honed this year; this was probably in response to concerns raised following the 2013 event by the Town Council.
- b). That the government had been asked to explain why funding could be provided for Eastbourne Pier for repairs following a fire and not for essential repairs to the Undercliffe following storm damage.
- c). That the Post Office in Northwood would soon be closing; an active search was on for an alternative venue with the Travellers Joy as a possibility.

Cllr Fuller had submitted a written report referring to the following:

a). That following feedback from concerned residents, issues with neighbour's bonfires seemed more widespread than he had anticipated. He had been advised by Environmental Health that although there was no local bye-law restricting fires until after 6pm action could be taken by them through the Clean Air Act when a neighbor lights regular bonfires (defined as more than 2 or 3 times a month) or when bonfires are particularly noxious or out of control. The police also had powers to act should smoke from bonfires restrict visibility on the highway.

b). That he had received a number of complaints regarding bags of dog mess being indiscriminately deposited in hedgerows, on the beach adjacent to footpaths and in some cases resident's gardens. In one case, the police had been called and action taken.

c). That he would be stepping down as a Governor at the Cowes Enterprise College following the transfer of the College to the Ormiston Academies Trust. He wished to congratulate students at the College who took exams this year; following the hard work of the students and with the support of staff and parents the College gained their highest ever GCSE results.

d). That summer loading figures for the community bus had reached its highest levels; the number of daily passenger journeys had now exceeded 100 on several occasions.

He had been informed by Southern Vectis that it remained their intention to divert buses via the Aldi Store; the section between Northwood Garage and Somerton Roundabout would be missed out in favour of allowing the bus to return from The Horseshoe via Nodes Road and Three Gates Road. If approved, the new diverted route would come into force for the winter timetable due to commence from October with this section of service operating on a 'hail and ride' basis.

e). That the Environment and Public Protection Executive Advisory Committee of which he was a member would be exploring the following issues for their next meeting:

- The potential formation of an All-Island Flood Defence Committee to consider 'Belwin Fund' expenditure.
- Options for the IW Council's successful bid for Phase 2 of the Local Sustainable Transport Funding. This funding amounts to £900k
- Implementation of the Isle of Wight Parking Strategy.
- Supermarket Levies.
- Feedback from the recent Area Action Plan Consultation.
- Marine Conservation Zones, and preparing for next year's Consultation.
- Investigating Plantlife accreditation.

f). That he had dealt with other miscellaneous incidents in the last month.

Councillor Peacey-Wilcox referred to the following:

a). That she had been contacted about a dog in the care of the dog wardens; she had assisted in having the dog re-homed.

b). That she continued to attend NHS Board meetings; she worked closely with Karen Baker on housing and care issues.

c). That she had been contacted regarding 'industrial noise' at Medham; she was able to offer advice and support.

- d). That she had received a copy of the alternative cycling route through Cowes prepared by Cycle Wight members; it appeared to be very similar to the route previously devised following Town Council consultation with the I.W. Council Cycling Officer.
- e). That she regularly received a copy of the Vectis Astronomical Society newsletter; she could make this available to members if they wished.

6951 REPORT FROM SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER

Sergeant Gary Knight gave a verbal report which referred to the following:

- a). That crime figures for the year to date were down by 11% from 228 crimes 2013/14 down to 204 crimes 2014/15. This latest figure when compared to 2012/13 when there were 259 recorded crimes would show a 21% reduction.
- b). That the no. 1 priority identified by the Local Action Group remained cycling and cars using the High Street during times of prohibition. The police continued to actively patrol the area and had caught 8 cyclists during August; these have all had their details taken, been given a verbal warning and an educational letter. If the same persons were seen cycling in the High Street again during prohibited times then formal action would be taken.
- c). That the frequency and day of the month for Beat Surgeries had changed; the Beat Surgery would now be held on the 2nd Thursday of each month at Cowes Police Station between 1800hrs and 2000hrs. The next Surgery would be on 11th September. To date there had been very little interest in the Surgeries; unless there were more people attending in the next couple of months he would seriously have to consider whether to continue with them.
- d). That there were no crimes of note to bring to the attention of the Town Council.

A question was asked about a breakdown of the crime figures into categories of crime; Sergeant Knight stated that this could be easily done and he agreed to do so.

6952 MATTERS ARISING

a). The Parade Village (Min. No. 6939b refers)

The Town Clerk submitted a response from the I.W. Council Head of Economy giving details of all AAM Cowes Week costs; the Town Council had requested details specifically in respect of The Parade Village operation. However, the Head of Economy had stated that it was not possible to disaggregate the specific figures required as the I.W. Council looked at the whole week in terms of their contribution.

The Town Clerk had subsequently requested a breakdown of an £85k Highway & Transport (PFI contractor) cost and these details had been circulated to all members.

It was agreed that the Town Clerk should request a more detailed breakdown of how all the figures quoted had been made up.

b). Land, bottom of Market Hill (Min. No. 6936 refers)

The Town Clerk submitted a response from Maria Bishop, the I.W. Council Compliance Officer regarding the condition of the land adjacent to Ward Cottages, Market Hill; it stated that she had carried out a further site visit on 15th August to establish the condition of the land. She had determined that there was no loose rubbish/waste or other material present that could be considered to be impacting on the local amenity. In respect of the vegetation, it was not encroaching on the highway and appeared to be maintained to an acceptable level on the whole of the site. She was also aware of the concerns raised by a local resident regarding the siting of wheelie bins on the land and she noted these during her visit. However, the Planning Authority had no control over the use and siting of wheelie bins as they did not constitute development or a material change of use of the land; neither were they considered to be untidy.

In view of her findings, the current condition of the site did not warrant any further investigation or action to be taken as it was not in a condition deemed unacceptable in relation to Section 215 of the Town & Country planning Act 1990.

This response was noted; members agreed that nothing further could be done by the Town Council.

6953 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

a). Staffing & Development Committee

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Staffing & Development Committee held on 11th August 2014 were received.

The Town Mayor reported that Debbie Faulkner had accepted the offer of the position of Cowes Town Clerk; she had given notice to her current employer but was unable to commence her duties with the Town Council until 1st October. The existing Town Clerk had offered to remain in post until the end of October to enable a one month 'hand over' period.

RESOLVED

That the Town Clerk be requested to remain in post until 31st October 2014.

b). Town Improvements Committee

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Town Improvements Committee held on 11th August 2014 were received.

i). Plaques on the bandstand.

RESOLVED

That an advertisement be placed in the I.W. County Press inviting tenders for the cleaning of plaques on the bandstand, The Parade.

ii). Free online guide.

RESOLVED

That the Town Mayor writes the 50 words of text for insertion into the free online guide for Cowes.

iii). Toilets, Northwood Recreation Ground.

RESOLVED

That the Town Clerk be authorised to settle in full the Southern Water bills in respect of water charges for the toilets in Northwood recreation Ground for the period April 2011 to July 2014.

c). Planning & Licensing Committee

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Planning & Licensing Committee held on 13th August 2014 were received.

d). Island Waste Advisory Group Meeting

Notes of Island Waste Advisory Group Meeting held on 13th August 2014 were received.

Councillor Corby referred to the problem of second home owners putting their rubbish out prior to returning home, usually on a Sunday when collection day was not until Thursday. This had been raised previously but the Town Council had been told that nothing could be done until a new contract was negotiated in 2015.

Councillor Nicholson stated that refuse in Northwood was collected on a Monday and that it may be possible to switch days with Cowes without too much disruption.

It was agreed that the Town Clerk writes to Island Waste offering that suggestion.

e). WW1 Commemoration Working Group

The Minutes of Meeting of the WW1 Commemoration Working Group held on 27th August 2014 were received.

RESOLVED (in respect of Armistice Day Parade)

- 1). That a public address system be provided and the names of the First World War war dead read out;
- 2). That following liaison, the Clergy for the service be requested to emphasise the part played by the Cowes servicemen in the Great War;

- 3). That military representatives lay their wreaths on the memorial tiers to the south aspect of the war memorial where the names of the First World War deceased are recorded while civic dignitaries and community organisations lay wreaths to the front and east sides;
- 4). That the Town Council requests of NHCTCL permission for a temporary flagpole to be erected adjacent to the war memorial for 2014 pending planning permission for a permanent fixture; and
- 5). That the Salvation Army band at the Armistice Parade be requested to play a selection of typical WW1 tunes

RESOLVED (in respect of Armistice Day Church Service)

- 1). That a poem relating to the war, possibly from Wilfred Owen or Siegfried Sassoon, is read;
- 2). That a special 'poppy candle' or large red candle is lit in remembrance of those 148 Cowes combatants who forfeited their lives;

RESOLVED (in respect of future events)

- 1). That an information page relating to the 148 Great War dead from Cowes be included in future editions of the Town Council newsletter;
- 2). That the Town Council purchases poppy seeds for distribution to local schools for children to plant;
- 3). That the Town Council considers taking over the Park Road Rose Garden from the I.W. Council with the view that it becomes a WW1 commemorative area and then seeks grant funding for forming it into that dedicated area;
- 4). That on 4th August each year of the war's centenary the Town Council lays a wreath at the War memorial;
- 5). That the Town Council holds an evening discourse of war poetry in Northwood House which could include prints of paintings and photographs by war artists and photographers from the time possibly incorporating it as a part of the Cowes Literacy Festival; and
- 6). That the Town Council plants trees together with dedicated commemoration plaques, in Northwood Park, Northwood Recreation Ground, Mornington Green and Princes Green to mark each year of the Great War.

Cowes Week Ltd. Shoreside Committee

Councillor McNeill gave a short verbal report on a meeting of the Cowes Week Ltd. Shoreside Committee Meeting held on 2nd September 2014.

He stated that there had been considerable discussion about spreading out the evening displays over a number of evenings during AAM Cowes Week rather than have everything on the Friday night (Typhoon, Red Arrows, and Fireworks); Cowes Week Ltd. had suggested three possible options for consideration.

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council prefers Option 2 which would entail having the Red Arrows on the Thursday night with the Typhoon display and Fireworks on Friday night.

6954 TOWN COUNCIL FACEBOOK PAGE

Councillor Spalding submitted a paper regarding a Town Council Facebook page; her proposal stated that the majority of younger people and many that were older now used social media for their information sources and she believed that a Facebook page would distribute Council news and information more quickly and to a wider audience than the newsletter.

Councillor Spalding maintained that Facebook would provide a means for the general public to interact with the Council; the Town Council could seek the views of local residents and get feedback in a more immediate way. She also believed that this would be a positive step in trying to engage with younger people in the town.

Councillor Spalding would be willing to set a Facebook page up and initially, to administer it. Following much discussion and on the Chairman's casting vote, it was

RESOLVED

That the Town Council does not proceed with the proposal of having a Facebook page.

6955 BULLYING & HARASSMENT POLICY

The Town Mayor submitted a draft 'Dignity at Work – Bullying and Harassment' policy a copy of which had been circulated to all members.

He stated that the Town Council should be committed to the elimination of any form of intimidation in the workplace or the Council Chamber and that the draft document he was proposing was merely a standard policy that had been adopted by many Town & Parish Councils. If members agreed to adopt the policy it could be incorporated in the Town Council's Standing Orders.

RESOLVED

- 1). That the Town Council agrees to adopt the 'Dignity at Work – Bullying and Harassment' policy; and
- 2). That its inclusion in Standing Orders including the method by which it is implemented be deferred to the next ordinary meeting of the Town Council.

6956 THE CUT

The Town Mayor submitted a paper regarding the possible pedestrianisation of The Cut as an extension to the High Street traffic free precinct; it stated that this was a Town Council born initiative that had been endorsed by local residents following a public survey.

The Town Council had subsequently set aside funding annually towards the circa £50k cost of the scheme prior to it eventually being shelved some two years ago as being too expensive proportionately for the benefit it would derive for the town.

However, the Town Council had recently received an unexpected windfall of £79k from the sale of Bridge House following the winding up of the North Medina Community Development Trust conditional on it being spent in the town wholly on capital projects.

A more recent survey in the Spring newsletter identified the establishment of regular markets closely followed by the pedestrianisation of The Cut as most favoured from 25 possible options, albeit by way of limited response.

The Town Mayor questioned whether or not the Town Council should reconsider its position regarding The Cut in line with residents wishes.

RESOLVED

That the possible pedestrianisation of The Cut be referred to the Town Improvements Committee for further consideration.

6957 COMMUNITY HIGHWAYS FUND

The Town Clerk submitted documents from the Interim Highways PFI Contract Manager in respect of an I.W. Council policy change regarding its Community Highways Fund, copies of which had been circulated to all members.

The I.W. Council would 'ring fence' £100k each year in their highways capital programme for highway improvements that would be assessed and prioritised. The process for the assessment and prioritisation was also set out.

In particular the Interim Highways PFI Contract manager was seeking a response by 22nd September 2014 to two specific questions as follows:

- Do you support the proposal of the formation of a small cross-party group of Councillors to assist with the prioritisation of highway improvement schemes?
- Is your Council willing and able to contribute to the implementation of any such schemes? If yes, please give an indication of the type of schemes and the amount of money that may be available

RESOLVED

- 1). That the Town Council does support the formation of a group of Councillors to assist with the prioritisation of highway improvement schemes and nominate Councillor Ellis to the group as their representative; and
- 2). That Cowes Town Council would consider each local scheme on its merits before deciding whether or not they would wish to contribute towards the implementation of the scheme.

6958 MATTERS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN CLERK

- a). To receive details of training that has been arranged by the County Training Partnership.
 - b). *To receive details of miscellaneous correspondence
 - c). Notification of 2nd place in Wight in Bloom 'Community Project' category
 - d). Notification of Medina Yard Community Forum & Exhibition at Cowes Methodist Church on 18th September between 1800hrs and 2000hrs.
- * Copies circulated to all members

RESOLVED

That Councillor Fuller attends the 'Community Right to Bid and Community Right to Challenge' training at County Hall on 10th September at 4.30pm.

6959 ITEMS FOR FUTURE AGENDAS

It was agreed that the following item be included on a future agenda:

- i). The amendment of Standing Order 3 in respect of the maximum term of office of Town Mayor (Councillor Hammond).

(The proceedings terminated at 8.46pm)

CHAIRMAN