

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

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

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

In attendance: Debbie Faulkner, Town Clerk; Kate Scragg, Deputy Town Clerk; two members of the public.

8763 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Bertie, Hollis, Oliver and Peacey Wilcox.

8764 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Fuller declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No. 8777 as he is a Trustee of The Footprint Trust Ltd.

8765 REPORT FROM THE LOCAL SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER

There was not a report from the Local Safer Neighbourhood Officer. Councillors were disappointed about the lack of police attendance at the Town Council meeting.

8766 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 13 July 2023, be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8767 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The members of the public present raised the issue of the disrepair of the Wishing Well on Shooters Hill. The Mayor advised that this matter is being discussed at the Projects Committee meeting on Tuesday 12 September 2023 to which the public are invited to attend.

8768 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 Fuller was asked if he had obtained the annual schedule of works for Cowes from Island Roads which was promised at the June Town Council meeting. It was agreed:

ACTION

Councillor Fuller will once again ask Island Roads to circulate the annual schedule of works for 2023 for the Cowes area.

Councillor Quigley's report referred to the closed section of the walkway on the approach to Red Funnel due to an unsafe balcony which we understand is making progress towards resolution.

The charges and pontoons at Town Quay were raised, along with the ownership of the benches in the area. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerks will write to the IW Council's legal department to ascertain ownership of the benches.

Councillors also discussed a vacancy on Cowes Harbour Commission's Board of Commissioners and asked whether a Town Councillor may consider applying.

8769 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

a) Projects Committee

The Minutes of the Projects Committee meeting held on 8 August 2023 were received and noted. It was:

RESOLVED

- 1. That Cowes Town Council engages RPL Construction Ltd for the refurbishment of Medina Road public conveniences for the cost of £90,188.80, with the cost to be met from the money set aside for the Public Toilet Refurbishment.**
- 2. That Cowes Town Council approves a contingency sum of 10% of the contract value, with the cost to be met from the money set aside for the Public Toilet Refurbishment.**
- 3. That Cowes Town Council agrees the sum of £1,500 for expenditure relating to holding a community event for the D-Day 80th Anniversary, with the cost to be met from the 'New Projects' budget heading.**

b) Planning & Licensing Committee

The Minutes of the Planning & Licensing Committee meetings held on 9 August 2023 and 29 August 2023 were received and noted.

c) Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee

The Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 22 August 2023 were received and noted. It was:

RESOLVED

- 1. That Cowes Town Council receive, note and approve the Financial Statement as at 30 June 2023.**
- 2. That the Job Description, Person Specification and Advertisement for the position of Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer be approved.**
- 3. That the advertisement for the position of Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer be placed in the County Press and the Observer for two weeks and circulated to IWALC and the local SLCC branch.**

d) Supporters of Cowes Library

The Minutes of the meeting of the Supporters of Cowes Library held on 24 July 2023 were received and noted. Councillor Wardrop advised that the Library staff are very unhappy with the repair made to the outer wall, the instruction being only to make the wall safe as it is too expensive to fully renovate. The Librarian will be raising this matter with the Head of the Library Service at the IW Council.

8770 PARADE TOILETS – ACCESS TO BANDSTAND ROOF

Councillors discussed the Parade toilets and Bandstand roof which is being regularly scaled by youngsters who then throw toilet rolls at passers-by. The police have been alerted to this situation and have said that patrols in this area have been stepped up. However, Councillors are concerned about the safety of the youths on the roof and the potential for falling which could result in Cowes Town Council being held responsible. A suggestion to install spikes was not possible due to legal restrictions. Fragile roof signs are already in situ. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. Councillor Rafferty will undertake a risk assessment of the building and report back to Full Council.
2. Councillor Rafferty will remove the hanging basket and bracket to deter further climbing onto the roof.
3. The Town Clerk will re-send the email sent to the Police, and their response, to all Town Councillors.

The Town Clerk circulated a report from the Mayor detailing his activities during the month which was received too late to add to the Agenda. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Mayor has asked all Town Councillors to provide, when relevant, a succinct report for the Town Council meeting under Agenda Item 8 to advise Councillors of any activities undertaken during the month.

8771 AMENDED ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Due to an incorrect figure placed on Page 5 of the AGAR by the Internal Auditor, Cowes Town Council are required to sign the amended AGAR for return to the External Auditor, BDO LLP. It was:

RESOLVED

That the amended Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2023 be approved and signed by the Town Mayor and Town Clerk.

8772 CHEQUE PAYMENTS AND PETTY CASH PAYMENTS FOR THE MONTHS OF JULY 2023 AND AUGUST 2023

The Town Clerk presented Councillors with details of cheque and petty cash payments for the months of July and August 2023. Cheque payments for July totalled £27,953.37; petty cash payments for July totalled £292.54. Cheque payments for August totalled £34,833.16; petty cash payments for August totalled £156.30. It was:

RESOLVED

That the cheque payments for July of £27,953.37, the petty cash payments for July of £292.54, the cheque payments for August of £34,833.16 and petty cash payments for August of £156.30 be received, noted and approved.

8773 TO CONSIDER WHICH CHARITY / ORGANISATION WILL RECEIVE THE BALANCE OF THE CORONATION PICNIC IN THE PARK FUNDS OF £349.06

The Town Clerk advised that there are funds of £349.06 remaining from the Coronation Picnic in the Park 2023. Northwood House Charitable Trust Co. Ltd have asked the Town Council to consider which charity or organisation should receive these funds. A number of worthy causes were discussed. It was:

RESOLVED

That the funds of £349.06 will be shared 50/50 between Wight Aid and the Foodbank.

8774 RESPONSE FROM DONNA JONES, POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER (PCC), REGARDING A REQUEST TO ATTEND A FUTURE TOWN COUNCIL MEETING (MIN NO 8730.2 REFERS)

The Town Clerk advised that Donna Jones, PCC, is unable to attend any forthcoming Town Council meetings but has agreed to meet with Town Councillors on Friday 3 November 2023 at 2.30pm in the Library at Northwood House. All Town Councillors are invited to attend. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Town Clerk will re-circulate the exchange of emails between Councillor Nicholson and Donna Jones, PCC.
2. Town Councillors will send any further issues to be raised at the meeting to the Town Clerk in advance of 3 November 2023.

8775 TO CONSIDER ADOPTING NALC'S EQUALITY & DIVERSITY POLICY (MIN NO 8756 REFERS)

Following the recent discrimination case against Cowes Town Council, it was agreed to consider adopting NALC's Equality and Diversity Policy. Councillors considered a draft policy document. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council adopt the Equality and Diversity Policy as presented.

8776 REVIEW OF COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY STATEMENT

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

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the Website Accessibility Statement.

8777 FOOTPRINT TRUST'S QUARTERLY IMPACT REPORT FOR APRIL – JUNE 2023

Councillors received details of The Footprint Trust's quarterly impact report for April - June 2023. The outreach statistics showed that, to date, 40 people in Cowes had been helped.

8778 UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT OFFICER

A report outlining the activities of the Environment Officer in Cowes was circulated to all Town Councillors. Actions taken routinely include dogs, homeless people, anti-social behaviour, litter and public toilets.

8779 MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

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

8780 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

- Inconsiderate parking by Lanesend School parents
- Medina Yard update

The proceedings terminated at 7.57pm.

CHAIRMAN