

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Cowes Town Council held in The Library, Northwood House, Cowes on Thursday 2 February 2023 at 7pm.

Present: Councillor Bertie (Town Mayor) (Chairman)
Councillors Brown, Ellis, Hollis, Nicholson, Paler, Peacey Wilcox, Rafferty, Sanders & Wardrop.

In attendance: Debbie Faulkner, Town Clerk; Kate Scragg, Assistant Town Clerk; Ian Boyd for Project Seagrass.

Prior to the presentation, Councillors held a minutes' silence in recognition of the passing of Councillor David Jones. Councillor Jones had been a Cowes Town Councillor since December 2003, was Deputy Town Mayor from 2013 – 2015 and Town Mayor from 2015 – 2017. David was a true gentleman with a quiet manner but was not afraid to express his opinion when necessary, especially about planning matters. David will be very much missed and Councillors send their condolences to David's family at this sad time.

PRESENTATION FROM IAN BOYD ABOUT PROJECT SEAGRASS

Prior to the start of the meeting Ian Boyd talked about Project Seagrass which is a global project supported by Sky, Liz Earle and the WWF. Seagrass is incredibly important around our coasts and the Solent is the most important site in the UK. Seagrass persists and survives in the area around Cowes despite the area being a busy working industrial area, a port and a harbour. Seagrass is a flowering plant and is home to many important species including seahorses, pipefish and cuttlefish. Seagrass meadows act as a natural defence by trapping sediment and slowing down current and waves. Seeds of the plant are being collected, grown in a nursery and put back in the sea to propagate. In the area around Cowes, Seagrass copes with a lot and the question is how and why this ecosystem persists in this difficult environment. The outcome of this research will be shared globally to help other areas to nurture Seagrass areas around the world. Ian advised that later in the year there will be a symposium in Cowes. SeagrassSpotter.org is being used to ask people to report any new sightings of Seagrass.

Q. How does the dredging in Cowes affect the Seagrass?

A. Dredging has the right to continue, yet Seagrass still persists in pockets around Cowes.

Q. Does commercial fishermen trawling around Cowes affect the Seagrass?

A. Yes it does, it is difficult to stop trawling but hopes for the future are that this will improve.

The Mayor thanked Ian for his presentation and wished the project every success for the future.

8639 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adams, Carter, Fuller, Hammond & Walters.

Councillors discussed the continuing absence of Councillor Hammond and her wish to remain as a Town Councillor. Councillors felt that it was important to have a full complement of Town Councillors and sadly could not agree to a further period of absence. This is not goodbye as there will be opportunities for reapplying by election or co-option in the future. It was:

RESOLVED

That Councillor Hammond ceases to be a Cowes Town Councillor as from 3 February 2023.

8640 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

8641 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 anti-social behaviour around the area with door knocking by young people. Extra patrols on late shifts seem to have stopped this behaviour; if it restarts then residents have been advised to call it in.

Police are targeting one road a month for anti-social behaviour, speeding or any vehicle related incidents. Councillors can advise the Police if there are any roads that they would like covered.

8642 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 15 December 2022 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8643 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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

8644 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 Peacey Wilcox advised that there is a residents parking permit consultation taking place with residents of Arctic Road, Bernard Road and Bellevue Road due to parking problems in these areas.

Councillor Nicholson advised that he has met with the IW Council's new Regeneration Officer, who will attend the March Town Council meeting.

8645 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

a) Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee

The Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 24 January 2023 were received and noted. It was:

RESOLVED

1. That Cowes Town Council receive, note and approve the Financial Statement as at 31 December 2022.

2. That the balances in the budget headings: Subscriptions; Northwood Recreation Ground, Grounds Maintenance; Dog & Litter bin emptying; Other Grounds Maintenance in Cowes; Sani bin contract; Cowes Library; Cowes In Bloom; Environment Officer; Park Road Crossing Patrol be ring fenced as appropriate as at 31 March 2023.
3. That the balances in the budget headings: Northwood Recreation Ground – Skate Park / MUGA / Outdoor Gym Maintenance; Cowes & Northwood Place Plan Promotion; Street Furniture Maintenance; New Projects (Ark & Dove £1,000); Public Toilet Refurbishment & Capital Projects; Picnic in the Park (Balance); Flags and Banners (Balance) be ear marked as at 31 March 2023.
4. Any under spend from other budget headings will go into the Town Council's Reserves.
5. That a grant be made to Cowes Fringe Ltd in the sum of £2,500 specifically for the promotion and marketing of the Cowes Fringe Event 2023. The organisers will send their invoices up to that amount for payment by the Town Council.
6. The Town Clerk will write to Dragon Class, Solent Division to ask exactly what the requested £2,000 will be spent on.
7. The Town Clerk will liaise with the organisers of Island Food Festival Ltd to ascertain which part of the Festival the Town Council can support and bring the proposal back to the next Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting on 28 February 2023.
8. That a grant be made to WightTricks Academy, in the form of a one-off bursary, in the sum of £3,000 which will allow students from low income families in Cowes to take part in lessons. The sum will be held by the Town Council and released upon request from the WightTricks Academy.
9. That a grant be made to Market Days IOW CIC in the sum of £2,500. The organisers will send their invoices up to that amount for payment by the Town Council.
10. That Cowes Town Council transfers the funds held into a Nationwide Business 18 Month Saver Account with a gross interest rate per annum of 3.00%.
11. That Cowes Town Council contributes the requested £1,240 to the Voluntary Community Social Enterprise (VCSE) Support Service on the proviso that the VCSE achieve 75% of their £20,000 shortfall i.e. £15,000, from other Town & Parish Councils. The contribution to be taken from the 'Discretionary Services Contingency' budget heading.
12. That no amendments are required to the Cowes Town Council's Complaints Procedure.
13. That Cowes Town Council receive and note the Isle of Wight Pension Fund 2022 valuation results and employer contribution rate of 23.5%.

b) Projects Committee

The Minutes of the Projects Committee meeting held on 10 January 2023 were received and noted. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council earmarks the balance of the 'New Projects' budget heading as at 31 March 2023 for any expenses that relate to celebrating the King's Coronation.

- c) Planning & Licensing Committee
The Minutes of the Planning & Licensing Committee meetings held on 4 January 2023 and 26 January 2023 were received and noted.
- d) IWALC Meeting with the IW Council's Cabinet
The Report of the IWALC Meeting with the IW Council's Cabinet held on 12 January 2023 was received and noted.
- e) Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee
The draft Minutes of the Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee meeting held on 11 January 2023 were received and noted.

8646 ISLAND ROADS / GRANVILLE ROAD

Councillors discussed the problems of potholes which are filled in with a temporary fix and then at a later time the road is closed off for a more permanent fix.

Councillors queried why it takes two visits to repair the potholes. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerk will write to the IW Council's Contract Management Team and Island Roads to ask for sight of the procedure being used for the treatment of potholes.

8647 CENTRAL EMPTY LARGE SHOP OPPOSITE THE ANCHOR

Councillors discussed the large empty shop, formerly occupied by Watson, Bull and Porter. This building has been empty for many years and is in disrepair and a prominent eyesore in the town centre. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerk will write to the estate agent marketing this building, Scotcher & Co, to ask for an overall update on the building and why it has been empty for so long.

8648 COUNCILLOR UPDATE

Councillors received an update report from Councillor Paler regarding a number of meetings held with organisations in Cowes and forthcoming events being planned for Cowes.

8649 CHEQUE PAYMENTS AND PETTY CASH PAYMENTS FOR THE MONTHS OF DECEMBER 2022 AND JANUARY 2023

The Town Clerk presented Councillors with details of cheque and petty cash payments for the months of December 2022 and January 2023. Cheque payments for December totalled £25,860.71; petty cash payments for December totalled £70.00. Cheque payments for January 2023 totalled £33,027.55; petty cash payments for January 2023 totalled £10.00. It was:

RESOLVED

That the cheque payments for December 2022 of £25,860.71; the petty cash payments for December 2022 of £70.00; the cheque payments for January 2023 of £33,027.55; the petty cash payments for January 2023 of £10.00 be received, noted and approved.

8650 RESIGNATION OF THE CHAIRMAN OF THE PLACE PLAN WORKING GROUP

Councillors received details of Councillor Paler's resignation as Chairman of the Place Plan Working Group. It was agreed:

ACTION

The appointment of a new Chairman will be added to the Agenda for the next Place Plan Working Group meeting.

8651 IW COUNCIL'S WASTE SERVICE PROVIDER'S COMMUNICATION WITH RESIDENTS OF UNADOPTED AND UNMADE ROADS

Councillors discussed the IW Council's communication with residents of unadopted and unmade roads. This is due to the waste service provider's problems experienced on these roads due to pot holes and poor road surfaces; the IW Council has a duty of care for Amey employees. The roads affected in Cowes are Alexandra Road, Coronation Road and Weston Road. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerk will write to the IW Council to enquire if any enforcement action can be taken in regard to residents in the aforementioned roads.

8652 THE FOOTPRINT TRUST QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT FOR APRIL 2022 – DECEMBER 2022 AND SUMMARY OF THE WARMER COWES SERVICE

Councillors received details of The Footprint Trust Ltd's quarterly impact report for April 2022 – December 2022. The summary of the Warmer Cowes Service showed that, to date, 32 households in Cowes had been helped with savings identified of £12,390.00.

8653 MEMBERSHIP OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT SPORTS FOUNDATION

Councillors were asked to consider whether to renew Cowes Town Council's membership of The Isle of Wight Sports Foundation for the annual sum of £11.00. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council renews its membership of The Isle of Wight Sports Foundation for the sum of £11.00.

8654 UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT OFFICER

A report detailing the activities of the Environment Officer in Cowes was received and circulated to all Town Councillors. The activities included toilet inspections; playpark inspections; regular patrols to ensure closer links with PCSOs; slipway inspections and liaison with dog owners and their responsibilities.

8655 MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

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

8656 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDA

There were no items raised for inclusion on future agendas.

The proceedings terminated at 8.14pm.

CHAIRMAN