

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Cowes Town Council held virtually by Zoom on Thursday 4 February 2021 at 7pm.

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

In attendance: Debbie Faulkner, Town Clerk; Kate Gibbs, Assistant Town Clerk.

Prior to the start of the meeting the Mayor thanked Councillors for freely giving their time for the benefit of the Town Council.

8217 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Ellis.

8218 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Peacey Wilcox declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No. 8223a3 as she is a Life Member and a Vice President of the Friends of Northwood Cemetery.

Councillor Jones declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No. 8223a3 as he is a Vice President of the Friends of Northwood Cemetery.

Councillor Jones declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No. 8223a4 as he is a Vice President of Cowes Heritage and Community Group.

8219 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 January 2021 showed 2 criminal damage; 3 public order; 2 drug offences; 8 assaults; 1 burglary; 4 shoplifting offences; 3 theft; 5 malicious communications; 1 harassment. 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. The report also included details of a number of scams being detected on the Island.

8220 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Extraordinary Town Council meeting held on 21 January 2021 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and the Chairman be authorised to sign the Minutes.

8221 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no members of the public present, therefore no questions were raised.

8222 REPORTS FROM ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLORS

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

Councillor Bertie had attended The Parade to monitor for skateboarding on the steps of Osborne Court but had not witnessed any activity. He was advised that it mostly happens in the early evening; he will attend at that time to monitor activity. Skate

parks being closed due to the lockdown has most likely sent skateboarders to find different locations for their activity.

Councillors thanked Councillor Fuller for his efforts to stop the introduction of parking charges on the Esplanade in Cowes and Gurnard. Despite a large number of objections and a petition, the IW Council's Cabinet have agreed to introduce the parking charges. Councillor Fuller advised that this matter is ongoing to see whether it is legal for parking charges to be applied simply to increase revenue for the IW Council.

Councillor Nicholson advised that the Place Plan is reaching its conclusion; it has found that contentedness in Cowes and Northwood has been mistaken for complacency. It may be possible to have a Place Plan presentation on the Agenda for the April Town Council meeting.

Councillor Peacey Wilcox advised that it is almost certain that the local elections will go ahead on May 6 2021; a press release is expected tomorrow. The Mayor thanked the Assistant Town Clerk for formulating an informative Town Council newsletter which has helped signpost residents to areas of support needed during this current lockdown. Plans for Cowes Week 2021 need further discussions between the Town Council and Cowes Week Ltd. Councillors Fuller and Taylor were thanked for helping to reinstate the SpeedWatch programme in Cowes, which can start again when the current lockdown restrictions are lifted.

8223 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

a) Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee

The Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 26 January 2021 were received and noted. It was:

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Financial Statement as at 31 December 2020 be noted and approved.**
- 2. That the balances in the budget headings for Civic Regalia; Northwood Recreation Grounds Maintenance and Other Grounds Maintenance in Cowes; Northwood Recreation Ground – Skate Park / MUGA / Outdoor Gym maintenance; Dog and Litter bin emptying; Cowes Library; Environment Officer; Warmer Cowes; Park Road Crossing Patrol; Discretionary Services Contingency (Place Plan); Street Furniture Maintenance; New Projects; The Big Lunch; Public toilet refurbishment programme be ring fenced or ear marked as appropriate at the financial year end on 31 March 2021.**
- 3. That a grant be made to the Friends of Northwood Cemetery in the sum of £2,000.**
- 4. That a grant be made to the Cowes Heritage and Community Group in the sum of £10,000.**

b) Projects Committee

The Minutes of the Projects Committee meeting held on 12 January 2021 were received and noted.

c) Public Conveniences Working Group

The Minutes of the Public Conveniences Working Group meeting held on 15 December 2020 were received and noted.

d) Parking Strategy Working Group

The Minutes of the Parking Strategy Working Group meeting held on 22 December 2020 were received and noted. Due to short timescales for the deadline to reply to the District 1 Traffic Regulation Order Review, an email survey of Councillors was sought. Having received a majority decision from Councillors it was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council supports the Parking Strategy Working Group's comments, as listed in the 22 December 2020 Minutes, in response to the IW Council's informal consultation on the traffic regulation order review for District 1.

It was agreed:

ACTION

Councillors will have an opportunity to make any further comments as the consultation process continues.

8224 CHEQUE AND PETTY CASH PAYMENTS FOR THE MONTHS OF DECEMBER 2020 AND JANUARY 2021

The Town Clerk presented Councillors with details of cheque and petty cash payments for the months of December 2020 and January 2021. Cheque payments for December totalled £21,056.63; petty cash payments for December totalled £10.00. Cheque payments for January totalled £21,632.68; petty cash payments for January totalled £42.98. It was:

RESOLVED

That the cheque payments for December 2020 of £21,056.63 and petty cash payments for December 2020 of £10.00; the cheque payments for January 2021 of £21,632.68 and petty cash payments for January 2021 of £42.98 be received, noted and approved.

8225 TRIAL OF eSCOOTERS IN COWES

Councillors discussed the eScooter trial on the Island which started in May 2020 and is expected to last one year; however there is some indication that the trial may continue into the summer and may become a permanent fixture. The roll out of the trial in Cowes started on 2 February 2021. Councillors raised concerns that the Town Council had not been consulted on this matter and the locations of the scooter bays, on IW Council land, were in some unsuitable places. Concerns were also raised that the eScooters may be used for illicit purposes; however the Police are working with the operator Beryl and will take action if any misuse takes place. Councillors agreed to monitor the trial and to advise the Town Clerk if any problems arise.

8226 COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S PROPOSED CHANGES TO PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS CONSULTATION (MIN. NO 8215 REFERS)

The Chairman of the Town Council's Planning Committee and the Town Clerk formulated a comprehensive response, on behalf of Cowes Town Council, to this consultation objecting to the proposed changes to Permitted Development Rights. Decisions should not be dealt with at a national level and not taken away from the local level where the Local Planning Authority are aware of the unique situation on the Island. The MP, Mr Bob Seely, agrees with the Town Council's position on this

matter. The Mayor thanked Councillor Jones and the Town Clerk for undertaking this sizeable piece of work.

8227 COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO THE GOVERNMENT'S CONSULTATION 'RIGHT TO REGENERATE'

The Government are consulting on proposals to replace the current scheme 'Right to Contest' with a new scheme 'Right to Regenerate'. This would enable people to ask for publicly owned underused land to be made available as Brownfield sites.

Concerns are raised as yet again this would take decisions away from the local level and developers could use financial incentives to persuade local residents to put their names to any challenges made. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Mayor, the Chairman of the Planning Committee and the Town Clerk will formulate a response, on behalf of the Town Council, to object to this proposal.

8228 WARMER COWES QUARTERLY REPORT FOR QUARTER 3

Councillors noted the Warmer Cowes report for Quarter 3 which showed that savings of £1,170 had been identified for Cowes residents'.

8229 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; removal of unused bikes from the cycle rack at Beckford Road; slipway inspections; assistance to tape off play / gym equipment that cannot be used during the current lockdown.

8230 MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

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

8231 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

- Place Plan presentation – April Town Council Meeting
- Natasha Lambert's crossing from Gran Canaria to Saint Lucia – Councillor Oliver

The proceedings terminated at 7.58pm.

CHAIRMAN