

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Cowes Town Council held at The Isle of Wight Community Club, Park Road, Cowes on Thursday 5 October 2023 at 7pm.

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

In attendance: Debbie Faulkner, Town Clerk; Kate Scragg, Deputy Town Clerk.

Prior to the start of the meeting, Councillor Nicholson reported of the sad loss of Colonel Otton Hulacki who passed away on 25 September 2023 at the age of 101. Cowes Town Council's first association with Otton was in 1991. Geoff Banks was Town Mayor and in 1992 it was the 50th anniversary of the Cowes blitz. It was recognised that it was important to commemorate this historic event, however, there was an urgent need to find a Polish speaking person for negotiations with Poland. Otton offered his services and played an important part in making the event so successful. Following this event Otton and Geoff Banks formed the Friends of the ORP Blyskawica Society in 1997 and since then there have been annual commemorative events supported by Cowes Town Council. Otton's contribution, as co-founder and past President, throughout has been immeasurable and without his assistance, even in his later years, those events would have not been so meaningful and memorable. Otton will be sadly missed by all.

On a happier note, Councillor Nicholson advised Councillors that the IW Story Festival has won the 'BBC Making a Difference Award 2023'. Fantastic news for the organisers and the Island.

8781 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Peacey Wilcox and Walters.

8782 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

8783 REPORT FROM THE LOCAL SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER

There was not a report from the Local Safer Neighbourhood Officer. Councillor Nicholson reported that he had a very positive meeting with Terry Norton, Deputy Police and Crime Commissioner (DPCC), where he was advised that a dedicated police officer and phone number would be assigned to each area on the Isle of Wight. It was acknowledged that Cowes Town Council had not been advised in advance of the placement of a new Police hub in Cowes. It was agreed:

ACTION

Councillor Nicholson will advise the DPCC that there was still no attendance of a police officer at the Town Council meeting or a report provided.

8784 MINUTES RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 7 September 2023, be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8785 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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

8786 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 reported that hedgehog homes are available from 'Men in Sheds'. It was acknowledged that Councillor Quigley is helping a resident in The Arcade, Fountain Yard, with difficulties due to water ingress from an adjoining property. The M & S road signage issue will be considered by the Place Plan Steering Group audit. Councillor Quigley also referred to the excess of primary and secondary school places. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerk will ask Councillor Quigley to advise of the current excess of school places in the Cowes area.

8787 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

a) Projects Committee

The Minutes of the Projects Committee meeting held on 12 September 2023 were received and noted. It was:

RESOLVED

- 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.**

b) Planning & Licensing Committee

The Minutes of the Planning & Licensing Committee meeting held on 19 September 2023 were received and noted. The Planning & Licensing Committee and Councillor Fuller are asking for the proposed Meadow View development to be 'called in' and heard by the IW Council's Planning Committee.

c) Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee

The Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 26 September 2023 were received and noted. It was:

RESOLVED

- 1. That a grant be made to Ability Dogs 4 Young People in the sum of £500.**
- 2. That a grant be made to Cowes Amateur Operatic & Dramatic Society (CAODS) in the sum of £1,500.**
- 3. That a grant be made to Isle of Wight Citizens Advice Bureau in the sum of £500.**
- 4. That a grant be made Isle of Wight Literary Festival in the sum of £2,500.**
- 5. That a grant be made to UK Sailing Academy in the sum of £750.**

6. That Cowes Town Council engage Care in the Garden for winter planting and maintenance in Cowes for the sum of £2,060 with the cost to be met from the 'Cowes in Bloom' budget heading.
7. That Cowes Town Council does not invest in Wight Community Energy.
8. That Cowes Town Council makes a further sum of £200 available to Mornington Woods Volunteer Group from the 'Discretionary Services Contingency' budget heading for the remaining financial year 2023 / 2024.
9. That Cowes Town Council makes available £700 to Mornington Woods Volunteer Group from the 'Discretionary Services Contingency' budget heading for future financial years
10. That the Interview Panel for the position of Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer should consist of no more than four Councillors and the Town Clerk, those being Councillors Ellis, Nicholson, Rafferty & Sanders.
11. Due to the lack of applications, the vacancy will be re-advertised for a further two weeks and the hours will be increased from 18 hours a week to 25 hours a week through the IW County Press, the IW Observer, the IW Council's job vacancy list and 'Indeed'.
12. That Cowes Town Council renews the Deputy Town Clerk's membership of the SLCC in the sum of £222.

d) Supporters of Cowes Library

The Minutes of the meeting of the Supporters of Cowes Library held on 4 September 2023 were received and noted.

8788 MAYOR'S UPDATE

The Mayor updated Councillors on recent activities including the 'Great Wight Bite'; forming a Governance Support Committee; taking a lead in collaborative working; identifying common goals amongst local stakeholders. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. Councillors to complete their qualifications and experience forms so that Councillors can lead on Place Plan matters utilising their specialisms and experience.
2. Councillors are asked to send a monthly report to advise the Town Council of their activities in Cowes.

8789 COUNCILLOR UPDATE

Councillor Paler updated Councillors on recent activities including the 'Great Wight Bite'; the Southampton Boat Show 2023; East Cowes Town Council meeting; Isle of Wight Community Club Open Day; UKSA Britannia visit to Cowes High Street; the Covid memorial; Cowes Harbour Commissioner meeting; Isle of Wight Book Awards; Wight Horse CIC.

8790 PARADE BANDSTAND RISK ASSESSMENT (MIN NO 8770 REFERS)

Councillor Rafferty undertook a risk assessment of The Parade Bandstand in Cowes, which was circulated to all Town Councillors. This was undertaken as a result of the risk to young people accessing the Bandstand roof and the risk to passers-by from objects being thrown from the roof. A number of recommendations have been made

and any further suggestions / ideas will be discussed at the next Projects Committee meeting on 10 October 2023. The Mayor thanked Councillor Rafferty for his detailed report.

8791 MEDINA YARD UPDATE (MIN NO 8780 REFERS)

Councillor Peacey Wilcox has been approached by the owners of Medina Yard with a view to a future meeting being held to discuss the way forward with the development. As yet, no meeting date has been arranged. It was agreed:

ACTION

Medina Yard will be added to the Agenda for the next Planning & Licensing Committee meeting.

8792 CHEQUE PAYMENTS AND PETTY CASH PAYMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2023

The Town Clerk presented Councillors with details of cheque and petty cash payments for the month of September 2023. Cheque payments totalled £17,549.60; petty cash payments totalled £165.35. It was:

RESOLVED

That the cheque payments of £17,549.60 and the petty cash payments of £165.35 be received, noted and approved.

8793 CONCLUSION OF THE EXTERNAL AUDIT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2023

Councillors received details of the conclusion of the external audit from BDO LLP. In their opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to their attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. However, other matters not affecting their opinion are drawn to the attention of Cowes Town Council i.e. the AGAR was not accurately completed before submission for review and had to be sent back for amendment. The Internal Auditor did not cover all of the recommended objectives to confirm compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation were being achieved throughout the financial year. Objective L: The Authority published the required information on the website / webpage up-to-date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant information was answered 'Not covered'. It was:

RESOLVED

- 1. That Cowes Town Council receives and approves the conclusion of the External Audit for the year ended 31 March 2023.**
- 2. That Cowes Town Council receives and notes the other matters identified by the external auditor BDO LLP.**

8794 SUGGESTED AMENDMENTS TO THE PLACE PLAN PROGRAMME STEERING GROUP AND PLACE PLAN PROJECT WORKING GROUPS' TERMS OF REFERENCE

At the Cowes Town Council meeting on 13 July 2023, Councillors adopted the 'Terms of Reference' for the Place Plan Programme Steering Group and Place Plan Project Working Groups. The 'Terms of Reference' were sent to Northwood Parish Council for their consideration. Northwood Parish Council made a number of minor amendments to the document. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council adopts the revised 'Terms of Reference' for the Place Plan Programme Steering Group and Place Plan Project Working Groups.

8795 IW COUNCIL'S COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

The IW Council have asked Town and Parish Councils to consider making comments regarding the Council Tax Reduction Scheme consultation. The proposal being for the scheme to stay the same as it is currently, with the maximum level of support remaining at 70%. Alternatives to the proposed scheme are for the maximum level of support to be increased to 75% or the maximum level of support to be decreased to 65%. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council supports the proposed scheme to stay the same as it is currently with the maximum level of support remaining at 70%.

8796 TO CONSIDER THE HIRE OF A PA SYSTEM AND FLAGPOLE FOR THE REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY EVENT ON 12 NOVEMBER 2023

The Town Clerk asked Councillors to consider the hire of a PA system in the sum of £265 and flagpole in the sum of £250 for the Remembrance Sunday event at Northwood Park on Sunday 12 November 2023. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council hires a PA system in the sum of £265 and flagpole in the sum of £250 for the Remembrance Sunday event at Northwood Park on Sunday 12 November 2023.

8797 TO CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION TO ST MARY'S CHURCH FOR THE PRODUCTION OF THE REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY PROGRAMMES

The Town Clerk asked Councillors to consider making a donation of £100 to St Mary's Church for the production of the Remembrance Sunday programmes. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council makes a donation of £100 to St Mary's Church for the production of the Remembrance Sunday programmes.

It was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerk will ask St Mary's Church for the actual cost of producing the programmes to ensure that the amount donated is sufficient to cover their costs.

8798 TO CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION TO THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION POPPY APPEAL FOR THE REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY WREATH

The Town Clerk asked Councillors to consider making a donation of £200 to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal for the Remembrance Sunday wreath. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council makes a donation of £200 to the Royal British Legion Poppy Appeal for the Remembrance Sunday wreath.

8799 TO CONSIDER MAKING A DONATION TO THE COWES BRANCH OF THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION FOR REFRESHMENTS AFTER THE REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY EVENT

The Town Clerk asked Councillors to consider making a donation to the Cowes Branch of the Royal British Legion for refreshments after the Remembrance Sunday event on 12 November 2023. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council makes a donation of £450 to the Cowes Branch of the Royal British Legion for refreshments after the Remembrance Sunday event on 12 November 2023.

8800 REVIEW OF COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S CHILD, YOUNG PERSON AND VULNERABLE ADULT PROTECTION POLICY

A review of Cowes Town Council's Child, Young Person and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy was carried out and no amendments were required. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the Child, Young Person and Vulnerable Adult Protection Policy.

8801 REVIEW OF COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S POLICY ON DEBATE AND VOTING AT MEETINGS

A review of Cowes Town Council's Policy on Debate and Voting at Meetings was carried out and no amendments were required. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the Policy on Debate and Voting at Meetings.

8802 REVIEW OF COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S DIGNITY AT WORK POLICY

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

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the Dignity at Work Policy.

8803 REVIEW OF COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR EMPLOYEES

A review of Cowes Town Council's Grievance Procedure for Employees was carried out and no amendments were required. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the Grievance Procedure for Employees.

8804 REVIEW OF COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S DISCIPLINARY PROCEDURE FOR EMPLOYEES

A review of Cowes Town Council's Disciplinary Procedure for Employees was carried out and no amendments were required. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the Disciplinary Procedure for Employees.

8805 ISLAND ROADS' FACTSHEET REGARDING THE PROCEDURE BEING USED FOR THE TREATMENT OF POTHOLES (MIN NO 8646 REFERS)

The Town Council requested information from Island Roads regarding the procedure being used for the treatment of potholes. A factsheet was circulated to all Town Councillors.

8806 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, anti-social behaviour, waste and litter. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerk will ask the Environment Officer how many Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued in Cowes.

Councillor Wardrop left the meeting at 8.23pm.

8807 MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

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

8808 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

- Town Quay – Who is responsible for cleaning this area, which is noted to be very untidy and littered?

The proceedings terminated at 8.30pm

CHAIRMAN