

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Cowes Town Council held in the Library, Northwood House, Cowes on Thursday 14 December 2017 at 7pm.

Present: Councillor Fuller (Town Mayor) (Chairman)
Councillors Adams, J. Bartrum, R. Bartrum, Brown, Glendinning, Hammond, Nicholson (7.02pm), Oliver, Peacey-Wilcox & Taylor.

In attendance: Councillor Dave Stewart, Leader of the IW Council; John Metcalfe, Chief Executive, Isle of Wight Council; Sharon Betts & Ian Lloyd, Isle of Wight Council; Kate Gibbs, Assistant Town Clerk; 13 members of the public.

UPDATE ON THE FLOATING BRIDGE FROM THE LEADER OF THE IW COUNCIL

The Leader of the IW Council attended the meeting to provide an update on the floating bridge. The update would be split into three parts: the review of what had happened, restoring the service and the legal position.

There were three stages of the process:

Stage 1 – Compile Review Team – officers present plus Councillor Kilpatrick formed team in September 2017.

Stage 2 – Interviews of all the key individuals, done between October and December, which has been completed.

Stage 3 – The review of the information and documentation, discuss the findings and prepare the report. It is on time for January's Scrutiny Committee meeting.

The review team identified those they wanted to interview, including people involved in the procurement transactions, through to the building and the getting the vessel to the Island and into service. Over 250 documents have been gathered and read and will form part of the review report. The review covers the acquisition of FB6 from the preparation of the bid through to when the vessel arrived, going into service, and then going out of service.

Recommendations will be presented to the Cabinet Member and Scrutiny Committee on 9 January 2018.

Restore position – The Floating Bridge returned to service on 11 December 2017 for a trial period. There has been an electrical fault today (14 December) with the prow at one end, which was fixed today. There was then a fault at the other end which will be fixed tomorrow (15 December).

As a gesture of goodwill there will be a free passenger service for residents/users for the Christmas week. Red Funnel have particular ferries running for the Christmas period and the IW Council have engaged with them to try and link in services.

A strategic review of the trial period will be undertaken in January 2018 to see where we go from here, which will primarily focus on the vessel.

Further improvements are required, and testing will be carried out on 20/21 December 2017 and 29/30 January 2018 on the chains as tides are comparable to those in February 2011 and August 2017. Officers have met with Cowes Harbour Commission to discuss clearance, and a further meeting will be held in December 2017. Marine engineers will look at the chain depth and the IW Council are currently awaiting their assessment. The noise level has improved substantially and all issues on the initial defectors snagging list have been resolved. The IW Council have still not formally accepted the vessel and won't before the review report is discussed at Scrutiny Committee on 9 January 2018.

Legal action is being considered by the IW Council, but hasn't been decided.

Questions were then asked by Town Councillors and members of the public.

The Leader listened and responded to all questions and advised that most questions will be answered by the report. He reiterated that providing a floating bridge is not a statutory requirement, and that the IW Council have to do what is best for the community of East and West Cowes, as well as fulfilling their wider responsibilities.

The Mayor advised that a small working party was being set up to discuss the report and obtain the views of Cowes Town Council and East Cowes Town Council. Comments will be passed through the IWALC rep for the Scrutiny Committee. The Mayor asked for 3 Cowes Town Council representatives to attend a Floating Bridge Scrutiny Working Party at East Cowes Town Council on Wednesday, 3 January 2018 at 6.30pm. Councillors Adams, J. Bartrum and Oliver volunteered.

The Scrutiny Committee will then make recommendations to Cabinet who will look at taking this matter forward.

Councillor Dave Stewart, Leader of the IW Council; John Metcalfe, Chief Executive, Isle of Wight Council; Sharon Betts & Ian Lloyd, IW Council; and 13 members of the public left the meeting at 7.57pm.

7602 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Jones, Slade and Wardrop.

7603 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- a) Councillor Oliver declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No. 7616 in relation to the IW Literary Festival Youth Zone Report.
Councillor Glendinning declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No. 7608k as Cowes Town Council's Deputy Representative on The Big Lunch.
- b) Written requests for dispensation were received, and granted, from Councillors Adams, J. Bartrum, R. Bartrum, Brown, Glendinning, Hammond, Oliver and Taylor in respect of the draft budget and precept setting for 2018/2019. Minute No. 7608a1. refers.

7604 REPORT FROM THE SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER

PC Adam Dollery was unable to attend the meeting and no written report had been provided.

7605 MINUTES RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 2 November 2017 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

7606 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present for this item therefore no questions were raised.

7607 REPORTS FROM ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLORS

Written reports focussing on local matters were received from Councillors Bertie, Fuller, Nicholson & Peacey-Wilcox and had been circulated to all Town Councillors. Councillor Bertie was absent from the meeting. Reference was made to Destination Cowes and that Councillors Adams and Bertie are on the Destination Cowes Steering Group that is discussing the Yachting Parade of Fame initiative.

Councillors Bertie's and Fuller's reports included an update on progress in relation to siting a Post Office in the town. An application has been made by the new Central Convenience Store, with an inspection of the premises by the Post Office scheduled for January 2018. Overflowing dog bins is an issue that has been raised with Island Roads, who have agreed to increase the winter emptying frequency in line with summer emptying. The removal of access to the public at Trinity Landing was raised. There is a locked gate which is prohibiting access to the public. Access is gained by contacting the Royal London Yacht Club, however, the current signage does not state this. It was agreed:

ACTION

1. That an item is put on the next Planning and Licensing Committee to make enquiries regarding the planning permission granted to the Royal London Yacht Club for the use of Trinity Landing to access their pontoon to include looking into the signage at the gated archway.
2. That an update will be provided at a future Town Council meeting.

7608 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

a) Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee

The Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 14 November 2017 were received and noted.

The increase in precept is needed to address a significant shortfall in costs of works associated with the refurbishment and upgrading of four public toilet sites and to increase the staff resource to 1.5 Full Time Equivalent. The increase equates to 25p per week on a Band D property. A named vote was requested by Councillor Hammond, the results of which were:

For: Councillors Adams, J. Bartrum, R. Bartrum, Brown, Fuller, Glendinning, Oliver, Peacey-Wilcox and Taylor.

Against: Councillor Hammond.

Abstentions: Councillor Nicholson.

It was:

RESOLVED

1. That Cowes Town Council approves the draft budget (v3) for 2018/2019 which will require the precept, including grant, to be **£299,800.**

| COWES TOWN COUNCIL APPROVED BUDGET 2018-2019 | | | See notes below |
|--|-------------|--|-----------------|
| EXPENDITURE | 2018 - 2019 | | |
| GENERAL ADMINISTRATION | | | |
| Town Clerks' salaries/NIC/ Tax / Pension | £46,000 | | 1 |
| Office Rent | £8,100 | | |
| Office Cleaner & Sundry Expenses | £1,000 | | |
| Stationery & Office Supplies/Software | £500 | | |
| Office Equipment / Photocopier | £1,000 | | |
| Telephone/Broadband / Website | £1,500 | | |
| Postage | £300 | | |
| Travelling | £200 | | |
| Conference fees | £500 | | |
| Training | £500 | | |
| Hire of Meeting Rooms | £300 | | |
| Subscriptions | £1,500 | | |
| Insurance | £2,500 | | |
| Audit and Accountancy | £1,600 | | |

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|--|---------|-----------------|---|
| Mayor's Allowance | £2,000 | | |
| Newsletter / Publicity | £4,000 | | |
| Elections / Admin Contingency | £2,500 | | |
| Sub Total | | £74,000 | |
| DISCRETIONARY SERVICES | | | |
| Northwood Rec Grounds Maintenance | £7,400 | | |
| Northwood Rec - Skate Park /MUGA / Outdoor Gym Maintenance | £6,000 | | |
| Northwood Rec Toilets - Cleaning, electricity + other costs | £10,200 | | |
| Northwood Park Grounds Maintenance | £10,000 | | |
| Northwood Park Toilets - Cleaning Only | £4,200 | | |
| Northwood Park + Cowes area - Dog + Litter bins | £5,500 | | |
| Other grounds maintenance in Cowes | £5,000 | | |
| 4 Public Toilets - Cleaning + other costs | £49,000 | | |
| Cowes Library Proposed contribution | £22,400 | | |
| Cowes In Bloom | £4,000 | | |
| Environment Officer | £2,600 | | |
| Discretionary Services Contingency | £12,000 | | |
| Sub Total | | £138,300 | |
| TOWN IMPROVEMENTS / GRANTS / SPECIAL EVENTS | | | |
| Street furniture maintenance | £2,000 | | |
| Civic-Xmas trees/Festive lights/Bunting | £16,000 | | |
| New Projects | £4,000 | | |
| Grants, Events & Good Causes | £24,000 | | |
| Remembrance Sunday & Charity Donations | £1,500 | | |
| Public Toilet refurbishment | £40,000 | | 2 |
| Sub Total | | £87,500 | |
| TOTAL EXPENDITURE | | £299,800 | 3 |
| Significant Variances | | | |
| 1. Proposal to increase staff resource to 1.5 Full Time Equivalent which equates to 1/6 of the precept. | | | |
| 2. To address significant shortfall in costs of works associated with the refurbishment and upgrading of four public toilet sites. | | | |
| 3. The increase in the precept will equate to a 25p increase per week for a Band D Property. | | | |

2. That funds ear marked for the 'Outdoor Gym Equipment' (Min. No 6875f) be re-allocated to the 'Northwood Rec – Skate Park / MUGA / Outdoor Gym Maintenance' budget heading and any surplus from the 2017 / 2018 budget heading 'Northwood Rec – Skate Park / MUGA Maintenance' be ear marked and added to this fund.
3. That Cowes Town Council pays the additional sum of £475 to Martin Hayles with the costs being met from the funds set aside for The Cut project.
4. That Cowes Town Council approves the repairs to the Skate Park in the sum of £1,400 with the costs being met from the Northwood Rec - Skate Park / MUGA maintenance budget heading.
5. That Cowes Town Council appoints the Town Clerk as the Data Protection Officer.
6. That the Assistant Town Clerk, Kate Gibbs, is given a full time contract (37 hours per week) as from 1 February 2018.
7. That the accrued hours of 43.25 are paid to the Assistant Town Clerk in a one off payment of £452.70

- 8. That any additional hours accrued by the Assistant Town Clerk between 14 November 2017 and 31 January 2018, are paid in arrears on a monthly basis.**

Councillor Hammond left the meeting at 8.40pm.

- b) Projects Committee
The Minutes of the Projects Committee meeting held on 21 November 2017 were received and noted. It was:
RESOLVED
- 1. That Cowes Town Council approves the cost of £238.00 plus VAT for a portrait table top panel display stand, with the cost being met from the 'New Projects' budget heading.**
 - 2. That Cowes Town Council approves the cost of £170 to repaint the railings around the War Memorial in Northwood Park, with the cost being met from the 'New Projects' budget heading.**
- c) Planning & Licensing Committee
The Minutes of the Planning & Licensing Committee meetings held on 15 November 2017 and 6 December 2017 were received and noted.
- d) Cowes Business Association
The Minutes of the Cowes Business Association meeting held on 13 November 2017 were received and noted.
- e) Supporters of Cowes Library
The Minutes of the Supporters of Cowes Library meetings held on 2 October 2017 and 13 November 2017 were received and noted.
- f) IWALC Executive Committee
The Minutes of the IWALC Executive Committee meeting held on 16 November 2017 were received and noted.
- g) Northwood Park Sub Committee
The Reports of the Northwood Park Sub Committee meetings held on 30 October 2017 and 20 November 2017 were received and noted.
- h) IW Town & Parish Councils Seminar
The Notes of the IW Town & Parish Councils Seminar meeting held on 20 November 2017 were received and noted.
- i) IWALC Planning Training
The Notes of the IWALC Planning Training session held on 27 November 2017 were received and noted. Those who attended felt it was a very informative evening.
- j) Age Friendly Champion Meeting
The Report of the Age Friendly Champion meeting held on 27 November 2017 was received and noted.

k) The Big Lunch

The Notes of The Big Lunch meetings held on 17 November 2017 and 1 December 2017 were received and noted. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council provides financial support to The Big Lunch 2018 event to a maximum of £2,000, ring-fenced from the 2017/2018 budget.

7609 MEMBER REVIEW OF FINANCIAL RECORDS QUARTER 2 – 2017

Councillor Glendinning, as Cowes Town Council's Member Auditor, undertook a review of the Town Council's financial records on 15 November 2017. The quarterly review covered the period 1 July 2017 – 30 September 2017. The purpose of the review was to take a random sample of financial transactions during the period and review for accuracy and compliance with financial regulations. Documents reviewed included the Cash book (manual ledger & Excel spreadsheet); Invoices; Bank records: paying-in book, cheque stubs, bank statements & bank reconciliations; Petty cash records; Reporting & approval by members: agenda/minutes - list of cheque & petty cash payments; Annual Return to 31 March 2017 (external audit); Asset Register. The review showed from the sample taken during the period that the standard of book-keeping is very good. No recommendations were made.

7610 REPORT FROM COWES LIBRARY

The report from Cowes Library was noted. It was agreed:

ACTION

Councillor Brown will provide an article and accompanying photograph on the good work that the supporters of Cowes Library do, for inclusion in the next Town Council newsletter.

7611 DRAFT AGE FRIENDLY COMMUNITIES REPORT

The draft Age Friendly Communities Report was approved, subject to any further comments received from Councillors. Councillor R. Bartrum thanked the Town Clerk for her assistance with the draft. Age Friendly Island could be approached regarding free transport for elderly residents to The Big Lunch. It was:

RESOLVED

That the draft Age Friendly Communities Report be received and approved, subject to any further comments being passed through the Clerks to Councillor R. Bartrum by 1 January 2018.

ACTION

1. Councillor Peacey-Wilcox will provide contact details regarding the Rotary Club to enquire about providing transport for elderly residents to attend The Big Lunch.
2. Councillor R. Bartrum will liaise with Age Friendly Island regarding transportation of elderly residents to The Big Lunch 2018.

7612 CHEQUE PAYMENTS AND PETTY CASH PAYMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2017

The Town Clerk had presented Councillors with details of cheque payments and petty cash payments for the month of November 2017. Cheque payments totalled £23,409.81; petty cash payments totalled £36.38. It was:

RESOLVED

That the cheque payments of £23,409.81 and petty cash payments of £36.38 be received, noted and approved.

7613 APPOINTMENT TO THE SUPPORTERS OF COWES LIBRARY

Following the resignation of Councillor J. Bartrum on the Supporters of Cowes Library it was:

RESOLVED

That Councillor Glendinning be appointed to serve on the Supporters of Cowes Library until the Annual Town Council meeting in 2018.

7614 RESPONSE FROM THE IW COUNCIL IN REGARD TO THE FLOATING BRIDGE (MINUTE NOS. 7563.2 AND 7598 REFERS)

At the Town Council meeting on 5 October 2017 the Town Clerk was actioned to write to the IW Council to request that improvements are made to enable disabled access for residents to cross the River Medina. At the Town Council meeting on 2 November 2017 the Town Clerk was actioned to request a full response from IW Council officer Alex Minns. He responded on 9 November 2017 stating that the procurement of the launch was by open tender, with only one tender being received. The IW Council's intention was that the launch would only be used for short periods of time when the floating bridge wasn't working. The launch meets the Maritime and Coastguard Agency's ship design and building regulations. While the launch can accommodate many disabled users, it is unable to accommodate mobility scooters. The launch has been in place longer than anticipated and the IW Council are investigating any impact as part of an equality impact assessment. Councillors expressed their concerns regarding the continuing lack of provision for disabled access across the River, and the poor shelter afforded to those travelling on the launch. They felt that LED signage should be installed to make it clear to road users when the Floating Bridge is not in service. It was agreed:

ACTION

1. The Town Clerk will write to IW Council to request that an LED sign is provided that can be switched on when the floating bridge is not in service.
2. The Town Clerk will write to IW Council Officer, Alex Minns, to request that a suitable launch is provided when the floating bridge is not in service, which provides for disabled access and shelter for pedestrians.

7615 RESPONSE FROM MR BOB SEELY MP IN REGARD TO THE FLOATING BRIDGE (MINUTE NOS. 7563.1 AND 7597 REFERS)

At the Town Council meeting on 5 October 2017 the Town Clerk was actioned to write to Mr Bob Seely MP asking him to investigate whether businesses in West and East Cowes can claim business rate relief due to the business disruption caused by the lengthy lack of service of the Floating Bridge. At the Town Council meeting on 2 November 2017 the Town Clerk was actioned to request a response from Mr Bob Seely MP. He responded on 20 November, which included a response he had received from the IW Council which gave details of the IW Council's Discretionary Rate Relief Policy. It was agreed:

ACTION

That if no response from John Metcalfe has been received within a fortnight regarding business rate relief for businesses in West and East Cowes, due to the business disruption caused by the lengthy lack of service of the Floating Bridge, that he be requested to respond.

7616 IW LITERARY FESTIVAL YOUTH ZONE REPORT

A written report in relation to the £5,000 grant to the Isle of Wight Literary Festival Youth programme had been circulated to Town Councillors. The grant had been used towards the costs of the Hidden Heroes project; events at Cowes Library and for the hire and set up costs of 2 yurts and décor for the Youth Zone over the Literary Festival weekend. It was:

RESOLVED

That the IW Literary Festival Youth Zone Report is received and noted.

7617 POLICY FOR THE ERECTION OF PUBLIC USE BENCHES/SEATS

A review of the policy for the erection of public use benches/seats was carried out and no amendments were required. It was:

RESOLVED

That the Town Council approves the Policy for the erection of public use benches/seats.

7618 UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT OFFICER

A spreadsheet outlining the recent activities of the Environment Officer in Cowes were circulated to all Town Councillors. Issues raised included fly tipping at St Mary's Road Car Park, and maintenance issues in the public toilets. Councillors raised concerns at the increase in the amount of dog fouling in the town. The Enforcement Officer is able to take enforcement action against those who allow their dogs to foul. It was agreed:

ACTION

1. The spreadsheet will be expanded to include items raised by the Town Council with the Environment Officer.
2. The Environment Officer's contact details be circulated to Councillors, with a request that the Clerks are copied in to any emails to the Environment Officer or Island Roads.
3. The Environment Officer be invited to attend a future meeting of the Town Council.

7619 MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Details of miscellaneous publications and correspondence were circulated to all Town Councillors.

7620 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

No items were raised for inclusion on future agendas.

The proceedings terminated at 9.15pm.

CHAIRMAN