

## COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Projects Committee Meeting held in the Library, Northwood House, Cowes on Tuesday 12 September 2023 at 6.15pm

**Present:** Councillors Adams (Chair), Brown, Dodwell, Ellis, Nicholson, Oliver, Paler and Sanders

**In attendance:** Ross Edmunds, Regeneration Officer, IW Council; Martin Hayles (Architect for The Cut enhancements, Changing Places Toilet and Medina Road public conveniences projects); Kate Scragg, Deputy Town Clerk; 4 members of the public

### 540. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

### 541. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

### 542. MINUTES RESOLVED

**That the Minutes of the Projects Committee meeting held on 8 August 2023 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

### 543. UPDATE ON EXISTING PROJECTS

#### a) **The Cut - Enhancements**

Revised costings for the enhancement works had been received shortly before the meeting and were presented by the Deputy Town Clerk, being a build cost of £69,012.62 and a maintenance cost until the end of the PFI Contract of £3,757.88, totalling £72,770.50. No indication of a timescale for the works has been provided. Although the costs have increased by £7,516.93 since the last estimate of £65,253.57 was approved in 2021 (Min. No. 8411 refers), Councillors were still in support of the improvements for The Cut area. Councillors felt the previously agreed contingency of £6,000 (Min. No. 8411.b.2 refers) should be increased to 10% of the revised contract value. It was:

#### **RECOMMENDED**

- 1. That Cowes Town Council approves Island Roads' revised estimate, including maintenance to the end of the PFI Contract, of £72,770.50, subject to the Isle of Wight Council releasing S.106 monies of £62,338.00, with the balance of £10,432.25 to be met from monies held by Cowes Town Council for The Cut project.**
- 2. That Cowes Town Council approves a contingency sum of 10% of the contract value, being £7,277.05, with the cost to be met from monies held by Cowes Town Council for The Cut project.**

It was agreed:

#### **ACTION**

The Deputy Town Clerk will ask the IW Council's Contracts Management Team for a timescale for the works.

#### b) **Changing Places Facility – The Cut**

Martin Hayles, architect for the project, was in attendance. The drawings for the Building Regulation application have been completed and Martin will submit the application to the Local Authority on behalf of Cowes Town Council. The schedule of works has been drafted. Martin advised that the final tender is likely to be in excess of £50,000, requiring the Town Council to give public notice for the return of tenders for three consecutive weeks, in

accordance with Financial Regulation 10.5. Martin expects the tender package to be finalised within 14 days.

The Heads of Terms Lease and Plan have been signed by Cowes Town Council and returned to the IW Council for completion. The IW Council have since advised that this will need to be registered with the Land Registry, who strongly advise that a solicitor be instructed to undertake this process. The Deputy Town Clerk presented costings from Diana Deacon, whose services were used when entering into the existing Lease for The Cut public conveniences, to undertake the work on behalf of the Town Council. The searches previously carried out by Diana Deacon for The Cut can be re-used. Diana's fees, including Land Registry registration fee, are estimated at £1,237.40. To expedite this process, Councillors felt it appropriate for the Mayor to authorise the expenditure in accordance with Financial Regulation 10.3. Martin offered to provide Diana with any drawings to assist in the process.

The Mayor discussed with Island Roads for the service alterations and groundworks for the Changing Places facility to be done as part of the enhancement works to The Cut.

It was agreed:

#### ACTIONS

1. Martin Hayles will prepare the tender package and liaise with the Clerks regarding advertising dates.
2. The Mayor will authorise the engagement of Diana Deacon to register the Heads of Terms Lease with the Land Registry.

#### c) **Public Conveniences Refurbishment - Medina Road**

The Town Council have appointed RPL Construction Ltd to undertake the refurbishment of the public conveniences facilities at Medina Road. Martin Hayles met with the sub-contractor who will do the internal fitting. The sub-contractor will produce a graphical representation of the internal layout, with a palette of the colours available, for the Town Council to select their preference. Isle Access, who consulted on the layout of the accessible facility, will be asked for their guidance on the colour scheme for the accessible facility. Martin put forward a suggestion, raised by the contractor, to replace the two external doors (Ladies and Gents facilities) with lockable gates, which would provide air flow to the facility if/when locked. Councillors felt this required further consideration, once the graphics are available. It was agreed:

#### ACTIONS

1. The Deputy Town Clerk will circulate the graphical representation, once received.
2. The Deputy Town Clerk will liaise with Isle Access for guidance regarding the colour scheme for the accessible facility.

#### d) **Ark and Dove Commemorations**

The IW Council's agreement is awaited to install a new Ark and Dove information board on The Parade. The Deputy Town Clerk has requested a site meeting with the District Steward (Island Roads) to reaffirm the location of the information board. Once confirmed, the location will be forwarded to the IW Council for their approval.

#### e) **CCTV at Northwood Recreation Ground**

The IW Council's permission is awaited to install a CCTV system at Northwood Recreation Ground. This will be raised at the next monthly meeting with the IW Council.

f) **Review of Access Audit for Cowes Town Centre**

Members of the Projects Committee are reviewing the audit report's findings.

It was reported that Island Roads have installed a number of new dropped kerbs in the town centre. Dropped kerbs are also expected to be installed at Fountain Yard as part of the refurbishment of the area.

g) **Wishing Well, Shooters Hill**

The Deputy Town Clerk has spoken with the IW Council's Contracts Management Team to discuss whether the Town Council can take over the Wishing Well, remove the pump and install a steel cap to the structure. It was advised that the Highways Authority has no objection in principle to the removal of the pump or the undertaking of works to the Wishing Well, however, prior to being in a position to authorise these works the following will be required:

In respect to the pump, information proving ownership of this feature or who donated the pump etc. Any works relating to the removal of the pump, excavation / reinstatement of the public footway, will need to be undertaken by a contractor accredited to work on the public highway. There will also be a need for them to obtain a license from Island Roads in association with Section 171 of the Highways Act 1980 prior to commencement of works.

In respect to the Wishing Well, as with the pump, limited information is held in respect to the feature. The Wishing Well is not a highway asset, however, due to it being located on the public highway, a permit will need to be obtained from Island Roads in respect to the placing of any associated traffic management prior to the undertaking of works. Any contractor engaged to carry out the proposed repair work will need to have the appropriate level of public liability / indemnity insurance to work on the highway (£10 million).

The Mayor offered to speak to the IW Council's Contracts Management Team and accredited contractors to progress removal of the pump.

As there is likely to be differing views on whether to repair and retain the Wishing Well, or remove it altogether, Councillors felt it was appropriate to consult with local residents and shopkeepers.

Councillor Dodwell is obtaining written quotations for the steel cap.

It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. Councillor Ellis will discuss proof of ownership / installation of the pump with the Hammond family; any statement of proof will be forwarded to the IW Council.
2. The Mayor will contact the IW Council's Contracts Management Team and accredited contractors to discuss removal of the pump.
3. The Deputy Town Clerk will produce a draft survey to consult with residents and businesses.

h) **Maintenance Role**

The installation of the flags and banners through the High Street is currently being managed by the Town Council, at the request of Cowes Business Association. Quotations are being sought from approved local contractors for the installation of flags and banners. This is considered a temporary solution, which will enable the current Union Jack flags to be removed. The Town Council will consider purchasing new 'Cowes' and Christmas flags. Information on the schedule of events for the installation of flags / banners for 2024 will be required. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Deputy Town Clerk will obtain costs for new Cowes and Christmas flags.
2. Councillor Bertie will be requested to assist with the schedule of events requiring flags / banners for 2024.

i) **Cowes High Street Events**

The Mayor attended Cowes Traders' Group monthly meeting in August. A number of points were raised at the meeting which the Town Council were requested to consider.

A request to move the Christmas Tree from Francki Place to The Cut was made. The Town Council have already approved the location of the Christmas Tree in Francki Place for 2023. It was also felt not appropriate to move the tree to The Cut due to the planned enhancement works and installation of a Changing Places Toilet facility in this area. This is something that can be considered after the works are completed, if there is sufficient room for a large tree, without it impeding access to the ramp for the Changing Places Toilet facility. It was noted that there is currently a 'sleeve' providing an electrical supply for a Christmas Tree at this location; it was requested to keep this, if possible, after the aforementioned works are completed.

Assistance to remove the redundant BT phone box and other cabinets from the area outside of Sainsbury's in the High Street was requested. Councillors advised that BT will not remove the telephone box currently. The cabinets are necessary as they service a number of nearby businesses.

The installation of solar-powered LED lights through the town, which will remain in place all year round, was requested by traders. Councillors felt this was something that could be explored by the Projects Committee.

The date for the turning on of the Christmas Lights was requested. This is usually set in consultation with traders to tie in with their late night shopping evening. Thursday 23 November was put forward as a suggestion by the Town Council. Cowes Traders Group requested the Town Council's assistance with free parking on that evening to encourage shoppers to stay in the area. Councillor Adams offered to organise a school choir to sing. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Deputy Town Clerk will ask Martin Hayles for his thoughts on the retention of the electrical 'sleeve' and whether there will be sufficient room for a Christmas Tree in The Cut.
2. The Deputy Town Clerk will add 'Solar-powered LED lights' to the agenda for the next Projects Committee.
3. The Deputy Town Clerk will seek a quotation for solar-powered LED lights from a local contractor in the first instance.
4. The Deputy Town Clerk will request free parking on the evening of Thursday 23 November 2023 from the IW Council's Parking Services Department.
5. Councillor Adams will contact local schools to organise a choir for the Christmas Light switch-on event.

j) **D-day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – 6 June 2024**

Councillor Paler provided an update on plans to commemorate the 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of D-Day. The Picnic in the Park has been scheduled for the Sunday following the Anniversary on 6 June 2024. This will be the town's main community event. Councillor Paler suggested that only the beacon is lit on Thursday 6 June 2024, to co-ordinate with other beacon lighting in the area. This will require permission from the IW Council to site the beacon on The Parade, along with the installation of appropriate temporary fencing and completion of a risk assessment. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Deputy Town Clerk will seek permission from the IW Council to light a beacon on The Parade on the evening of Thursday 6 June 2024.

2. Subject to the above permission being granted, the Deputy Town Clerk will seek costs for temporary fencing around the beacon and complete a risk assessment.

k) **Review Notes from informal meeting with IW Council – 18 August 2023**

The Notes from the informal meeting were circulated prior to the meeting. Councillors requested the loss of public access to the waterfront be raised at the next meeting, including clarification on Whitegates Pontoon - whether it will remain accessible to the public following its refurbishment and change to being managed by Cowes Harbour Commission. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Deputy Town Clerk to raise public access slipways at the next informal meeting with the IW Council.

**544. NEW PROJECTS**

a) **Town Signs**

This item was deferred to the next meeting of the Projects Committee.

**545. MAINTENANCE ISSUES WITH EXISTING PROJECTS**

a) **Street Furniture**

The Clerks are meeting a representative from Community Payback to discuss redecoration of various items of street furniture.

The annual inspection of the Town Council's assets will be undertaken shortly by the Deputy Town Clerk and Facilities Manager.

The Cut benches were raised, which do not appear to have been included on the Network Integrity Register; Councillor Dodwell offered to undertake a safety check and advise the Clerks of any issues. It was agreed:

ACTION

Councillor Dodwell will inspect the benches in The Cut and advise the Clerks of any safety issues.

b) **Public Conveniences**

The Clerks are meeting a representative from Community Payback to discuss redecoration of the internal ceilings at The Parade and Northwood Recreation Ground public conveniences.

The use of Reinforced Autoclaved Aerated Concrete (RAAC) has been raised in the national media recently; the Mayor confirmed that no RAAC is present in our public conveniences.

An unpleasant aroma from the public conveniences was raised; the Deputy Town Clerk was requested to discuss with the cleaner.

Councillor Rafferty is writing a risk assessment for The Parade public conveniences, following reports of repeated antisocial behaviour and access to the roof of the facility by youths.

It was agreed:

ACTION

The Deputy Town Clerk will speak to the cleaner about the aroma from our public conveniences.

**546. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS**

- Plastic reusable glasses – Councillor Nicholson
- Community Orchard – Councillor Brown
- Solar-powered LED lights (Min. No. 543.i. refers)

The proceedings terminated at 8.08pm.

**CHAIRMAN**