

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Cowes Town Council held in The Right Hand Chapel at Northwood Cemetery on Thursday 6 April 2023 at 7pm.

Present: Councillor Bertie (Town Mayor) (Chairman)
Councillors Adams, Brown, Carter, Dodwell, Ellis, Hollis, Nicholson, Oliver, Sanders & Wardrop.

In attendance: Debbie Faulkner, Town Clerk; three representatives from the Friends of Northwood Cemetery.

Prior to the start of the meeting the Mayor welcomed newly co-opted Town Councillors Stuart Dodwell and Neil Oliver.

PRESENTATION FROM THE FRIENDS OF NORTHWOOD CEMETERY (FONC)

Representatives from the FONC gave some background to the project at Northwood Cemetery which began in 2008. The first part of the project was to restore the East Chapel and the dead house (tool store). In 2013 – 2015 the FONC made a Lottery Fund application of £1m to restore the West Chapel. However in 2015 the East Chapel failed again and had to be closed. Therefore the lottery bid was increased to £1.7m to include restoration of the failed East Chapel. The project to restore both chapels was completed in 2017. These buildings becoming a community asset and creating a positive environmental impact. Post project 2017 – 2027, there has been a ten year maintenance and management plan put in place. The area has achieved 'Green Flag' status which is a Parks and Open Spaces award and has been granted for five consecutive years. The Chapels hold coffee mornings, drop in sessions, online and outlet sales, guided walks, exhibitions and talks and presentations in the Resource Centre. Achievements include restoration of the War Grave, restoring broken and fallen headstones, the Cemetery book, updating the website of burial records, installation of CCTV, visits from local primary schools and attendance at Volunteer Fairs. The Chapels and the Cemetery grounds are a community asset which belongs to and is for the community. There have been increased funerals in the Chapel, an abundance of flora and fauna, numerous privately restored memorials, an active Facebook site and quarterly newsletters.

The question now is the future sustainability of the area. The grounds need to be maintained, headstones cleared, purchase of tools and clearance of rubbish. Also the high costs for Insurance, utilities and the Ancestry Licence fee.

These costs have previously been reliant on a prolific fundraiser but the future cannot rest on the endeavours of one person alone. The IW Council have also helped with costs in kind of around £6k by paying the contractor to manage the grounds and cut the grass but this is now being withdrawn.

The FONC advised Councillors that they will be asking local Town & Parish Councils for financial assistance to continue the good work that started in 2008.

The Mayor thanked the representatives of the FONC for their interesting presentation.

8674 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Fuller, Paler, Peacey Wilcox, Rafferty & Walters.

8675 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

8676 REPORT FROM THE LOCAL SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER

The local Safer Neighbourhood Officer did not provide a written report.

8677 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 2 March 2023 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8678 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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

8679 REPORTS FROM ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLORS

Written reports focussing on local matters were received from Councillors Fuller, Nicholson, Peacey Wilcox and Quigley and were circulated to all Town Councillors. Councillor Nicholson was available for questions but none were raised.

Councillors discussed the problem of parking on double yellow lines as mentioned in Councillor Quigley's report. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerk will advise the IW Council of the ongoing parking problems on the double yellow lines in Gordon Road.

8680 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

a) Projects Committee

The Minutes of the Projects Committee meeting held on 14 March 2023 were received and noted. It was:

RESOLVED

1. That Cowes Town Council approves up to £2,300 for the purchase of 1008 celebratory mugs, with the cost to be met from the money set aside for the Coronation. Any shortfall to be taken from the earmarked 'New Projects' 2020/21 budget heading.

2. That Cowes Town Council approves up to £350 for the purchase of Union Jack and Coronation flags, with the cost to be met from the money set aside for the Coronation. Any shortfall to be taken from the earmarked 'New Projects' 2020/21 budget heading.

3. That Cowes Town Council approves the cost of £1,100 for the installation of the bunting, with the cost to be met from the 'Flags, Banners and Bunting' budget heading.

4. That Cowes Town Council approves M J Hayles Architectural Service's costs in the sum of £2,900 plus VAT, for the Changing Places Facility at The Cut with the cost to be met from the 'Public Toilets refurbishment and Capital Projects' budget heading.

b) Planning & Licensing Committee

The Minutes of the Planning & Licensing Committee meeting held on 8 March 2023 were received and noted. Councillors discussed a planning appeal raised in regard to Hamlet Court. The Town Council have reiterated its objections, to the current planning application, to the planning inspectorate.

- c) Place Plan Working Group
The Minutes of the Place Plan Working Group meeting held on 23 March 2023 were received and noted. It was:
RESOLVED
That Cowes Town Council writes to the Cowes Town Waterfront Trust to request a Town Councillor or an IW Council representative on the Board of Trustees.
- d) Environment & Sustainability Forum
The Minutes of the Environment & Sustainability Forum held on 14 February 2023 were received and noted.
- e) IWALC Meeting with IW Council's Cabinet
The Report of the IWALC Meeting with the IW Council's Cabinet held on 9 March 2023 was received and noted.
- f) Supporters of Cowes Library
The Minutes of the Supporters of Cowes Library meeting held on 13 March 2023 were received and noted. The repairs to the front wall of the Library appear to be substandard and are being inspected by the IW Council.

8681 MEMBER REVIEW OF FINANCIAL RECORDS QUARTER 3

Councillors Adams and Paler, as Cowes Town Council's Member Internal Financial Reviewers, undertook a review of the Town Council's financial records on 28 February 2023. The quarterly review covered the period 1 October 2022 to 31 December 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 utility bills. 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 annual internal and external audit is due at the end of the next quarter; this will be done by auditors and not Councillors.

Councillor Adams left the meeting at 7.59pm.

8682 COWES HIGH STREET EMPTY SHOP (MIN NO 8647 REFERS)

At the Town Council meeting on 2 February 2023, Councillors discussed the large empty property at 126 High Street. The Town Clerk made enquiries with the estate agent who advised that the marketing had been suspended by the leaseholder, Watson, Bull and Porter. The property owner, Cowes Yacht Haven, have also had no contact from the leaseholder.

Subsequently no further progress has been made to see this building brought back into use. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerk will write to Watson, Bull and Porter to ask what their intentions are for the future of this empty property (copy to Cowes Yacht Haven).

8683 COUNCILLOR REPORT

Councillor Paler provided an update on local events being organised in Cowes. With regard to Cowes Fringe, Councillor Bertie advised the organisers that they should go through the Town Clerk for any funding requests as per the Town Council's Financial Regulations.

8684 CHEQUE PAYMENTS AND PETTY CASH PAYMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF MARCH 2023

The Town Clerk presented Councillors with details of cheque and petty cash payments for the month of February 2023. Cheque payments totalled £10,202.21; petty cash payments totalled £35.84. It was:

RESOLVED

That the cheque payments of £10,202.21 and the petty cash payments of £35.84; be received, noted and approved.

8685 CO-OPTIONS TO THE TWO VACANCIES IN COWES MEDINA WARD

Co-option interviews were held on Wednesday 29 March 2023. Two candidates attended and were successfully co-opted to Cowes Town Council, those co-options being Stuart Dodwell and Neil Oliver. This brings the Town Council back to a full complement.

8686 PLANTING OF TROUGHS, PLANTERS AND HANGING BASKETS IN COWES FOR SUMMER 2023

Councillors suspended Financial Regulation 10.4 as only one quotation from Care in the Garden has been received. Their quotation for the summer planting of the troughs and planters in Cowes is for the sum of £961.49; the filling and installation of hanging baskets is for the sum of £1,517.70 and maintenance, weeding and dead heading and removal of the plants at the end of the season is for the sum of £810. It was:

RESOLVED

- 1. That Cowes Town Council engages Care in the Garden for the summer planting of the troughs and planters in Cowes for the sum of £961.49.**
- 2. That Cowes Town Council engages Care in the Garden for the filling and installation of hanging baskets in Cowes for the sum of £1,517.70.**
- 3. That Cowes Town Council engages Care in the Garden for the maintenance, weeding and dead heading, and removal of the plants at the end of the season in Cowes for the sum of £810.**

8687 PROVISION AND WATERING OF HANGING BASKETS THROUGHOUT COWES HIGH STREET

Councillors were asked to consider the provision and watering of hanging baskets outside of premises throughout Cowes High Street. The cost of 28 hanging baskets and installation of £1,208 and watering of £1.80 per basket based on twice a week for 16 weeks is £1,612. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council pays for the provision of 28 hanging baskets and watering for the sum of £2,820 from the 'Cowes and Northwood Place Plan Promotion' budget heading.

8688 COWES TOWN WATERFRONT TRUST (MINUTE NO 8662.1 REFERS)

Councillors discussed Cowes Town Waterfront Trust earlier in the meeting and agreed an action, please refer to Minute No 8679c.

8689 RESPONSE FROM ISLAND ROADS REGARDING CYCLISTS USING COWES HIGH STREET (MINUTE NO 8665 REFERS)

At the Town Council meeting on 2 March 2023, Councillors discussed the ongoing problem of signage to instruct cyclists to dismount during times of pedestrianisation. The Town Council have once again raised this issue with the IW Council and Island Roads. There does not appear to be a definitive answer as to what signage is legal and enforceable and investigations into this matter will be ongoing.

8690 RESPONSE FROM THE IW COUNCIL IN REGARD TO UNADOPTED AND PRIVATE ROADS (MIN NO 8651 REFERS)

At the Town Council meeting on 2 February 2023, Councillors discussed the recent IW Council presentation regarding the safety of waste employees when emptying bins in unmade and unadopted roads. The Town Council asked if the IW Council intended to take any enforcement action against residents in these roads. The IW Council have responded by saying that they have written to residents in the affected roads: Coronation Road, Weston Road, Broadfields Avenue and Alexandra Road. Residents have been invited to carry out basic maintenance to improve safety levels on the road and walkways within the frontages of their property pending a further risk assessment in 3 months' time. Currently there is no threat to recycling and waste collections in these roads.

8691 UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT OFFICER

There was not a report from the Environment Officer.

8692 MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

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

8693 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDA

- Cowes Week 2023 Update

The proceedings terminated at 8.20pm.

CHAIRMAN