



NEWSLETTER

Summer Edition 2015 from Councillor. David Jones – Cowes Town Mayor

Firstly I would like to thank the previous Mayor Councillor Geoff Banks for his two years in office. I was elected as Mayor on 21st May knowing I had an extremely hard act to follow. As his deputy I was constantly amazed by the amount of council business he fitted in to his busy schedule. Cowes owes him and his wife, Kay a huge vote of thanks not only for the last two years but also for his long service on Cowes Town Council

Just a brief introduction for those who do not know me. My wife and I have lived in Cowes for over 50 years. Our two daughters and most of our six grandchildren and 4 great grandchildren also live in Cowes. I have been a Councillor since November 2003 when I was elected in a bye election. Now retired, I was for many years manager of W Hurst & Son Ltd in Cowes High St, I have been Chairman of Cowes Business Association and briefly a Director of Cowes Yachting. My interests include gardening, reading and local heritage particularly researching the history of the area. I am treasurer of Cowes Heritage and secretary of the Friends of Northwood Cemetery and I am passionate about this town. We live in a great place and I feel that we can all contribute to making it even better.

ROYAL YACHT SQUADRON BICENTENARY.



HMS Northumberland; the new breakwater can be seen in front, 4th June 2015.

I was very fortunate to have the opportunity to represent the town during celebrations marking the bicentenary of the Royal Yacht Squadron. Commander Trish Kohn, captain of the RN guard ship HMS Northumberland, visited the Town Council office on 3rd June where I presented her with a town crest while she presented the town with an HMS Northumberland plaque. She also signed the visitor's book (photo).

As Mayor I represented Cowes during 2 visits to HMS Northumberland, firstly for lunch then on 4th June to the official event in the present of HRH Prince Phillip & other dignitaries.



After a Review of the Fleet by Prince Phillip the last official event was the service at Holy Trinity followed by the Beat the Retreat ceremony. The week culminated in a firework display. Naturally the event was a celebration organised by the RYS, however the town benefitted hugely, both from increased visitors and also world wide media coverage. Cowes Town Council paid for the cost of temporary toilets provided for spectators on the Parade.

The Royal Yacht Squadron is very much part of Cowes and I know if they had chosen to go elsewhere Cowes would be a very different and a far poorer place.

YOUR COUNCIL

The Town Council recently made some changes to our sub-committees, instead of seven we now have just three. They all meet in the Town Council Office in Northwood House. Six Councillors have been appointed to each sub-committee while the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are ex-officio members of them all. The committees are Planning and Licensing which meets as and when planning applications are posted, I chair this meeting which has delegated powers to make decisions without referral to the full committee. The Finance, Acquisitions and Staffing Committee is scheduled to meet next on 8th September under the Chairmanship of Cllr. Mark McNeill. The Project Committee, chaired by Cllr. John Nicholson meets next on the 15th September. Full details of dates and membership are listed in the information at the end of this Newsletter.



Members of the public can attend any of our meetings and ask a question. I have always thought it a shame that I see so few people sitting on the visitors' chairs. Please come along and see how your rates are spent by your council.

SKIP IN ST MARY'S RD CAR PARK.

Unfortunately the skip has now been removed. As mentioned in our spring edition of the Newsletter the use of the skip in St Mary's Car Park was being monitored over a trial period.



Despite putting a new sign in place indicating the type of rubbish that could be left and changing to a covered skip unauthorised and commercial waste continued to be dumped. Town Councillors at the May meeting decided it was inappropriate use of ratepayer's money to pay to remove rubbish the disposal of which was the responsibility of businesses and individuals. A case of a few spoiling it for the majority.

GRANTS.

One of the more enjoyable roles of the Town council is giving financial assistance to local groups. In the past 3 months your council has awarded the following grants:

Cowes Carnival £2,500

Cowes Firework Committee £3,000

Cowes Open Bowls Tournament £400

Isle of Wight Literary Festival – Youth Zone Marquee - £2,000

Isle of Wight Literary Festival – Lighting, stages, sound system & advertising - £6,300

Any non-commercial group can apply; a form is available to download from our website. For more information contact our friendly clerks (details below). The budget for grants has been increased as we give financial help to larger events.

At the July meeting it was agreed that the Town Clerk produces draft processes in which larger organisations, that make considerable contributions to the Town, are removed from the grant process, instead they will receive an annual payment. At present these organisations are Cowes Carnival, Cowes Fireworks and the Literary Festival.

GROUNDS MAINTENANCE.

This is something Cowes Town Council is willing to take responsibility for, being one of the discretionary services the Isle of Wight Council are asking Towns and Parishes to help finance. This year we have agreed to contribute £3,345.27 towards the cost of maintaining community areas. Your Council also accepted the Isle of Wight Council's revised budget for Northwood Recreation Ground, Mornington Woods and Arctic Park. We will monitor the effect of this significant reduction in the budget. Long term we are still seeking lease agreements which will give your local council control of local amenities. We anticipate that a maintenance contract that meets local needs will be more cost effective than the "one fits all" which the Unitary Authority have in place. We have taken responsibility for the Bandstand including the Commemorative plaques, which have recently been cleaned and serviced.

The Rose bed in Park Road has been removed from the Isle of Wight Council's maintenance programme consequently this year the roses are being smothered with weeds. Although Cowes Council have no governance over this area we liaised with Northwood House Charitable Trust (who strangely own a small slice of the circle, the rest is the property of the Isle of Wight Council) As a result, in exchange for a donation volunteers from the Trust took on the backbreaking task of



clearing the weeds. Unfortunately weeds have a habit of growing at a tremendous rate and the area quickly reverted to its unsightly state. Cowes Council has now agreed to appoint a contractor with the remit to clear the weeds, provide an appropriate weed suppressant and to tend to the roses. Requiring the use of public money certain procedures have to be followed which means a delay before remedial work can commence. Your council recognises the importance of keeping this highly visible area looking tidy and attractive, we will appoint a contractor as soon as possible and long term we have plans to make this a focal point in the town.

VANDALISM IN NORTHWOOD REC.

It is very disappointing to have to report that a few vandals completely destroyed the shelter provided for those people, mostly young, who enjoy using the Skate Park and Multi Use Games Area. This facility was provided by Cowes Town Council and paid for from the precept. At the July meeting it was agreed at this time not to replace the shelter. We will however continue to seek the opinions of the users of the area and should we, in the future replace this facility it is likely to be in a different position and a more user friendly design.



FLORAL COWES

A small band of volunteers have planted summer bedding plants in the concrete troughs and planters placed around the town. The hanging baskets on the Cowes signs and Parade lamp standards were supplied by Forest View Nursery. Library staff water the 6 troughs in front of the Library while Cowes Town Council pay a contractor to feed and water the rest. Last year we ensured that the large planters placed on the Parade for Cowes Week remained in situ until the end of the season. We have asked for a similar arrangement this year.



KEEPING A POST OFFICE IN THE TOWN.

We have been approached by several concerned residents worried that Cowes will lose its Post Office, while we cannot wave a magic wand both as a group and individually we are trying to stop this happening. A group of councillors met the Post Office's area manager for most of Southern England and the local negotiator, who explained the problems they face. We are in regular contact asking that they explore every possible site both for the temporary portacabin and a permanent local Post Office.

COWES LIBRARY.

Once again this service is faced with a significant budget reduction. Staff reduction and increased reliance on volunteers are proposed while Cowes Town Council are being asked to take on the cost of heating and lighting, cleaning, security and the maintenance of the building. A small group of Councillors and representatives of the Supporters of Cowes Library will meet to formulate a response.

In the meantime a consultation document is available on line or in the Library; I would urge those who value our library to complete this before the 6th September closing date.



THE CUT

Plans to upgrade this rather tired area is on-going. Local Architect Martin Hayles has been asked to provide plans in line with a simpler design and to submit a planning application. It has been a long time in the pipeline but it is now a case of “watch this space”.

SEAFRONT SHELTER.

Again this initiative is progressing, planning permission has been granted and the architect has been appointed for the next stage of the project. When complete this will be a welcome rest and shelter halfway between Cowes and Gurnard.

COUNCILLOR VACANCY; URGENT APPEAL.

Despite advertising and posting details on our noticeboard there was no response to the invitation to fill a vacancy on Cowes council. This is disappointing as this is an opportunity for anyone who has an interest in their local community to become involved. The role of a town councillor is changing as more and more services are being devolved by the Isle of Wight council. We have decided to re-advertise this vacancy and I would like to use this Newsletter to appeal to those who have a few hours to spare and who want to play a part in the future of your town to contact the town clerk for details on how to apply.

LITTER.

Letters of concern were sent to the Mayor from children of Cowes Primary School asking for help regarding litter being discarded in woodland owned by the school and on the footpath linking Blackberry Lane and the Crossfield Estate. Before the end of the school term Councillor Paul Fuller and Assistant Town Clerk, Sue Waters visited Year 1 children, who raised questions, suggestions and concerns about the litter and the impact this was having.

Last year, Cowes Town Council funded a new bin at the bottom of Blackberry Lane, but despite this there is still a problem. After listening to the children, the following action points will be considered by Cowes Town Council. These are:

- 1) To work alongside Cowes Enterprise College on suggestions and opportunities to help reduce litter.
- 2) Request the installation of a small litter bin at the top of Blackberry Lane by the school entrance.
- 3) Conduct a joint Litter Pick with the school, parents and Town Councillors for September.
- 4) Have a competition for the best poster which can be made into sticky signs and permanent metal signs which the Town Council funds.
- 5) Signage to be placed on both school fences – along the perimeter and the Woodland area.

KUMON

On the hottest day of the year I had the pleasure of presenting certificates and medals at Cowes Branch at St Andrew’s hall. It was a most enjoyable experience. I was very impressed with the children all ages and abilities working at their own pace to supplement the school curriculum.

The programme helps students develop better study skills especially numeracy and literacy skills. All students are treated as individuals, improving their skills and mastering topics at their own rate



The Friends of Northwood Cemetery win Lottery funding

After over 7 years of building up the case, and 18 months of dialogue with the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), it was announced last month that the Friends of Northwood Cemetery (in partnership with the Isle of Wight Council, the land owners) would be granted **£1,685,100** to lead restoration work in the Cemetery.



Last year the partnership received an initial grant of £75,300 to undertake the professional work (architects, structural engineers, surveyors, landscape consultants, etc) to detail precisely what needed to be done to save the West Chapel (ie: that closest to the Cowes Medical Centre and on the right below) from collapse and potential demolition – with an estimated cost of reparation around £1.0m.

Amongst other items included in that sum was the cost of developing a woodland burial site at the far (south) end of the Cemetery, re-pointing the front wall, providing a DDA compliant toilet and kitchen facilities - and creating a heritage trail. A range of heritage and educational programmes are also in the plan.

However the extremes of the last two winters opened up cracks in the East Chapel which, only 18 months ago, was not thought to be in need of a similar underpinning scheme. After the professional work had been completed the partnership, rather than confirming the estimate of £1.0m, was faced with going back to the HLF with what was effectively a new application - over 60% higher than the HLF was expecting!

The professional work was done within timescale and well under budget and this clearly impressed the HLF who, without precedent, 'found' another £600,000 to set aside for Northwood Cemetery.

During the remainder of 2015 the procurement of contractors will take place with on-site work not expected to begin until next spring. If all goes according to plan, the building phase will complete in the summer of 2017.

Understandably the HLF demands that the Friends of Northwood Cemetery has to make a contribution (known as 'match funding') and so fund raising is now a major focal point. As well as match funding in cash, the HLF allows volunteer hours to be counted - so light work in the Cemetery is a valuable income stream.

In addition there are admin roles that can be undertaken by volunteers – such as web site maintenance, membership secretary, publicity, research and organising fund raising events.



Please contact Cowes Town Council on 01983 209022 if you have a few hours to devote to this exciting project – and contribute to your local community.

Jon Matthews
Chairman (Friends of Northwood Cemetery)

THE FRIENDS OF THE ORP BŁYSKAWICA SOCIETY



BRIEF HISTORY OF *ORP Grom* and THE EXHIBITION AT COWES LIBRARY

The Polish destroyer *ORP Grom* was ordered for construction along with her sister ship, *ORP Blyskawica*, from the Cowes shipyards of [J. Samuel White & Co Ltd](#) in East Cowes. *Grom* was laid down in 1935 and commissioned in 1937. These *Grom*-class destroyers had a top speed of 39 knots (45 mph), and their effective range was 3,500 nautical miles (4,000 land miles) at 15 knots (17 mph).

On 30 August 1939, the Polish destroyers *Burza*, *Blyskawica* and *Grom* were ordered to activate the [Peking Plan](#), whereby these Polish warships headed for Great Britain to operate as convoy escorts under the Royal Navy.

On 21st April 1940, *Grom* and *Blyskawica* entered Vest Fjord, Narvik for their operations in the [Norwegian Campaign](#). *Grom* was ranked by the German soldiers as probably the most hated of all the allied ships deployed to the area due to her gunnery accuracy and hours spent lurking the coast in order to find a kill. The German gun batteries were a constant target.

On 4 May 1940, *Grom* carried out support missions in Rombaken Fjord, [Narvik](#). She was attacked, following two weeks of action, by a [Heinkel He 111](#) bomber whereby her loaded midship torpedo launcher was struck by a bomb which exploded causing the hull to break in two whereupon she sank almost immediately with the loss of 59 men. There were 154 survivors, including Kmdr. Hulewicz, who had been in command of the *Grom* since 4th March 1938. Some of those survivors were to later serve on *Blyskawica* finding themselves in Cowes exactly two years later, to the day, in defence of our two towns; the home of their birth.

The wreck of *Grom* remains a war grave and the people of Narvik paid homage to the ship and her crew on the 28th May when Major Otton Hulacki, Co- Vice President of the Island based *Friends of the ORP Blyskawica Society*, made a visit along with Polish Naval personnel.

The *ORP Blyskawica Society* commemorated *Grom's* loss at a ceremony on Cowes Parade on 4th May, exactly 75 years to the day since her sinking and exactly 73 years since *Blyskawica's* defence of Cowes.

A **PHOTOGRAPHIC EXHIBITION**, presently at Cowes Library and provided by the Polish Naval Museum in Gdynia, brilliantly displays *Grom's* history in 21 large captioned photographs. A visit is highly recommended.

Cllr. Geoff Banks, Society Chairman.



COWES CARNIVAL.



This year the volunteers, that every year build a new float from scratch, have surpassed

themselves; it is absolutely brilliant. Fantastic design and beautifully built.

The main carnival is on Thursday 6 August at 7pm & the Illuminated carnival Saturday 22 August starting at 9pm.

This year the parade starts in Crossfield Avenue then going through Parklands Avenue, Park Rd, Victoria Road. Mill Hill Road., Birmingham Road, Shooters Hill, High St, Bath Road and finishing on the Parade.

If anybody wants to get in to costume and join in please ring 283308.

TOWN COUNCILLORS ELECTED TO COWES TOWN COUNCIL and COMMITTEES

Cowes Town Council, under its *Quality Town Council* status, has to publish details quarterly of current councillors; these are as set out below:

David Jones (Town Mayor)	Cowes Medina	298445
Mark McNeill (Deputy Town Mayor)	Cowes North	0779 0777101
Geoff Banks	Cowes West	295425
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
Lynn Hammond	Cowes Medina	282308
John Nicholson*	Cowes South	619130
Joe Oliver	Cowes North	291877
Lora Peacey-Wilcox*	Cowes Medina	247177
Bob Robinson	Cowes West	294234
Jacqui Spalding	Cowes South	291877
Wendy Wardrop	Cowes North	298687

* Also Isle of Wight Councillors

Sub-committee members:

Planning and Licensing: Cllrs Banks, Brown, Cowan, Nicholson, Oliver and Wardrop.

Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing: Cllrs Banks, Brown, Corby, Ellis and Hammond.

Projects: Cllrs Banks, Brown, Corby, Nicholson and Spalding.

The Mayor and Deputy Mayor are members of all sub-committees.

Details of when these committees meet are on the Town Council website and are posted on the noticeboard at least a week prior to the meeting.

CONTACTING YOUR WARD TOWN COUNCILLOR

Any written communications to councillors to be sent via the Cowes Town Council offices and any email communications to councillors to be copy emailed to Cowes Town Council offices please for record purposes.

Email addresses of councillors can be found on the Town Council website, www.cowestowncouncil.org.uk.

MEETINGS

Our next full council meeting is at 7pm on Thursday 3rd September Meetings are in the Drawing Room at Northwood House. All are most welcome to attend.

The Notice of these Meetings and Agendas are posted on the notice board outside of W H Hurst and can be viewed in the Cowes Public Library and are available on the Council's website as given below.

**Office & Communications –Ms Debbie Faulkner, Town Clerk Cowes Town Council,
Northwood House, Ward Avenue, Cowes PO31 8AZ.
Tel. 209022, email town.clerk@cowestowncouncil.org.uk.**

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

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

