

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Cowes Town Council held virtually by Zoom on Thursday 10 December 2020 at 7pm.

Present: Councillor Peacey Wilcox (Town Mayor) (Chairman)
Councillors Adams, Brown, Bustin, Ellis, Fuller, Gilpin, Hammond (7.03pm), Jones, Nicholson (7.04pm), Rafferty, Reynolds (7.16pm), Taylor and Wardrop (7.02pm).

In attendance: Debbie Faulkner, Town Clerk; Kate Gibbs, Assistant Town Clerk; two members of the public.

8195 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bertie and Oliver.

8196 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a) No verbal declarations of interest were received at the meeting.
b) Written requests for dispensation were received, and granted, from Councillors Adams, Brown, Ellis, Gilpin, Hammond, Jones, Rafferty, Taylor and Wardrop in respect of the draft budget and precept setting for 2021 / 2022. Min. No. 8201a1 refers.

8197 REPORT FROM THE LOCAL SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER

The Local Safer Neighbourhood Officer provided a written report which had been circulated to all Town Councillors. The crime statistics for November 2020 showed 1 criminal damage; 3 public order; 3 drug offences; 14 assaults; 3 burglaries; 4 shoplifting offences; 3 theft; 3 malicious communications; 2 threats to life; 1 arson; 1 offensive weapon. The current police priorities are: Op Sceptre – nationwide knife crime initiative; Domestic violence – signposting / referring to partner agencies; Drugs – gathering intelligence and taking appropriate action.

8198 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Town Council meeting held on 26 November 2020 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes.

8199 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No questions were raised by the members of the public present at the meeting.

8200 REPORTS FROM ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLORS

Written reports focussing on local matters were received from Councillors Fuller, Nicholson and Peacey Wilcox.

Councillor Peacey Wilcox was available for questions but none were raised.

Councillor Fuller added that there is a possible development being considered in Gurnard between Cockleton Lane and Place Road the same size as Meadow View. Even though Gurnard has a Neighbourhood Plan that should restrict this building, because the Island Plan is out of date this could give a developer free rein to develop the site which would have an impact on Cowes.

Councillor Nicholson added that he had attended a recent IW Council Health Scrutiny Committee meeting whereby concerns about Cowes Medical Centre had been raised. Councillor Nicholson has asked that Councillors advise him of any feedback, whether it be good or bad.

At Northwood Parish Council's recent Planning meeting Councillors discussed whether the Local Planning Authority (LPA) was acting in the best interests of their residents. This resulted in a vote of no confidence in the LPA and the Leader of the IW Council has been advised. Councillor Nicholson asked whether Cowes Town Council can lend their support to Northwood Parish Council. It was agreed:

ACTION

Councillor Jones, as Chairman of Cowes Town Council's Planning Committee, will review the Minutes of Northwood Parish Council's Planning meeting and draft a letter of support from Cowes Town Council.

8201 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

a) Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee

The Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 17 November 2020 were received and noted.

It was:

RESOLVED

1. That Cowes Town Council approves the budget for 2021 / 2022, as below, which will require the precept, including grant, to be £314,340.

<u>EXPENDITURE</u>	2021-2022
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION	
Town Clerks' salaries / NIC/ Tax / Pension	£53,440
Office Rent	£8,700
Sundry Office Expenses	£350
Stationery & Office Supplies/Software	£350
Office Equipment / Photocopier	£1,000
Telephone/Broadband / Website	£1,500
Postage	£300
Conference fees & Travelling	£500
Training	£500
Hire of Meeting Rooms and / or Zoom	£200
Subscriptions	£2,100
Insurance	£2,300
Audit and Accountancy	£2,000
Mayor's Allowance	£2,000
Newsletter / Publicity	£4,000
Elections / Admin Contingency	£2,500
Civic Regalia	£500
Sub Total	£82,240
DISCRETIONARY SERVICES	
Northwood Rec Grounds Maintenance	£7,500
Northwood Rec - Skate Park /MUGA / Outdoor Gym Maintenance	£6,000
Northwood Rec Toilets - Cleaning, electricity + other costs	£14,600

Northwood Park Grounds Maintenance	£10,200
Northwood Park Toilets - Cleaning Only	£3,400
Dog + Litter bin emptying	£5,600
Other grounds maintenance in Cowes	£6,500
4 Public Toilets - Cleaning + other costs	£48,100
Cowes Library	£22,400
Cowes In Bloom	£8,000
Environment Officer	£2,600
Warmer Cowes	£2,700
Park Road Crossing Patrol	£5,000
Discretionary Services Contingency	£8,000
Sub Total	£150,600
TOWN IMPROVEMENTS / GRANTS / SPECIAL EVENTS	
Street furniture maintenance	£2,500
Civic-Xmas trees/Festive lights/Bunting	£17,000
New Projects	£4,000
Grants	£20,000
Remembrance Sunday & Charity Donations	£1,500
Public Toilet refurbishment	£36,500
Sub Total	£81,500
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£314,340

2. That Cowes Town Council extends the Lease for the Town Council Office and Storeroom at Northwood House with Northwood House Charitable Trust Co. Ltd for three years starting 26 November 2020; the fixed rental fees from 1 April 2021 being £719.03 per month.

3. That a grant be made to the Isle of Wight Music, Dance & Drama Festival in the sum of £50.

Councillor Reynolds joined the meeting.

- b) Community Action IW
The Notes of the Informal Meeting with Community Action IW held on 12 November 2020 were received and noted.
- c) IWALC AGM
The draft Minutes of the IWALC AGM held on 29 October 2020 were received and noted.
- d) IWALC Executive
The draft Minutes of the IWALC Executive meeting held on 26 November 2020 were received and noted.
- e) Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee
The Minutes of the Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee meeting held on 13 November 2020 were received and noted.

- f) IW Council Parish and Town Council Briefing
The Minutes and slides of the IW Council Parish and Town Council Briefing held on 30 November 2020 were received and noted.

8202 SPEEDWATCH COWES

Speedwatch in Cowes was last operative 2.5 years ago and would meet in locations around Cowes that were subject to speeding and / or accidents. The team consisted of a PCSO and Town Councillors. The PCSO used to bring the kit to the chosen location. The kit consisted of a large and heavy battery-operated speed detection and display unit, yellow jackets, a vehicle clicker for detecting the number of cars which passed the display board and the forms to use for recording registrations, make of car and colour of those who were detected as speeding. This was then co-ordinated at the police station in Newport.

The team decided at that time to fundraise for a smaller manageable kit and former Town Councillor Roger Bartrum opened a bank account for that to happen. As it was a commercial account, the Bank insisted that a committee was formed and Councillor Peacey Wilcox was elected Chairman, Councillor Paul Taylor as Secretary and Roger Bartrum as Treasurer.

Eventually the police display unit broke down and became redundant so Speedwatch could not happen; Roger Bartrum left Cowes Town Council. Roger had a certain top of the range Vehicle Speed tracker in mind, and due to successful fundraising had accrued £670 in the account. That unit now costs £1,995.

There is now a new PCSO who is head of Speedwatch, which is still a desired police operation, and she has recently been trying to get it all going again, if town and parish councils can fund their own equipment. She is of the opinion that as Speedwatch is only advisory, the kit does not need to be expensive.

The view could be taken that although advisory, Speedwatch groups should have confidence in the accuracy of their kit. Newport and Carisbrooke Community Council have a reasonably expensive Speed gun, and indeed a calibrated hand-held speed display kit is available at £510.

There is £670 in an account held by Roger Bartrum; he would still like to fundraise towards the top of the range kit. The rest of the Committee want the cheaper calibrated kit, so that Speedwatch can be resumed. To facilitate that the Committee would like the funds to be transferred and held by Cowes Town Council and ring-fenced for Speedwatch. With a small hand-held kit, the group would not need the previously desired number of 6 per team; it would need just 3 or 4 persons to fulfil all the requirements. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council holds the funds of £670, ring-fenced for Speedwatch Cowes and any other funds raised for the project.

8203 CHEQUE AND PETTY CASH PAYMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2020

The Town Clerk presented Councillors with details of cheque and petty cash payments for the month of November 2020. Cheque payments totalled £15,174.86 and petty cash payments totalled £10.00. It was:

RESOLVED

That the cheque payments of £15,174.86 and petty cash payments of £10.00 be received, noted and approved.

8204 CONCLUSION OF THE EXTERNAL AUDIT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2020

The Town Clerk reported that the conclusion of the external audit for the year ended 31 March 2020 had been received. The external auditor, PKF Littlejohn, have raised no matters of concern. Councillors thanked the Town Clerk for the successful conclusion of the External Audit. It was:

RESOLVED

That the conclusion of the external audit for the year ended 31 March 2020 be received, noted and approved.

8205 COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S MEMORIAL BENCH POLICY

Councillors were asked to undertake an annual review of the Town Council's Memorial Bench Policy. The Town Clerk pointed out that it was rather lengthy and needed some clarification. Therefore Councillors were presented with an amended draft policy for consideration. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the amended Memorial Bench Policy.

8206 UPDATE FOLLOWING A MEETING BETWEEN COWES TOWN COUNCIL, SOLENT LOCAL ENTERPRISE PARTNERSHIP (SLEP) AND THE IW COUNCIL (MIN. NO. 8183 REFERS)

The Mayor advised that a meeting took place on 9 November 2020 between SLEP, the IW Council and Cowes Town Council to discuss Floating Bridge 6. It was a productive meeting with a number of proposals which, at this time, SLEP have asked to remain confidential until any progress has been made. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerk will write to SLEP to ask for an update.

8207 RESPONSE FROM THE ISLE OF WIGHT CLINICAL COMMISSIONING GROUP IN REGARD TO COWES MEDICAL CENTRE (MIN. NO. 8158 REFERS)

At the Town Council meeting on 1 October 2020 the Town Clerk was actioned to write to the Isle of Wight Clinical Commissioning Group to ask for an update on when work will be completed at Cowes Medical Centre to enable a phlebotomy service to start at the practice and to ask for an update when the Patient Participation Group (PPG) will be reinstated. A reply was received on 23 November 2020. The alterations to the practice, in order to deliver a phlebotomy service, are being planned and may take longer than hoped due to the current situation. Patients from the Cowes practice can still attend St Mary's Hospital Phlebotomy Department in the same way as normal. Colleagues are currently collaborating to reinstate the PPG; it is anticipated that it will be up and running before Christmas. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Town Clerk will write to the Isle of Wight Clinical Commissioning Group to enquire on progress regarding reinstating the PPG at Cowes Medical Centre.
2. As mentioned in Minute No. 8200, Councillor Nicholson has asked that Councillors advise him of any feedback regarding Cowes Medical Centre whether it is good or bad.

Councillor Wardrop left the meeting at 7.44pm.

8208 WARMER COWES REPORT QUARTER 2

Councillors noted the Warmer Cowes report for Quarter 2 which showed that savings of £720 had been identified for Cowes residents.

8209 UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT OFFICER

A spreadsheet outlining the activities of the Environment Officer in Cowes was circulated to all Town Councillors. Actions included playground inspections; toilet inspections; patrolling Northwood Cemetery; fly-tipping; dogs off leads and dog fouling; beach inspections; abandoned bicycles; waste issues. Councillors commented how hard the Environment Officer works. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerk will write a letter of thanks to the Environment Officer for all her efforts and hard work in Cowes.

8210 MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

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

8211 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

- Place Plan Update – Councillor Nicholson
- Waste Collection on unadopted roads in Cowes – Councillor Reynolds

Prior to the conclusion of the meeting the Mayor thanked Councillors for their time as unpaid volunteers and wished them a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

The proceedings terminated at 8pm.

CHAIRMAN