

## COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Cowes Town Council held in the Library, Northwood House, Cowes on Thursday 2 September 2021 at 7pm.

**Present:** Councillor Bertie (Town Mayor) (Chairman)  
Councillors Adams, Brown, Carter, Ellis, Fuller, Hammond, Nicholson, Rafferty, Sanders, Walters and Wardrop.

**In attendance:** Debbie Faulkner, Town Clerk; Kate Gibbs, Assistant Town Clerk;  
Ollie Boulter, Strategic Manager Planning and Infrastructure Delivery, IW Council; PCSO Lisa Paul.

### ISLAND PLANNING STRATEGY DISCUSSION

The draft Island Planning Strategy Consultation is running for a nine week period from 30 July 2021 until 1 October 2021. Mr Boulter attended the meeting to talk Councillors through the consultation and answer any questions that Councillors may have.

Why do we need a new Island Plan? The current Plan was adopted in 2012 before the introduction of the National Planning Policy Framework and the IW Council have been making decisions under 'presumption in favour' since 2018 due to no 5 year land supply and lack of delivery. A new Plan means new policy tools to improve consistency and certainty in decision making which will benefit the public and applicants. The consultation on the draft Island Planning Strategy (IPS) is taking place now; further consultation on the final version of the IPS will take place in Spring 2022 before submitting to Government for examination in public.

The key changes from the 2018 Draft IPS are: proposed reduction in the housing number of 25% to a deliverable total; removal of garden settlement areas of search; no allocated sites outside of the new settlement boundaries; 'hard' settlement boundaries, so removal of support in principle for new sites that are immediately adjacent; unallocated sites coming forward in rural areas will be expected to be predominantly affordable housing via Rural or First Homes exception sites; revised housing mix policy to provide more of the types of homes that Island people need; new policy to promote brownfield and steer unplanned development towards it; policies adapted to respond to recovery and lessons learnt from the pandemic.

The Draft IPS proposes 486 developments per annum which is an average of all 15 year plan periods in the last 20 years and is clear and evidence based. Based on this realistic housing number, evidence shows that the IPS will be unable to only allocate brownfield land; exclude Greenfield land; only plan for affordable housing and pick and choose sites using an inconsistent approach that undermines delivery argument.

What can the IPS do as currently drafted: 98% of allocated homes are within primary (87%) and secondary (11%) adjusted settlement boundaries; 60% of allocated homes are on previously developed land, including key public sector sites, Camp Hill and Newport; 72% of allocated homes on greenfield land are already in the planning system as either applications or pre-app; all allocated sites are over 10 units so have to deliver on site affordable homes, meaning over 1,500 across the plan period in addition to those already with permission.

### Q & A

**Q** Councillors were encouraged by what they had heard and asked whether streamlining the process will reduce the workload for officers?

**A** Since Covid, planning applications have increased and from September 2020 by 40%. Short term support is being brought in to support permanent Planning Officers.

**Q** Will developers be able to continually renew their granted planning permission beyond the 3 / 5 year planning period?

**A** Developers will not be continually allowed to renew their planning permission without a legitimate reason. Use it or lose it!

**Q** The Town Council's Planning Committee ask why the Medina Yard planning application, which was given planning approval in March 2018, now shows that approval was given on 21 June 2021?

**A** The date that the IW Council Planning Committee give approval is not the date used. The date used is the date that Officers finalise the agreement and this was not issued until 21 June 2021.

**Q** The Town Council's Planning Committee agreed that a suitable mix of housing should be available for Island residents; the number of affordable homes built in the last few years is lamentably low.

**A** The Draft IPS takes into account the need for more affordable housing.

Councillor Nicholson thanked Mr Boulter for attending the Town Council meeting and explaining the process. It was agreed:

#### ACTIONS

1. Councillors will submit their comments on the Draft IPS to the Town Clerk by the deadline of 23 September 2021.
2. The Town Clerk will make available the full Draft IPS for Councillors who wish to read before making a submission.
3. The Town Clerk will co-ordinate all submissions and respond accordingly to the Consultation by the deadline of 1 October 2021.

Ollie Boulter left the meeting at 7.40pm.

#### **8338 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Hollis, Jones, Peacey Wilcox and Slade.

#### **8339 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Ellis declared a nonpecuniary interest in Minute No. 8344c2 as his children attend the Cowes Area Explorer Unit.

#### **8340 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 July 2021 showed 4 criminal damage and arson; 6 public order; 29 violence and sexual offences; 9 anti-social behaviour. Community Speed Watch is operating again along with the Pub Watch scheme in Cowes; both are run by volunteers and supported by the Police. There have been a few staffing changes recently within the Cowes police team which has resulted in a growth in personnel. Councillors were reminded to report any drugs issues to Councillor Nicholson, who has a direct contact at the Police for such matters. The issue of lack of resources when calling 101 was discussed; PCSO Paul advised that this is inevitable on occasions when other matters have to take priority.

PCSO Paul left the meeting at 7.50pm.

#### **8341 MINUTES**

##### **RESOLVED**

**That the Minutes of the Town Council meeting held on 15 July 2021 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

#### **8342 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

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

#### **8343 REPORTS FROM ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLORS**

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

Councillor Fuller advised, when asked, that a suitable alternative weed killer to glyphosate had not been found; a man with a hoe was the only option at present.

This matter is currently being investigated at the Projects Committee.

Councillor Fuller also advised that Southern Water could not give an assurance that raw sewage is not being discharged into the sea around the Cowes / Gurnard areas. Councillor Fuller advised that he had not been advised of a 'Cowes Week Wash Up' meeting; he will follow this up.

Councillor Nicholson was available for questions but none were raised.

In the absence of Councillors Peacey Wilcox and Quigley, any questions should be raised with them direct.

#### **8344 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS**

a) Planning & Licensing Committee

The Minutes of the Planning & Licensing Committee meetings held on 29 July 2021 and 25 August 2021 were received and noted. It was:

##### **RESOLVED**

**That Cowes Town Council make a response to the Draft Island Planning Strategy Consultation by the deadline of 1 October 2021.**

b) Projects Committee

The Minutes of the Projects Committee meeting held on 10 August 2021 were received and noted.

c) Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee

The Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 27 July 2021 were received and noted. It was:

##### **RESOLVED**

**1. That Cowes Town Council receive, note and approve the Financial Statement as at 30 June 2021.**

**2. That a grant be made to Cowes Area Explorer Unit in the sum of £300.**

**3. That the sum of £4,750, ear marked from the 2020 / 2021 budget, be reserved for the Friends of Northwood Cemetery, to cover any shortfall in their fundraising for the Community War Grave refurbishment.**

**4. That a grant be made to Victim Support in the sum of £150.**

**5. That Cowes Town Council approves repainting the bottom section of the Town Clock by Moss Hayman, for the sum of £60, with the cost to be met from the 'Street Furniture Maintenance' budget heading.**

6. That Cowes Town Council provides one dressed Christmas tree to be located at Francki Place at a cost of up to £800, with the cost to be met from the 'Civic – Xmas trees / festive lights / bunting' budget heading.
7. That Cowes Town Council approves the installation, maintenance and subsequent removal of the Festive Lights by F.W. Marsh Ltd, at a cost of up to £14,500, with the cost to be met from the 'Civic – Xmas trees / festive lights / bunting' budget heading.
8. That Cowes Town Council approves the repainting of the two 'Cowes' entry signs located at Three Gates Road and Carvel Lane by Moss Hayman, for the sum of £340, with the cost to be met from the 'Street Furniture Maintenance' budget heading.
9. That Cowes Town Council approves the repainting of the two metal picnic benches located in Northwood Park by Moss Hayman, for the sum of £250, with the cost to be met from the 'Street Furniture Maintenance' budget heading.
10. That Cowes Town Council approves repainting and staining two benches located at Egypt Light by Moss Hayman, for the sum of £340, with the cost to be met from the 'Street Furniture Maintenance' budget heading.
11. That Cowes Town Council approves removing the chains and lower rings from both basketball hoops at the MUGA at Northwood Recreation Ground by John Groves (IW) Ltd, for the sum of £45, with the cost to be met from the 'Northwood Rec – Skatepark / MUGA / Outdoor Gym maintenance' budget heading.

- d) Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee  
The Minutes of the Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee meeting held on 11 June 2021 were received and noted.
- e) IWALC AGM  
The draft Minutes of the IWALC AGM meeting held on 29 July 2021 were received and noted.

#### **8345 A VOTE OF THANKS**

Councillors discussed the work of the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk and recognised that they are appreciated for the work that they do on behalf of the Town Council and the residents of Cowes. It was:

#### **RESOLVED**

**That Cowes Town Council recognises the contribution of our Clerks, Debbie and Kate, and thanks them on behalf of the town which we represent.**

#### **8346 COWES MEDICAL CENTRE**

Councillors discussed the current situation at Cowes Medical Centre (CMC), acknowledging the previous issues that were raised; they now have installed a new telephone system and the phlebotomy service is in its early stages. However, Cowes Town Council agree that there should be regular dialogue between Cowes Town Council and CMC to assist the residents that the Town Council represents. It was suggested that the Town Council could work in partnership with CMC to reinstate the Patient Participation Group (PPG) and have a Town Council representative attend the PPG meetings. It was agreed:

## ACTION

The Town Clerk will write to Cowes Medical Centre to propose that Cowes Town Council works in partnership with them to reinstate the PPG at the earliest opportunity.

### **8347 CHEQUE AND PETTY CASH PAYMENTS FOR THE MONTHS OF JULY 2021 AND AUGUST 2021**

The Town Clerk presented Councillors with details of cheque and petty cash payments for the months of July 2021 and August 2021. Cheque payments for July totalled £25,139.28; petty cash payments for July totalled £147.25. Cheque payments for August totalled £18,835.80; petty cash payments for August totalled £35.83. It was:

#### **RESOLVED**

**That the cheque payments for July of £25,139.28 and petty cash payments for July of £147.25; that the cheque payments for August of £18,835.80 and petty cash payments for August of £35.83 be received, noted and approved.**

### **8348 CONCLUSION OF THE EXTERNAL AUDIT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2021**

The Town Clerk reported that the conclusion of the External Audit for the year ended 31 March 2021 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 2021 be received, noted and approved.**

### **8349 REVIEW OF COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S COMMITTEES AND WORKING GROUP STRUCTURES**

This item has been deferred to a future Working Group meeting, date to be arranged. The Working Group will include Councillors Adams, Bertie, Carter, Jones, Nicholson, Walters and Wardrop.

Councillor Hammond left the meeting at 8.22pm.

### **8350 PROPOSED CHANGES TO COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

Councillors discussed whether to amend Financial Regulations to authorise the Town Clerk to purchase goods or undertake small works to a value of up to £500 without reference to Councillors. Any expenditure would be reported at each Town Council meeting as usual. It was:

#### **RESOLVED**

**That Financial Regulations be amended to authorise the Town Clerk to purchase goods or undertake small works to a value of up to £500.**

### **8351 REVIEW OF COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS FOR 2021 / 2022**

This item has been deferred to a future Working Group meeting, date to be arranged. The Working Group will include Councillors Adams, Bertie, Carter, Jones, Nicholson, Walters and Wardrop.

**8352 PROPOSED CHANGES TO COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S STANDING ORDERS**

A review of Cowes Town Council's Standing Orders was carried out and slight amendments were suggested in relation to 6.2.3 (Voting) and 25.2 (Delegation of Authority). It was:

**RESOLVED**

**That Cowes Town Council's Standing Orders be amended in relation to sections 6.2.3 and 25.2.**

**8353 REVIEW OF COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT**

A review of Cowes Town Council's Accessibility Statement was carried out and no amendments were required. It was:

**RESOLVED**

**That Cowes Town Council approves Cowes Town Council's Accessibility Statement.**

**8354 PROPOSAL FOR A 'SISTER CITY' ARRANGEMENT WITH NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND, USA**

Councillors discussed a proposal from Her Majesty's Consul General at the British Consulate General in Boston to consider a 'sister city' arrangement with Newport, Rhode Island, USA. Councillors felt that this could be considered as a 'Friendship Link'. It was agreed:

**ACTION**

The Town Clerk will respond to the request with a view to taking this proposal forward and reporting back to Councillors in due course.

Councillor Wardrop left the meeting at 8.40pm.

**8355 WARMER COWES REPORT FOR QUARTER 1 – 2021 / 2022**

The Footprint Trust Ltd, as administrators of the Warmer Cowes scheme, provided a report for Quarter 1 - 2021 / 2022. The report showed that 17 people had received assistance during the period. Energy saving measures have saved residents £3,225. The project cost to Cowes Town Council for Quarter 1 was £375.

**8356 UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT OFFICER**

A report outlining the activities of the Environment Officer in Cowes was circulated to all Town Councillors. Actions taken included dog warden services; play park inspections; domestic and commercial waste issues; eScooter monitoring in pedestrian areas.

**8357 MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

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

**8358 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS**

- Invite Keith Herbert from Southern Water to give a presentation, including a Q and A session.

The proceedings terminated at 8.42pm.

**CHAIRMAN**