

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Cowes Town Council held in The Library, Northwood House, Cowes on Thursday 15 December 2022 at 7pm.

Present: Councillor Bertie (Town Mayor) (Chairman)
Councillors Adams, Brown, Ellis, Fuller, Hollis (7.05pm), Jones, Nicholson, Paler, Peacey Wilcox, Sanders & Walters.

In attendance: Debbie Faulkner, Town Clerk; two representatives from Wighttricks Academy.

PRESENTATION FROM WIGHTTRICKS ACADEMY

Prior to the start of the meeting, representative from Wighttricks Academy made a presentation to Councillors. They advised that the group started in 2018 running an airtrack at Gurnard Primary School. They moved to Prospect Business Park in March 2019 and opened their gym. Unfortunately noise complaints were made which necessitated the group looking for alternative premises. These have now been found at Somerton Business Park and they will be receiving the keys on 23 December 2022. The group currently has 100 students attending and 1000 on their waiting list. The Students do flips, kicks and tricks. One of their 12 year old students came first in the under 16's category of the 2022 Oslo Movement Gathering, an international tricking competition. The new gym will accommodate their existing spring floor and the unit will have a café and waiting room added. All these things cost money and the group is considering making an application for grant to the Town Council.

The Mayor thanked the representatives for their interesting presentation and wished them well with their upcoming move.

8618 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Carter, Hammond, Rafferty & Wardrop.

8619 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

8620 REPORT FROM THE LOCAL SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER

The local Safer Neighbourhood Officer provided a written report which was circulated to all Town Councillors. The report included details about extra visits to the skate park during the day and evening, shifts permitting. Various beat surgeries have been organised around the Island for the public to attend. Changes within the policing team were included, along with details of monthly meetings at Cowes Enterprise College to address any issues involving their students.

8621 MINUTES RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 3 November 2022 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8622 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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

8623 REPORTS FROM ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLORS

Written reports focussing on local matters were received from Councillors Fuller, Nicholson & Peacey Wilcox and were circulated to all Town Councillors.

Councillor Fuller was asked about the Medina Yard development, which is a brownfield site, and the proposed Somerton Farm development on a greenfield site. Councillors were advised that the new owners of Medina Yard have no intention to build residential properties. They want to tidy the site up and bring unused offices back into use. Should residential properties be considered again then the clause of building phases 1 and four together would still apply.

Councillor Fuller was also asked about the one share that the IW Council hold on the Cowes Town Waterfront Trust (CTWT). Why can't the IW Council representative on CTWT vote at their meetings? Could the share (which cost the IW Council £50k) be transferred to Cowes Town Council? It was agreed:

ACTION

Councillor Fuller will investigate and report back to the February 2023 Town Council meeting.

Councillor Peacey Wilcox advised that BT had been fined for road blocking without sufficient notice and not for emergency works. A number of other utilities have also been found to do unauthorised works.

Councillor Quigley's report arrived too late for circulation prior to the meeting. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerk will circulate Councillor Quigley's report to all Town Councillors.

8624 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

a) Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee

The Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 22 November 2022 were received and noted. It was:

RESOLVED

- 1. That Cowes Town Council pays for the grounds maintenance works at Northwood Park from 1/4/23 – 31/3/24 in the sum of £12,800, direct to Northwood House Charitable Trust Co. Ltd (NHCTCL).**
- 2. As from 1 April 2024 NHCTCL will apply for a grant for future grounds maintenance works at Northwood Park.**
- 3. That Cowes Town Council continues to pay the quarterly invoices from the IW Council to support Cowes Library from 1/4/23 – 31/3/24.**
- 4. That Cowes Town Council approves the Budget for 2023 / 2024, as overleaf, which will require the precept to be £335,504.**
- 5. That Financial Regulation 10.4 is suspended to consider only one quotation for the management of the refurbishment project at Medina Road Public Conveniences.**
- 6. That M.J. Hayles Architectural Service be appointed to manage the refurbishment project at Medina Road Public Conveniences for the sum of £4,000.**
- 7. That no amendments are required to the Code of Conduct for Members of Cowes Town Council.**
- 8. That Cowes Town Council receive and note the NJC Salary Award for 2022 – 2023.**

COWES TOWN COUNCIL BUDGET 2023 - 2024	
GENERAL ADMINISTRATION	
Town Clerks' salaries / NIC/ Tax / Pension	£62,000
Office Rent	£8,700
Stationery / Sundry Office Expenses/Software	£700
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	£400
Subscriptions	£2,100
Insurance	£2,500
Audit and Accountancy	£2,200
Mayor's Allowance	£2,000
Newsletter / Publicity	£4,000
Elections / Admin Contingency	£2,500
Civic Regalia	£500
Sub Total	£91,400
DISCRETIONARY SERVICES	
Northwood Rec Grounds Maintenance	£8,204
Northwood Rec - Skate Park / MUGA / Outdoor Gym Maintenance	£6,000
Northwood Park Grounds Maintenance	£12,900
Northwood Park Toilets - Cleaning Only	£4,000
Dog + Litter bin emptying	£5,800
Other grounds maintenance in Cowes	£7,300
5 Public Toilets - Cleaning + other costs	£52,000
Cowes Library	£22,400
Cowes In Bloom	£12,000
Environment Officer	£3,000
Warmer Cowes	£500
Park Road Crossing Patrol	£5,000
Cowes & Northwood Place Plan Promotion	£12,000
Discretionary Services Contingency	£8,000
Sub Total	£159,104
TOWN IMPROVEMENTS / GRANTS / SPECIAL EVENTS	
Street furniture maintenance	£3,500
Festive lights / Xmas Tree	£17,000
New Projects	£4,000
Grants	£15,000
Remembrance Sunday & Charity Donations	£1,500
Public Toilet refurbishment & Capital Projects	£40,000
Picnic in the Park 2023	£2,000
Flags, Banners and Bunting	£2,000
Sub Total	£85,000
TOTAL EXPENDITURE	£335,504

- b) Projects Committee
The Minutes of the Projects Committee meeting held on 8 November 2022 were received and noted.
- c) Planning & Licensing Committee
The Minutes of the Planning & Licensing Committee meetings held on 23 November 2022 and 14 December 2022 were received and noted.
- d) Environment & Sustainability Forum
The Minutes of the Environment & Sustainability Forum held on 15 November 2022 were received and noted.
- e) Meeting with Hampshire & Isle of Wight Partnership of CCGs
The Notes of the meeting with Hampshire & Isle of Wight Partnership of CCGs held on 17 November 2022 were received and noted.
- f) IWALC Meeting with the IW Council's Cabinet
The Report of the IWALC Meeting with the IW Council's Cabinet held on 10 November 2022 was received and noted.
- g) Supporters of Cowes Library
The Minutes of the Supporters of Cowes Library meeting held on 24 October 2022 were received and noted. It was agreed:
ACTION
That Cowes Town Council thanks Councillor Wardrop for attending the meetings of the Supporters of Cowes Library, on behalf of the Town Council, and thanks all of the volunteers and staff for their hard work.
- h) IWALC Executive Committee
The draft Minutes of the IWALC Executive Committee meeting held on 24 November 2022 were received and noted.

8625 MEMBER REVIEW OF FINANCIAL RECORDS – QUARTER 2

Councillor Paler, as one of Cowes Town Council's Member Internal Financial Reviewers, undertook a review of the Town Council's financial records on 8 November 2022. The quarterly review covered the period 1 July 2022 to 30 September 2022. 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; invoices; bank records; petty cash records; reporting & approval by members: agendas / minutes – list of cheque and petty cash payments; and VAT Return spreadsheet. The review showed from the sample taken during the period that the standard of book-keeping continues to be very good. It was:

RESOLVED

That the Member Review of Financial Records for Quarter 2 be received, noted and approved.

8626 COWES IN BLOOM – NORTHWOOD PARK TREES

Councillors discussed a proposal to plant sponsored trees in Northwood Park. As NHCTCL have not yet considered this proposal it was agreed that this matter be deferred to the February 2023 Town Council meeting.

8627 SAFEGUARDING

Councillors discussed child safeguarding, an item recently discussed by the IW Council's Children's Services Scrutiny meeting. When an enquiry was recently made to a local school about any safeguarding concerns, they responded by saying that they were concerned about the continued drug dealing and abuse in the area around the school and that they had no knowledge of what the Police were doing to safeguard children at their school. This has thrown up two concerns – the continued drug dealing and drug abuse, and the fact that the School were unaware of any police programme or effort to safeguard their students. Councillors were asked to consider whether Cowes Town Council should find out if this view is shared by other schools in our area and if so, invite the schools to represent their concerns at a future Town Council meeting, inviting a senior Police Safeguarding Officer to hear those concerns. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Town Clerk will write to all schools in Cowes to ascertain whether they have any safeguarding concerns at their school.
2. If concerns are raised, the Town Clerk will invite representatives from the schools and a senior Police Safeguarding Officer to a future Town Council meeting to hear those concerns.

8628 COUNCILLOR UPDATE

Councillors received an update report from Councillor Paler regarding Winter Pressure Workshops, Warm Spaces in Cowes and Solent 2050.

8629 CHEQUE PAYMENTS AND PETTY CASH PAYMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER 2022

The Town Clerk presented Councillors with details of cheque and petty cash payments for the month of November 2022. Cheque payments totalled £26,335.99; petty cash payments totalled £47.44. It was:

RESOLVED

That the cheque payments of £26,335.99 and the petty cash payments of £47.44 be received, noted and approved.

8630 COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S MEMORIAL BENCH POLICY

A review of Cowes Town Council's Memorial Bench Policy was carried out and no amendments were required. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the Memorial Bench Policy.

8631 RESPONSE FROM THE IW COUNCIL REGARDING PAVEMENT LICENSE APPLICATIONS (MIN NO. 8578 REFERS)

At the Town Council meeting on 6 October 2022, Councillors discussed the short notice given for comments on Pavement License Application. The Town Clerk wrote to the IW Council asking for a longer deadline for comments. The IW Council have responded by saying that the Business and Planning Act 2020, which includes new

Pavement Cafe License applications, came into force on 24 July 2020 until the end of September 2021. Those arrangements have now been extended to September 2023. The Act specifically states that the consultation period is 7 days and the IW Council are unable to deviate from this statutory consultation process.

8632 UPDATE ON THE WINDER SPORTS HALL (MIN NO. 8525.1 REFERS)

At the Town Council meeting on 14 July 2022, Councillor Peacey Wilcox offered to write to the Head of Children's Services at the IW Council to ascertain what, if any, arrangement had been made with the Ormiston Academy Trust (OAT) in relation to public access to the Winder Sports Hall. Councillor Peacey Wilcox has since advised that no agreement was made between the IW Council and the OAT when it took over the former Cowes High School site, and the Winder Sports Hall. Therefore the OAT cannot be compelled to let this sports hall out for public use. However, discussions are still taking place about hiring out the sports hall in the main school building. Councillors discussed whether there may be some clauses in the Planning Application that could be called into force. It was agreed:

ACTION

Councillor Fuller will check with Planning Enforcement at the IW Council to see if there are any clauses in the planning permission relating to the Winder Sports Hall.

8633 UPDATE ON PRECEPT PAYMENTS TO TOWN AND PARISH COUNCILS (MIN NO. 8546f REFERS)

At the Town Council meeting on 1 September 2022, Councillors discussed the current / future position of payments made to Town & Parish Councils for the precept. Freshwater Parish Council had been informed that the IW Council was considering, without consultation, changing the way the precept is received. The Town Clerk wrote to the Leader of the IW Council who has advised that there are no changes being made to the current process for making precept payments to Town & Parish Councils.

8634 CONNECT4COMMUNITIES GRANT

An opportunity has arisen for making a further connect4communities grant. The IW Council have been provided with over £1.1 million under the Household Support Fund which has to be spent by 31 March 2023. Councillors discussed whether to make a further application for a grant. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council make a further application for a connect4communities grant, for food vouchers, in the sum £5,000.

8635 REINSTATING COMMITTEE MEETINGS IN THE TOWN COUNCIL'S OFFICE

With the Covid-19 pandemic concerns abating, the Town Clerk asked Councillors whether they wish to return to holding Committee meetings in the Town Council's Office. Monthly Town Council meetings will continue to be held in other larger rooms at Northwood House. It was:

RESOLVED

That all future Town Council Committee meetings will be held in the Town Council office.

8636 UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT OFFICER

A report was not received from the Environment Officers in Cowes, however we are aware that the usual inspections have taken place during the month and any matters reported to the appropriate authority.

8637 MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

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

8638 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

- Presentation from the owners of Medina Yard
- Cowes In Bloom – Northwood Park Trees
- Safeguarding

The proceedings terminated at 8.25pm.

CHAIRMAN