

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Cowes Town Council held in The Drawing Room, Northwood House, Cowes on Thursday 9 May 2024 at 7pm.

Present: Councillor Nicholson (Town Mayor) (Chairman)
Councillors Adams, Barney, Brown, Carter, Ellis, Fuller, Oliver, Peacey Wilcox, Rafferty, Sanders, Walters & Wardrop.

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

8907 ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR

Councillor Nicholson was proposed for Town Mayor by Councillor Rafferty and seconded by Councillor Sanders. Following a show of hands, it was:

RESOLVED

That Councillor Nicholson be elected as Town Mayor to serve until the Annual Town Council meeting in 2025.

Councillor Nicholson thereupon made a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked Councillor Ellis for being a very supportive Deputy Town Mayor.

8908 ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR

Councillor Ellis was proposed for Deputy Town Mayor by Councillor Fuller and seconded by Councillor Peacey Wilcox. Following a show of hands, it was:

RESOLVED

That Councillor Ellis be elected as Deputy Town Mayor to serve until the Annual Town Council meeting in 2025.

Councillor Ellis thereupon made a Declaration of Acceptance of Office and thanked Councillors for their support.

8909 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dodwell & Hollis.

8910 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

8911 APPOINTMENTS TO FINANCE, ACQUISITIONS & STAFFING COMMITTEE

There are nine representatives on the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee. The Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor are 'ex officio' on all Committees. It was:

RESOLVED

That the following members be appointed to serve on the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee until the Annual Town Council meeting in 2025:

The Town Mayor, the Deputy Town Mayor and Councillors Barney, Brown, Carter, Hollis, Oliver, Rafferty & Walters.

8912 APPOINTMENTS TO PLANNING & LICENSING COMMITTEE

There are nine representatives on the Planning & Licensing Committee. The Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor are 'ex officio' on all Committees. It was:

RESOLVED

That the following members be appointed to serve on the Planning & Licensing Committee until the Annual Town Council meeting in 2025:

The Town Mayor, the Deputy Town Mayor and Councillors Barney, Brown, Dodwell, Hollis, Sanders & Wardrop. There remains one vacancy on this Committee.

8913 APPOINTMENTS TO PROJECTS COMMITTEE

There are nine representatives on the Projects Committee. The Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor are 'ex officio' on all Committees. It was:

RESOLVED

That the following members be appointed to serve on the Projects Committee until the Annual Town Council meeting in 2025:

The Town Mayor, the Deputy Town Mayor and Councillors Adams, Brown, Dodwell, Oliver, Peacey Wilcox, Rafferty & Sanders.

Councillor Peacey Wilcox left the meeting at 7.09pm.

8914 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES

Following a discussion about appointments to the other bodies it was:

RESOLVED

That the following representatives have been appointed to serve on the following other bodies until the Annual Town Council meeting in 2025:

Civil Military Partnership

Councillor P. Sanders

Deputy – Councillor J. Nicholson

Cowes Harbour Commission Advisory Committee

Councillor D. Walters

Deputy - Councillor A. Adams

Cowes Traders Group

Councillor P. Sanders

Deputy – Councillor J. Nicholson

East Cowes Town Council Liaison

Councillor J. Rafferty

Deputy – Councillor A. Adams

Environment & Sustainability Forum

Councillor N. Oliver

Deputy – Councillor P. Fuller

Friends of ORP Blyskawica Society Executive Committee

Councillor P. Sanders

Deputy – Councillor D. Walters

Highways P.F.I. District One

Councillor D. Walters

Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils Executive Committee (IWALC)

Councillor P. Fuller

Deputy - Councillor S. Barney

Member Internal Financial Reviewers – Town Council Accounts

Councillors A. Adams and P. Sanders

Northwood House Charitable Trust Co. Ltd - Park Forum

Councillor L. Brown

Deputy – Councillor N. Oliver

Place Plan Steering Group

Councillor J. Nicholson

Councillor L. Peacey Wilcox (Lead – Medina Ward)

Supporters of Cowes Library

Councillor W. Wardrop

Deputy – Councillor D. Walters

Tree Wardens

Councillors L. Brown and P. Sanders

8915 STANDING ORDERS

A review of Standing Orders was carried out and no amendments were made. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the Standing Orders.

8916 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

A review of Financial Regulations was carried out and no amendments were made. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the Financial Regulations.

8917 CODE OF CONDUCT

A review of the Code of Conduct was carried out and no amendments were made. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the Code of Conduct and refers it to the next Chairs & Clerks meeting for further review.

8918 POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND RISK ASSESSMENTS

A review of the following documents was carried out and no amendments were required: Complaints Procedure; Complaints Procedure for complaints against members; Internal Grievance Procedure; Freedom of Information under the model publication scheme; Document & Retention Disposal Policy; Risk Assessment - Insurance. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the annual reviews as listed above.

A review and update of the Community Emergency Plan will be carried out. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Community Emergency Plan will be reviewed and updated following a meeting with the IW Council regarding the recent flooding in the town.
2. The document will be referred to the Projects Committee for discussion.

The following documents were discussed: Risk Management Policy; Health & Safety Policy; Policy for dealing with abusive, persistent and vexatious complaints or complainants; Information and Data Protection Policy (Draft May 2024). It was:

RESOLVED

That the documents as listed above will be reviewed at the next Chairs and Clerks meeting.

8919 DATES OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR 2024 / 2025

RESOLVED

That the Town Council and Committee meetings be held on the following dates and start times for the Municipal Year 2024 / 2025.

TOWN COUNCIL	7pm
13 June 2024	
18 July 2024	
5 September 2024	
3 October 2024	
7 November 2024	
12 December 2024	
6 February 2025	
6 March 2025	
3 April 2025	
15 May 2025 Annual Town Council Meeting	

FINANCE, ACQUISITIONS & STAFFING COMMITTEE 6.15pm
21 May 2024
25 June 2024
23 July 2024
27 August 2024
24 September 2024
22 October 2024
26 November 2024
28 January 2025
25 February 2025
25 March 2025
22 April 2025

PROJECTS COMMITTEE 6.15pm
11 June 2024
9 July 2024
13 August 2024
10 September 2024
8 October 2024
12 November 2024
14 January 2025
11 February 2025
11 March 2025
8 April 2025

8920 ATTENDANCES

The Town Clerk reported that the attendances of Members at Town Council and Committee meetings during 2023 / 2024 were as follows:

TOWN COUNCIL

COUNCILLOR	POSSIBLE	ATTENDANCES	%
A. Adams	11	7	64
S. Barney	2	2	100
L. Brown	11	9	82
A. Carter	11	9	82
S. Dodwell	11	9	82
S. Ellis	11	10	91
P. Fuller	11	10	91
R. Hollis	11	6	54
J. Nicholson	11	10	91
N. Oliver	11	9	82
L. Peacey Wilcox	11	7	64
J. Rafferty	11	7	64
P. Sanders	11	11	100
D. Walters	11	8	73
W. Wardrop	11	9	82

FINANCE, ACQUISITIONS & STAFFING COMMITTEE

COUNCILLOR	POSSIBLE	ATTENDANCES	%
L. Brown	9	8	89
A. Carter	9	5	55
S. Ellis	9	8	89
R. Hollis	9	5	55
J. Nicholson	9	9	100
N. Oliver	9	6	67
J. Rafferty	9	4	44
P. Sanders	2	2	100
D. Walters	9	7	78

PLANNING & LICENSING COMMITTEE

COUNCILLOR	POSSIBLE	ATTENDANCES	%
S. Barney	2	1	50
L. Brown	15	12	80
A. Carter	15	7	47
S. Dodwell	15	9	60
S. Ellis	15	0	0
R. Hollis	15	12	80
J. Nicholson	15	6	40
P. Sanders	15	14	93
W. Wardrop	15	13	87

PROJECTS COMMITTEE

COUNCILLOR	POSSIBLE	ATTENDANCES	%
A. Adams	10	9	90
S. Barney	2	1	50
L. Brown	10	9	90
S. Dodwell	10	8	80
S. Ellis	10	5	50
J. Nicholson	10	9	90
N. Oliver	10	8	80
J. Rafferty	10	2	20
P. Sanders	10	10	100

8921 REPORT FROM THE LOCAL SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER

The local Safer Neighbourhood Officer did not attend the meeting and did not provide a report. Councillors discussed the difficulty in contacting the local Police and commented that there are no opening hours displayed at Cowes Police Station. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerk will write to PC Rowlands to advise of the lack of visibility of a Police presence in the town and lack of opening hours made available to the public.

8922 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 4 April 2024, be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

8923 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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

8924 REPORTS FROM ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLORS

Written reports focussing on local matters were received from Councillors Fuller, Nicholson and Quigley and were circulated to all Town Councillors.

Councillor Fuller advised that the IW Council's Island Plan Strategy was passed last week and will now move onto the next stage.

Councillor Nicholson raised the issue of the works undertaken by SSE outside of the Medina Road public toilets and the subsequent damage to the new floor. This is being raised at Island Roads' Health & Safety Forum as no apparent risk assessment had been undertaken by the contractor prior to the works starting.

8925 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

a) Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee

The Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 23 April 2024 were received and noted. It was:

RESOLVED

1. That Cowes Town Council receive, note and approve the Financial Statement as at 31 March 2024.

2. That Cowes Town Council suspends Financial Regulation 10.4 to allow for only one quotation for the watering contract to be considered.

3. That Cowes Town Council enters into a 3 year fixed term watering contract with JW Autoshine at a total annual cost of £5,598.80 (minus 10% discount).

4. That Cowes Town Council allows the Town Council logo to be placed on JW Autoshine's EV van.

5. That Cowes Town Council accept and consider future grant applications between May and February of each municipal year.

6. That a limit of 10% of the total grant budget of £15,000 i.e. £1,500 will be set as a cap for each grant application.

7. The Grant Application guidelines will be amended accordingly.

b) Planning & Licensing Committee

The Minutes of the Planning & Licensing Committee meetings held on 2 April 2024 and 17 April 2024 were received and noted.

c) Projects Committee

The Minutes of the Projects Committee meeting held on 9 April 2024 were received and noted. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council establishes a Working Group to look at civic commemorations for the bicentenary of Cowes Week in 2026, possibly by Zoom. The members of the Working Group are: Councillors Adams, Barney, Carter, Dodwell, Ellis, Nicholson, Sanders and Walters.

- d) Supporters of Cowes Library
The Minutes of the Supporters of Cowes Library meeting held on 8 April 2024 were received and noted.
- e) Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee
The draft Minutes of the Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee meeting held on 17 April 2024 were received and noted.

8926 MAYOR'S REPORT

Councillor Nicholson provided a written report regarding his activities which included progress on the Place Plan, Cowes Youth Hub, Cowes Pantry and food distribution hub, installation and maintenance of additional planters in the town.

8927 NORTHWOOD HOUSE CHARITABLE TRUST CO LTD PARK FORUM

Councillor Brown provided an update of the activities of the NHCTCL Park Forum. The children's playground is open again with new swings and a seesaw, new parking machines have been installed to make the system easier to use and additional trees have been planted in the grounds with more to follow in November.

8928 COUNCILLOR REPORT

Councillor Oliver provided a written report on his recent activities. He has participated in the National Landscape workshop planning day to inform their ten year strategy; met with IW Council representatives to change the speed bumps at Northwood Recreation Ground; membership of the Place Plan Connectivity Group; working with other Councillors to provide a scoring matrix for future grant applications.

8929 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The Town Clerk presented Councillors with the Town Council's Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2024. The date of the period for the Exercise of Public Rights has been set for Monday 3 June 2024 to Friday 12 July 2024 inclusive. It was:

RESOLVED

That the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2024 be approved and signed by the Town Mayor and Town Clerk.

8930 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The Town Clerk presented Councillors with the Town Council's Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024. It was:

RESOLVED

That the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2024 be approved and signed by the Town Mayor and Town Clerk.

8931 INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024

The Town Clerk presented Councillors with the Town Council's Internal Auditor's Report for the year ended 31 March 2024. It was:

RESOLVED

That the Internal Auditor's Report for the year ended 31 March 2024 be received and noted.

8932 CHEQUE PAYMENTS AND PETTY CASH PAYMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL 2024

The Town Clerk presented Councillors with details of cheque and petty cash payments for the month of April 2024. Cheque payments totalled £31,009.21; petty cash payments totalled £28.72. It was:

RESOLVED

That the cheque payments of £31,009.21 and petty cash payments of £28.72 be received, noted and approved.

8933 CO-OPTION TO COWES MEDINA WARD

A co-option interview was held for one applicant on Friday 3 May. Councillors in attendance decided not to make the co-option. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council re-advertises the co-option vacancy.

8934 APPOINTMENT OF LOCUM TOWN CLERK AND RESPONSIBLE FINANCIAL OFFICER

Following the resignation of Mrs Russell, Councillors approached the former Town Clerk, Ms Faulkner, to enquire if she would be prepared to stand in as Locum Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer. This was agreed for an initial period of three months and reviewed monthly after that. The terms and conditions will be those that Ms Faulkner received when employed before retirement. This will enable Councillors to do a full staffing review and make any changes if required. Councillors thanked Ms Faulkner for agreeing to step back in to help during this time.

8935 REVIEW OF COUNCILLORS' REGISTER OF INTERESTS

The Town Clerk reminded Councillors to review their Register of Interest forms. If any changes are required then a new form will need to be completed and returned to the Clerks within 28 days.

8936 EXCHANGE OF CORRESPONDENCE BETWEEN COUNCILLORS AND OUTSIDE BODIES / STAKEHOLDERS

The Town Clerk reminded Councillors to copy both Clerks in to any email / written correspondence between Councillors and outside bodies / stakeholders.

8937 TOWN COUNCIL'S INSURANCE QUOTATION FOR 2024 / 2025

The Town Clerk received a quotation from the existing insurer, Zurich Municipal, for the 2024 / 2025 Town Council Insurance Policy. The quote is £3,112.74. This is a higher cost than last year but represents the increasing cost of the replacement value of buildings and the additional Council resources placed on the policy. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council renews its insurance policy with Zurich Municipal from 1 June 2024 to 31 May 2025 for the sum of £3,112.74.

8938 FUNDING FOR IOW PANTRIES (MIN NO 8898c1 REFERS)

At the Town Council meeting on 4 April 2024, Councillors agreed to refer a grant application of £2,000 by IOW Pantries to the Place Plan Advisory Group for consideration from the 'Cowes & Northwood Place Plan Promotion' budget heading. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council make a grant of £2,000 to IOW Pantries with the funds to be met from the 'Cowes and Northwood Place Plan Promotion' budget heading.

8939 PORTRAIT OF KING CHARLES III

Councillors were advised that the Town Council had been gifted a portrait of King Charles III for use in public buildings and hung in reception areas, function rooms and similar locations where the portrait will be on display to staff and visitors alike. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerk will ask Cowes Library if they wish to display the portrait in their public area.

8940 UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT OFFICER

A report outlining the activities of the Environment Officer in Cowes was circulated to all Town Councillors. Actions taken included meeting with Cowes traders, abandoned vehicles; public toilet inspections; dogs off leads; Cowes Youth Hub.

8941 MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

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

8942 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

No items were raised for inclusion on a future agenda.

The proceedings terminated at 8.45pm.

CHAIRMAN