



COWES TOWN COUNCIL NEWSLETTER

Winter Edition 2013

From Cllr. Geoff Banks – Cowes Town Mayor

YOUR TOWN COUNCILLORS

Cowes Town Council, under its Quality Town Council status, has to quarterly publish details of current councillors, as below.

Geoff Banks (Town Mayor)	Cowes West	tel. 295425
David Jones (Deputy Town Mayor)	Cowes Medina	298445
Linda Brown	Cowes South	295222
John Corby	Cowes North	07798753962
Veronica Cowan	Cowes West	200415
Stuart Ellis	Cowes Medina	246352
Paul Fuller*	Cowes North	289595
Wendi Hall	Cowes South	07878138235
Lynn Hammond	Cowes Medina	282308
Jon Matthews	Cowes Medina	247498
Mark McNeill	Cowes North	07790777101
John Nicholson*	Cowes South	619130
Lora Peacey-Wilcox*	Cowes Medina	247177
Bob Robinson	Cowes West	294234
David Walters	Cowes North	200734
Wendy Wardrop	Cowes North	298687

* Also Isle of Wight Councillors

YOUR NEWSLETTER

Our apologies for those who did not receive our first Newsletter, which was being delivered early in October. The aim was to distribute some 5,550 Newsletters, one per household. Regrettably, the distributor managed to start deliveries in Northwood and, at an early stage, we became aware that not only a wrong area was receiving copies but that streets were being missed. The wrong delivery resulted in an additional print run. However, properties still have been missed and it would assist us if you know anyone who has not received a copy of that edition.

This Winter Newsletter is now increased to eight pages and, subject to cost, it is hoped to add colour and introduce article related photographs.

This edition includes articles from Northwood House Charitable Trust Co. Ltd., Cowes Safer Neighbourhoods Team (Cowes Police) and Cowes Heritage. Our aim in future editions is to bring you news from other organizations based in our town. If you belong to or have knowledge of any local community organization which could benefit from providing an article for this Newsletter, can they please let us know?

Our thanks to those who have commented on the Newsletter which appears to have been favourably received. Please remember, this is your community Newsletter and we welcome your comment and input.

MORE ABOUT YOUR TOWN COUNCIL

The Town Council has 16 councillors, a Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk. Both clerks are part-time and are the council's only paid office administration. Councillors receive no remuneration when on council business. The councillors are, annually, appointed to sub-committees by nomination from their fellow councillors.

The sub-committees on which they serve are the Finance, Planning, Town Improvements, Northwood Recreation Ground and Acquisitions Committees. The general public are welcome to attend any of these sub-committee meetings which are advertised on the Town Council's notice board on W. H Hurst's wall, the library or 'on line'.

The full council meets the first Thursday in each month at the Parish Room, St. Mary's Church, except during the summer months and the New Year when dates vary. The next full council meeting is shown at the end of this Newsletter. Sub-committees, however, meet at the Town Council offices in Denmark Road; the address being given as a footnote to this Newsletter.

At this year's May elections your 16 councillors were appointed to represent their wards and all stood without opposition. This could be regarded as self-appointment; however, it lies with the town's electorate to put their name forward for selection when vacancies occur. When vacancies arise such are advertised in the local press, on our council notice boards and in Cowes' Library.

Councillors also sit on a variety of organizations as Town Council representatives. These include Cowes Deauville Twinning Association, Cowes Harbour Commission Advisory Group, Good Neighbourhood Volunteer Group, Cowes Police Local Action Group, Highways P.F.I District One, Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils' Executive Committee, Cowes Week's Shoreside Committee and Cowes Business Association..

In addition there are three internal groups comprising the Member Audit for Town Council Accounts, Tree Wardens and Wight in Bloom Steering Group.

COUNCIL PRECEPT

This forms part of your Council Tax bill and is payment to your town council for its administration and funding of projects, services and grants etc. We are being asked by County Hall to consider taking on some of their services which could be withdrawn such as maintenance of Northwood Rec., provision of public toilets etc. By raising our current precept by £1 per month per household, (band 'D'), we could generate a substantial additional income towards managing such facilities. What are your views?

MEDINA VALLEY AREA ACTION PLAN (MVAAP)

For those who filled in the questionnaire in the previous Newsletter can we offer our thanks and appreciation. At this time we have over 180 responders giving their views which are invaluable to our consultation process. Your council will collate and review these responses and determine the consensus views. Such will then be forwarded to those at County Hall who are managing the Cowes area Action Plan. The results of this consultation and its outcome will be published in the Spring Newsletter. Can we have more responses please?

CHRISTMAS TREES

Cowes Town Council over the past years has provided fully lit large natural Christmas trees about the town centre. Last year these were supplemented by smaller ornamentally lit trees set above many of our shopfronts; this was a joint venture with Cowes Business Association which instigated and managed the scheme. However, our four large trees, previously supplied and erected in the past by Scottish and Southern Electric, (SSE Contracting), now have to be installed by Island Roads in that the trees are on areas of the footways over which they now have governance. Your town council, through its 'recommendation' structure, is committed to the erection of these four large trees and the cost from Island Roads is twice that from SSE at circa £2,600. Enquiries, to date, indicate that your town council, if wishing to have these trees, appear to have no option but to pay this unprecedented charge. The situation will most certainly be reviewed by next Christmas.

CHRISTMAS CAROLS

A reminder that the annual Lights of Love, in aid of the Earl Mountbatten Hospice, will not be held outside in the cold this year. The town council has organized a carol service in Cowes Methodist Church, Birmingham Road on Friday 20th December at 6pm for a concert at 6.30 pm with free

refreshments afterwards. Please come along with family and friends and join others in what should be a most enjoyable evening in aid of our local hospice.

SUN HILL BAPTIST CHAPEL

Local residents have expressed their continued concerns that this neglected development site has become an unacceptable eyesore. The Town Council, referring those concerns to County Hall, find there has been reluctance to take early and positive action under the legislation they have at hand. Hopefully, matters will soon be put in hand and this council with further request action to be taken.

“COWES WEEK” TRADEMARK

Cowes Week Ltd., which runs our famous regatta, considered that it was advisable to register the name “COWES WEEK” in order to safeguard the use of the name from others for an uncontrolled benefit. Without such control it was perceived that this could be detrimental to the event and to those who enjoyed and benefitted traditionally from it. Your town council will be asking Cowes Week Ltd. to enter into negotiations with them to consider giving the authority equally, to Cowes Town Council, Cowes Business Association and Cowes Week Ltd to determine the control and use of the trademark, in perpetuity.

“WETHERSPOONS”

The police station in Birmingham Road may be acquired by this company. However, until such time as there is a Planning and Licencing Application lodged we are not in a position to formally comment. There are mixed feelings as to whether such an establishment could be good or bad for the town. Everyone, however, will have a chance to have a say. At this time their acquisition is conjecture. Other possible purchasers could be interested in the property for it to be returned to its initial residential use.

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT OFF PLACE ROAD

There is a Planning Application for the construction off of Place Road for the construction of a mixed residential development of 99 homes. The land is accessed from the west side of Place Road and the site frontage will infill most of that area of open land between what was formerly ‘Readers’ and the row of houses leading from the Roundhouse roundabout. The area of development so happens to be in the parish of Gurnard yet would be, if permission is given, an extension to the residential outskirts of Cowes. Gurnard village would remain buffered by open fields and the development would not connect with their Gurnard’s residential area. The main consultants would be Gurnard Parish Council yet Cowes Town Council, in whose demographic area it would annexe, may only comment. There is a noted housing need on the Island generally and this would be able to satisfy some of that need for low cost housing and first time buyers. Prices would range from £70,000 to £120,000, we are told. At our town council’s Planning Subcommittee Meeting there was opposition to the development; four councillors were against this development, two were for it and one abstained. Grave concerns are expressed with regards to the loss of open fields and the yet further annexing of Cowes to Northwood. You can inspect the application ‘on-line’ on the IWC website under “Planning Applications”.

PUBLIC OPEN MEETINGS

Your town council held its first Public Open Meeting for several years. The attendance was low with approximately 30 people present. However, this was better attended than the IWC’s public meeting a week later at Northwood House where half that number attended. It may be the case that both councils are failing to adequately notify Cowes’ residents of such meetings where the primary objective has been to seek your views. However, it may be apathy with the electorate or disinterest. Your view does count and such meetings give you the chance to challenge the authorities and inform them of what you want for this community.

The town council’s meeting was very well received by those present and the attendees considered it of value and welcomed the next public Meeting scheduled for Thursday 20th March at 6.30 for 7pm at the Methodist Church in Birmingham Road. Again there will be an update on your town council’s business and speakers from three local community groups.

“DESTINATION COWES”

This is a new tourism initiative aimed at bringing further regattas and rallies to Cowes and developing shoreside events and facilities which would add to the town's prosperity. Funding for such would be from local interested organizations/stakeholders already engaged in the promotion of Cowes as a tourist and investment area. Cowes Town Council has been asked to be party to this initiative which would require funding for a two year period. At our council's November meeting the majority voted that this council would play no part in this initiative.

HIGH STREET TRAFFIC CONCERNS

Your council held a further meeting with Cowes Business Association and the local police. Regrettably, there were no attendees from Island Roads or local Isle of Wight Councillors. The major issues remain with the raising and lowering of the traffic bollards and the cyclists flaunting the traffic regulations.

The meeting agreed that the town council should seek quotations for the operation of the bollards having previously asked Cowes Business Association and Island Roads if they could take on this responsibility; both had declined. It was considered essential that the bollards, after many months in repose, were operational at the earliest date. The request to Island Roads for a financial contribution as to costs was refused albeit they have claim to governance over the highway. The responsibility for bollards was never invested in them when the IWC handed over their highway responsibilities. The meeting also agreed to review, with Island Roads, the siting and adequacy of the present bollards. However, councillors have, in the interim, agreed to enquire whether the town's Traffic Wardens could take on this responsibility.

We have recommended to Island Roads that the pedestrianization period should be restricted for the purposes of deliveries and for those with garaging/parking off of the High Street. This access period to be restricted to between 7am and 10am with the exception of those residents granted exemption. This would allow pedestrians safer use of the High Street and Shooters Hill of an evening when the town can be lively.

The matter of cyclists illegally riding through the High Street and Shooters Hill remains a difficult issue. Improved signage at all points of entry was considered essential in that many cyclists claimed they were confused by what is there at present.

At November's full town council meeting the police authority stated that they were now embarking on a robust attitude to cycling and traffic offences throughout the High Street and would start enforcement action which could lead to prosecutions.

Consideration was also given to providing a 'Green Carpet' cyclists route. This would allow cyclists to ride from the chain ferry in both directions along Medina Road and Birmingham Road, both on their seaward sides, then along a route through Beckford Road, Gordon Road into Denmark Road up into Granville Road crossing over to Union Road into Castle Road and out through Queens Road. Cyclists would be able to go in both directions along this route. Permission for this has to be sought and the costs found.

NORTH MEDINA COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT TRUST (NMCDDT)

Many will have read in the press that the NMCDDT's property, "Bridge House" in Ferry Road, East Cowes, is to be sold and that Cowes Town Council has raised the matter of their initial investment of £10,000, in setting up the Trust, be returned from proceeds from the sale. The NMCDDT intends winding up and distributing any surplus funds between the communities of Cowes and East Cowes. Negotiations with the NMCDDT were initiated by Cowes Town Council in July this year and were ongoing. However, a meeting with the chairman of the NMCDDT reported that at their trustees meeting in early October they had resolved that, following the sale of Bridge House, (with an anticipated surplus of possibly some £165,000), they would first request bids from local charitable or non-profit community organizations for the first year. The review of the bids for financial aid will be through a committee chaired by the NMCDDT with representation from the two town councils.

Following distribution of their funds for this twelve month period, any monies unallocated they wished to have equally distributed between the two town councils of Cowes and E. Cowes. Those two councils would then administer those funds in support of organizations their side of the Medina.

However, at Cowes Town Council's November meeting, it was agreed to appoint a council representative who would, for the life of the NMCDDT, be a director of that trust and that he would request that the funds available for Cowes' projects/initiatives was pro-rata that initial investment as provided by Cowes and E. Cowes 'councils.

NEWS FROM LOCAL ORGANIZATIONS.

COWES SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM. (COWES POLICE)

Cowes Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) has been liaising with members of the Local Action Group where representatives of the local community have a say on the policing priorities for Cowes. It was decided that the priority for Cowes, outside of general police commitments, was for Cowes SNT to deal with vehicles/cyclists committing traffic offences on Cowes High Street during the prohibited hours.

Cowes SNT would like to advertise that we will be holding a regular beat surgery on the 1st and 3rd Thursday of every month between the hours of 6.00pm to 8.00pm. This will take place at Cowes Police Station, Birmingham Road, Cowes. This will be open to all members of public who wish to speak to their local SNT about any concerns that they may have, including problems that are affecting the community, or just to pop in for a general friendly chat. The police station will remain closed to the public outside of these dates and times.

- Cowes SNT has dedicated Neighbourhood Watch (NHW) schemes in which coordinators attend a monthly meeting with police. Members will have the opportunity to liaise with police and they are an invaluable partner agency in the prevention and detection of crime.
- Our Shopwatch and Pubwatch schemes mean that representatives can liaise and work in partnership with police to discuss issues that may affect the community and to prevent and detect crime.
- Cowes SNT is always looking at ways to engage with members of the public. As technology moves on, Cowes SNT will have a twitter account in the near future where members of the public will be able to follow us.

Inspector Sam Dunlop of Cowes SNT, encourages the residents of Cowes to make contact in any way you prefer (person, letter, e-mail, twitter) with the police officers and police community support officers of Cowes SNT, to gain a better understanding and work together in achieving our mutual aims of catching offenders, reducing and preventing crime.

COWES HERITAGE.

Cowes Heritage was formed in 2004 by a small group of local people interested in the history & heritage of Cowes & its surroundings.

Coinciding with the 60th Anniversary of D Day our first exhibition was entitled "Cowes at War". A DVD was also produced which is still on sale, as are several other DVDs & books. These can be purchased at our annual exhibitions, at Cowes Library or through local retail outlets.

Following the positive response to the first exhibition ten further exhibitions have been produced; the latest "Who do you think lived here?" has just ended. We have also mounted smaller displays to coincide with local events. Cowes Library allows us space where a small display is regularly updated. We are also happy to give illustrated talks to local groups.

Our website www.cowesheritage.co.uk is in the process of being upgraded; hopefully when this is complete many more of our archive of images can be shown.

Next year will be the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War, the impact of this terrible event will be featured Island wide. As yet Cowes Heritage are unsure just how our 2014 exhibition will reflect the impact of these events. Material & photographs are not that plentiful, however most families have ancestors who were affected by the conflict. We would welcome anything tucked away in a drawer or passed down memories that we can record & add to our ever growing database.

Anyone interested in the history of the area can contact us on 01983 298445 or 01983 299221 or visit our website.

NEWS FROM NORTHWOOD HOUSE

The Directors of Northwood House Charitable Trust Company Ltd are delighted to have the opportunity to keep you up to date on developments in Northwood House and Park.

As you may know, Northwood House and its Park were gifted to the then Cowes Urban District Council in 1929 by the Ward family, who had built, owned and lived there since 1797. The beautiful and historic House was intended as local government offices and the Park for the benefit of the local community. Over the years it was sadly neglected; by 2008 refurbishment costs were estimated at £3.5m and the annual running costs at £75,000 and it appears on the English Heritage 'at

risk' register. For the Isle of Wight Council it was becoming a major liability, so in 2010 they handed responsibility for the estate to the Trustees of the Charitable Trust.

Since then the work to repair, restore and maintain the estate has been enormous and the cost of doing so is very significant. A small team of volunteers and paid workers has spent countless hours on making good the dilapidation in the House caused by years of neglect. The Park is a major job in its own right, once again carried out by a tiny group of volunteers. The House has had to be turned into a business to raise the money to keep going and is now much in demand for events of all sorts. If you need a beautiful and unique venue for a special occasion, Northwood House can provide it!

The estate is now run by a Charitable Trust Company, a Company Limited by Guarantee with Directors and Members, and we hope that local people will help contribute to the future of this icon we are working so hard to preserve. If you would like to help us, by helping with practical tasks, becoming a Member or by bringing professional skills to the Company, please email us on administrator@northwoodhouse.org, contact us on 293642, or check out our website, www.northwoodhouse.org.

COWES HARBOUR LOOKS TO THE FUTURE

Cowes Harbour Commission (CHC) welcomes this new quarterly newsletter from Cowes Town Council and we look forward to keeping Cowes residents up-to-date with everything that's happening in and around our harbour.

As the statutory harbour authority for Cowes Harbour, CHC are intent on delivering a first class harbour for today and for the future, and the Commission continually seeks to facilitate investment in marine and harbour facilities for the benefit of harbour and river users and the long-term prosperity of the local community.

Our major harbour infrastructure project at the moment is the new detached breakwater, which has won financial backing from the government and for which we will be awarding the design and build contract this December. Construction of the breakwater is due to start early next year and once completed, will transform Cowes into a true sheltered harbour, helping Cowes fulfil its potential as a world-class yachting centre, and major tourist, transport and commercial gateway to the Island.

Looking ahead to 2014, CHC is working on revisions to the new Cowes Harbour General Directions that were introduced this April, closely assisted by our Advisory Committee which provides a valuable and wide cross section of opinion. Many organisations are represented, including Cowes Business Association, the Cowes Clubs and Classes, Cowes commercial shipping operators, and of course East Cowes and Cowes Town Councils.

Finally, we would like to encourage you to sign up for CHC's free monthly newsletters via our website: www.cowesharbourcommission.co.uk, and if you would like to get in touch with Cowes Harbour Master Capt. Stuart McIntosh, do please phone us on 01983 293952 or email chc@cowes.co.uk.

MEETINGS

Our next full council meetings are at 7pm, Thursday 5th December followed by Thursday 9th January 2014, both in the Parish Hall at St. Mary's Church. At these meetings there are open sessions for the public to present questions to the town councillors. All are most welcome to attend.

WEBSITE

Why not visit our website at www.cowestowncouncil.org.uk for updated news, minutes of meetings and an introduction to your town council.

Office – 7, Baring Chambers, 13, Denmark Road, Cowes PO31 7SY. tel. 209022

Opening hours generally Mon. – Fri 9.30 to 12.00 (except Bank Holidays).

POSSIBLE FUTURE INITIATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION
PLEASE SCORE THE FOLLOWING INITIATIVES BASED ON WHAT YOU CONSIDER
COWES TOWN COUNCIL SHOULD PRIORITIZE.

PLEASE SCORE 1 – 10 *1 INDICATING NOT FAVOURED AND 10 BEING OF GREAT PRIORITY*

1. **VICTORIAN SHELTER MIDWAY BETWEEN COWES AND GURNARD SEAFRONT SITED ON THE PROJECTING GROIN.** The shelter can be as those along Cowes Green.
2. **PROVISION OF FLAGPOLES ON COWES PARADE.** There would be 6 no. 24' high flagpoles sited on the seaward side of the stone piers and enhance The Parade as those in the Queen's Diamond Jubilee visit.
3. **REPAIR OF THE BENZIE CLOCK OVER THE HIGH STREET.** This prominent clock is in the ownership of Benzies and has not worked for many years but is a noted part of the character and image of our town.
4. **PROVISION OF DECORATIVE LIGHTING THROUGHOUT THE HIGH STREET.** This has been previously provided but latterly discarded due to repairs. The Town Council still maintains those on the lamp-standards on Cowes Parade
5. **REFURBISHMENT AND UPGRADE OF THE CUT TO BECOME A PEDESTRIAN AREA.** This was progressed over many years by the Town Council and funds set aside. The object being to continue the pedestrianization from the High Street into The Cut. The area would be paved with additional seating leaving a single loading bay outside of the toilets. The area would be used for leisure and could be used for street entertainment and market stalls.
6. **PROVISION OF A PAY TO VIEW TELESCOPE ON COWES PARADE.** The small projecting area overlooking the sea is about to have a display panel set on the wall depicting important historical maritime related events. The recess area could also accommodate a pay-to-view telescope which would bring in revenue.
7. **PROVISION OF INSET HERITAGE TABLETS TO THE PARADE'S PAVED PROMENADE.** The stone inscribed tablets would reference those important maritime visitors to Cowes.
8. **SUPPORT FOR NORTHWOOD HOUSE CHARITABLE TRUST IN THEIR REFURBISHMENT OF THE NUNNERY STEPS.** The steps, although recently refurbished, are in need of future major structural repair at a high cost.
9. **REFURBISHMENT OF THE BANDSTAND ON COWES PARADE.** The bandstand area has 'Village Green' status restricting works refurbishment to what has become a 'tired' area.
10. **PROVISION OF A BANDSTAND IN NORTHWOOD PARK.** This would be subject to agreement with the Northwood House Trust. This would allow entertainment for all to enjoy
11. **PROVISION OF AN OPEN SIDED SHELTER AT NORTHWOOD RECREATION GROUND.** The play/sport areas have limited shelter and seating.
12. **UPGRADING OF THE RECREATION GROUND TOILETS.** These are functional but can be greatly improved.
13. **MANAGING THE TOILET FACILITIES ABOUT TOWN.** Several local councils have taken on this control to ensure their cleanliness and upgrade.
14. **SUPPORT OF A NEW TOURISM INITIATIVE FOR COWES.** This is to engage a professional tourism advisor/agency to promote and invigorate Cowes both on and off the water.

15. **TAKE OVER THE MANAGEMENT OF CAR PARKS IN THE OWNERSHIP OF THE IWC.** This would allow local control over charges and parking periods to encourage tourism and shopping.
16. **FUNDING FOR A TOURIST INFORMATION OUTLET.** This is presently being looked at by other agencies but may need funding from outside sources.
17. **A RESIDENTS' HANDBOOK.** This would be a free issue to all households listing services, retail outlets, contacts for social groups, annual events, attractions etc.
18. **PATHWAY TO THE WAR MEMORIAL.** Subject to Northwood House Trust's approval a paved area laid to the war memorial and general clean in readiness for the centenary of WWI.
19. **ESTABLISHING A WEEKLY/MONTHLY OPEN MARKET.** This could take place on The Parade, The Cut and St Mary's Rd Car Park or Birmingham Rd, (subject to closures being agreed).
20. **SUPPORT FOR NEW YACHTING INITIATIVES.** Historically financial support has been limited to events where there is engagement of local yachtsmen. This could be broadened to bring more trade to the town from new events.
21. **COWES DEAUVILLE TWINNING 50th ANNIVERSARY 2014.** The Association has limited funds to commemorate this twinning. Funding could provide a meaningful event for the public.
22. **REMOVAL OF SHOOTERS HILL WISHING WELL & RE-SITING OF PILLAR CLOCK IN ITS PLACE.** This is an ongoing debate. The wishing well is seen by many as unnecessary and aged. The re-sited clock could allow it to be mains powered to give accurate times!
23. **NORTHWOOD RECREATION GROUND PATHWAY.** A path to be laid about the circumference of the park for all-weather use with interactive interest points for children along the route.
24. **OUTDOOR GYM.** This would be for all age groups and abilities and provides great enjoyment.
25. **PADDLING POOL.** This would be for the younger element and its siting would be critical.

THESE ARE BUT A FEW IDEAS WHICH COULD BE CONSIDERED FOR FUNDING. OTHER INITIATIVES ARE GREATLY WELCOMED AND WE WOULD BE PLEASED IF YOU COULD PROVIDE ANY OF YOUR OWN IDEAS AND SIMILARLY POINT. SUBMIT ON A SEPARATE SHEET IF NECESSARY.

THE FORM CAN BE RETURNED TO THE COUNCIL OFFICES WITH YOUR VIEWS TO:

COWES TOWN COUNCIL, Freepost RTGB-BRJJ-RHUA, Office 7, Baring Chambers, 13 Denmark Road, Cowes, Isle of Wight, PO31 7DY