

## COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Cowes Town Council held at the Isle of Wight Community Club, Park Road, Cowes on Thursday 3 October 2024 at 7pm

**Present:** Councillor Nicholson (Town Mayor) (Chairman)  
Councillors Barney, Carter, Dodwell, Ellis, Fuller (7.29pm), Hollis, Peacey Wilcox, Rafferty, Sanders, Walters & Wardrop.

**In attendance:** Debbie Faulkner, Locum Town Clerk; Kate Scragg, Deputy Town Clerk; Gary Hall, Chief Executive, Cowes Harbour Commission; 4 members of the public.

### **PRESENTATION FROM GARY HALL, CHIEF EXECUTIVE OF COWES HARBOUR COMMISSION, REGARDING THE NEW MARINA AT EAST COWES**

Gary Hall advised Councillors that the Harbour Commission are proposing to build a new marina at East Cowes. Currently the marina in Cowes does not have enough berths to accommodate the amount of boats that wish to moor. There is a local demand for space and a waiting list. The current marina cannot accommodate larger boats like the superyachts. The proposed new marina will have 135 berths with modern facilities and a walk ashore facility. It is estimated that over a 20 year period it will bring £23M into the local economy and unite West and East Cowes. It is hoped that the marina will be completed by April 2026 ahead of the 200 year anniversary of Cowes Week. The additional berthing capacity will increase visitor footfall, provide improved facilities, larger yacht capacity and improve local employment in the local shops. There will also be an improved water taxi service.

There is lots to do including applying for planning permission and acquiring a Marine Management Organisation license.

**Q** How is the project being funded?

**A** By Cowes Harbour Commission and other external funding.

**Q** What will be the impact on Cowes High Street?

**A** Shops will be provided with intelligence when cruise ships will be arriving etc.

**Q** Why is Cowes not in the 'Top 10' of ports?

**A** Cowes has fallen behind due to the lack of infrastructure; Europe treats regattas very differently. However, sailors enjoy the challenge of the Solent.

**Q** How can you make regattas visible / aware from the High Street perspective?

**A** Advise local outlets, make them aware of the events programme.

**Q** There is a silt problem due to the breakwater?

**A** The problem has been caused through lack of dredging.

The Mayor thanked Gary for his informative presentation.

### **9004 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adams, Brown, Oliver & White.

### **9005 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Peacey Wilcox declared a pecuniary interest in Minute No 9010c1 as she purchases tickets for the Isle of Wight Literary Festival.

**9006 REPORT FROM THE LOCAL SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER**

The Local Safer Neighbourhood Officer provided a report which covered matters regarding Cowes Police Station, cycling in the pedestrianised zone, Operation Prone, Operation Forebear and the 'Let's talk app' / Hampshire Alert. Councillors were impressed by the comprehensive report; it was agreed:

**ACTION**

The Town Clerk will ask local Police when they expect the amended signage in the pedestrian zone will be implemented.

**9007 MINUTES**

**RESOLVED**

**That the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 5 September 2024 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

**9008 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC**

A member of the public raised the future planning application at the Methodist Church, Birmingham Road. Councillors were advised that several local residents opposed this planning application in a residential area. Councillors have been asked to consider the objections raised when considering the planning application at a future Town Council Planning & Licensing Committee meeting. It was agreed that the Planning & Licensing Committee will consider all representations before making any comment.

**9009 REPORTS FROM ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLORS**

Written reports focussing on local matters were received from Councillors Fuller, Nicholson and Peacey Wilcox and were circulated to all Town Councillors. Councillor Peacey Wilcox advised that the Spiritualist Church are not in favour of having a storage area for volunteers at Arctic Park. She also advised that the Exxon CO2 pipeline proposal will not be going forward. Councillor Fuller advised that no decision will be made about the drone trial at Mornington Road Car Park until widespread consultation has been held with local residents.

**9010 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS**

a) Projects Committee

The Minutes of the Projects Committee meeting held on 10 September 2024 were received and noted.

b) Planning & Licensing Committee

The Minutes of the Planning & Licensing Committee meetings held on 12 September 2024 and 2 October 2024 were received and noted. It was:

**RESOLVED**

**That Cowes Town Council endorse the decision to write to the IW Council regarding the delay in considering the Clare Lallow planning application.**

c) Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee

The Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 24 September 2024 were received and noted. It was:

## RESOLVED

1. That Cowes Town Council does not make a grant to the Isle of Wight Literary Festival (IWLF).
2. That the Locum Town Clerk writes to the IWLF to advise that Cowes Town Council appreciates what the event brings to Cowes. However, when a grant application was received late in 2023, the IWLF were advised that any applications for grant must be made as soon as possible when the event is being organised. Cowes Town Council would consider providing sponsorship of the event but are disappointed that another late grant application means that the Town Council's support would not be included in any promotional material. Therefore any future applications for grant must be sent to the Town Council for consideration at the early stages of organising future festivals.
3. The Town Council will also suggest that in future years the IWLF approach other Town & Parish Councils for financial support.
4. That Cowes Town Council renews its Zoom subscription in the sum of £129.90 plus VAT.
5. That Cowes Town Council places an advert in the local media, asap, for an Admin Assistant (20 hours per week) to include an appropriate job description and person specification.
6. That Cowes Town Council extends the arrangement with the Locum Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer until 31 October 2025.
7. That Cowes Town Council renews the Deputy Town Clerk's membership of the SLCC in the sum of £238.

d) Supporters of Cowes Library

The Minutes of the meeting of the Supporters of Cowes Library held on 2 September 2024 were received and noted. It was agreed:

ACTION

That Cowes Town Council write to the Supporters of Cowes Library to thank them for all their hard work.

e) Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee

The draft Minutes of the Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee meeting held on 4 September 2024 were received and noted.

### 9011 MAYOR'S UPDATE

The Mayor reported on 'Resourcing our Liabilities and Responsibilities' and 'Preparing to Take a Lead in Local Community'.

### 9012 NORTHWOOD HOUSE NOISE COMPLAINTS

Councillors discussed receiving several noise complaints from residents emanating from Northwood House entertainment events. Some Councillors felt that this may have become more noticeable since the stage had been moved from its usual position. Northwood House Charitable Trust Co Ltd (NHCTCL) are aware of the complaints and are engaging a noise consultant to investigate the cause of the noise being more evident and create a noise management plan. It was agreed:

ACTION

Councillors Barney, Rafferty and Sanders will offer their assistance to NHCTCL with the noise management plan.

**9013 NHCTCL SEPTEMBER PARK FORUM**

The NHCTCL September Park Forum report was received and noted.

**9014 DEPUTY MAYOR'S REPORT**

The Deputy Mayor reported on the events that he had attended during Cowes Week on behalf of the Mayor which included a very informative Royal Navy reception where he was advised that the Royal Navy wish to continue to become involved with Cowes Week more than they already do. The Deputy Mayor is also working on plans for the VE Day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary in 2025.

**9015 SUPPORT FOR PETITION TO HALT THE CLOSURE OF COWES PRIMARY SCHOOL**

Councillor Rafferty presented Councillors with details of the proposed closure of Cowes Primary School and asked the Town Council to support the petition and object to the closure of the school. The report discussed the short-term view on surplus places, the negative impact on the community, support for Special Education Needs (SEN) pupils, the quality of education at alternative schools, future housing developments, short-term decline in birth rates and parental preference. The proposal to close Cowes Primary School is based on projections of surplus capacity and declining birth rates but it does not adequately consider long-term factors such as new housing developments, community cohesion and the quality of education. Additionally, there are strong arguments against disrupting the support provided to SEN students and the school's role in offering parents a valued choice in their children's education. By keeping Cowes Primary School open the IW Council can ensure a more flexible and sustainable solution to future educational demands. It was:

**RESOLVED**

- 1. That Cowes Town Council opposes the closure of Cowes Primary School.**
- 2. That Cowes Town Council writes to the IW Council expressing our collective opposition to the proposed closure of Cowes Primary School.**
- 3. That Cowes Town Council supports the petition and encourages further engagement from local residents, ensuring that their concerns are communicated effectively to the IW Council.**

**9016 CHEQUE PAYMENTS AND PETTY CASH PAYMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF SEPTEMBER 2024**

The Town Clerk had circulated details of cheque and petty cash payments for the month of September 2024. Cheque payments totalled £35,553.86; petty cash payments totalled £269.86. It was:

**RESOLVED**

**That the cheque payments for September of £35,553.86 and petty cash payments of £269.86 be received, noted and approved.**

**9017 CONCLUSION OF THE EXTERNAL AUDIT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2024 AND NOTE ANY MATTERS ARISING**

Councillors received details of the successful conclusion of the External Audit for the year ended 31 March 2024 and noted the following matters arising:

- Box 11b was answered as 'No' by the Council, but the internal auditor answered assertion 'O' as N/A, therefore the Council should have answered box 11b as N/A.

- To be in line with best practice the External Auditor recommends that when minuting the appointment of the internal auditor, the Council record they have considered the independence of the appointed auditor on an annual basis.
- Although there is an engagement letter in place, it is considered good practice to renew these at regular intervals to ensure the scope of the work is up-to-date and in line with the risks of the Council.

It was:

**RESOLVED**

**That Cowes Town Council, receives, notes and approves the conclusion of the External Audit for the year ended 31 March 2024 and notes the matters arising.**

**9018 PUBLIC CONVENIENCES ACCESS AUDIT**

Councillors were asked to consider engaging Evans Jones to undertake an Access Audit of all five public conveniences for the sum of £1,925.00 plus VAT. It was:

**RESOLVED**

**That Cowes Town Council engages Evans Jones to undertake an Access Audit of all five public conveniences for the sum of £1,925.00 plus VAT.**

**9019 WINTER PLANTING QUOTATION**

Councillors were asked to consider the quotation from Care in the Garden for winter planting in Cowes for the sum of £970.00 plus VAT, plus £25 per hour for plant maintenance. It was:

**RESOLVED**

**That Cowes Town Council engages Care in the Garden for winter planting in Cowes for the sum of £970.00 plus VAT, plus any maintenance charges.**

**9020 UPDATE REGARDING THE DRONE TRIAL AT MORNINGTON ROAD CAR PARK**

At the Town Council meeting on 5 September 2024, the Town Clerk was asked to write to the IW Council, on behalf of the Town Council and local residents to express their concerns and ask questions about the proposed drone trial at Mornington Road Car Park. The letter has been acknowledged by the IW Council and a full response is awaited.

**9021 PARKING OPPOSITE COWES CORINTHIAN YACHT CLUB, BIRMINGHAM ROAD**

Councillors discussed the problems that users of Cowes Corinthian Yacht Club are having moving boats in and out of their premises on Birmingham Road. This is mostly due to the parking spaces opposite their entrance way, reducing their turning circle for boats on trailers; this has been a longstanding problem. It was agreed:

**ACTION**

Councillor Hollis will draft a suitable letter to the IW Council which he will send to the Town Clerk for onward transmission.

**9022 USE OF TOWN COUNCIL LOGO ON COWES HANDBOOK 2025**

Councillors have been asked to give their permission for the Town Council's logo to be used on the Cowes Handbook 2025 at no charge. It was:

**RESOLVED**

**Cowes Town Council give their permission for the Town Council logo to be used in the Cowes Handbook 2025.**

**9023 PA SYSTEM AND FLAGPOLE HIRE FOR REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY EVENT ON 10 NOVEMBER 2024**

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 10 November 2024. 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 10 November 2024.**

**9024 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.**

**9025 DONATION FOR THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION POPPY APPEAL**

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.**

**9026 DONATION TO THE COWES BRANCH OF THE ROYAL BRITISH LEGION**

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 10 November 2024. It was:

**RESOLVED**

**That Cowes Town Council makes a donation of £550 to the Cowes Branch of the Royal British Legion for refreshments after the Remembrance Sunday event on 10 November 2024.**

**9027 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.**

**9028 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.**

**9029 REVIEW OF COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY POLICY**

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

**RESOLVED**

**That Cowes Town Council approves the Equality and Diversity Policy.**

**9030 REVIEW OF COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR EMPLOYEES**

Councillors discussed the Town Council's Grievance Procedure for Employees. It was agreed:

**ACTION**

The Grievance Procedure for Employees will be reviewed at the next Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting.

Councillor Wardrop left the meeting at 8.50pm.

**9031 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.**

**9032 UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT OFFICER**

The Environment Officer provided an excellent report of her activities in Cowes which included dog fouling patrols; foot / vehicle patrols; identifying outdated advertising posters and fly-tipping; issuing a fixed penalty notice for fly-tipping; general inspections of beaches etc. and trying to locate a rough sleeper. The Senior Environment Officer has agreed to attend a future Town Council meeting.

**9033 MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE**

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

**9034 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS**

There were no items raised for inclusion on a future agenda.

The proceedings terminated at 8.55pm

**CHAIRMAN**