

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of Cowes Town Council held in the Library, Northwood House, Cowes on Thursday 7 November 2024 at 7pm

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

In attendance: Debbie Faulkner, Locum Town Clerk; Kate Scragg, Deputy Town Clerk; Ross Edmunds, IW Council Regeneration Officer; 1 member of the public.

PLACE PLAN PRESENTATION FROM ROSS EDMUNDS, IW COUNCIL REGENERATION OFFICER

Ross attended to update Councillors on the progress made with the Place Plan. Any proposed projects are evaluated by the Advisory Group who score each project on these five principles:

- Improve health and wellbeing
- Take positive steps towards improving the climate and environment
- Celebrate and build on the identity of the Cowes peninsula
- Create opportunities for young people
- Promote and improve access for all (equality, diversity and inclusion)

Four working groups are threads for local development and regeneration:

- Youth opportunities and skills
- Built & natural environment, connectivity and transport
- Food and energy security
- Community events

Projects may fit into multiple themes and will benefit from cross-theme support.

Having a Place Plan increases the opportunities to access external funding streams. All those involved collaborate to shape change and plan for a better future. There has been interest and input from Southampton University's innovation department, by meeting PPAS184 standards, they are keen to develop a planning strategy.

The Advisory Group includes ecologists, economists, yacht clubs, financiers, architects, education and public health colleagues.

The Local Planning Authority considers the Place Plan as a supplementary planning document.

Councillor Nicholson thanked Ross for attending the meeting and updating Town Councillors and raising awareness of the Place Plan.

9035 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Fuller.

9036 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

9037 REPORT FROM THE LOCAL SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER

The Local Safer Neighbourhood Officer did not provide a report. Councillors are disappointed about the lack of delivery of the promise made in regard to police presence in the town. An offer for two Cowes Town Councillors to meet with the Chief Inspector McDonald was discussed. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Town Clerk will arrange a meeting for Councillors Nicholson and Sanders to meet with Chief Inspector McDonald.
2. Town Councillors will send a list of issues to be raised to the Town Clerk for collation prior to the meeting.

9038 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on 3 October 2024 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

9039 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

The member of the public present asked for a response to the previous issue raised regarding a requested handrail on the steps between the Rotunda car park and Northwood Park. The Town Clerk advised that Northwood House Charitable Trust Co Ltd (NHCTCL) had previously not received any reports of incidents / accidents on these steps but would raise this at the next Board meeting. The Town Council were advised that several members of Medina Bowls Club had asked NHCTCL to provide a handrail on these steps. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Town Clerk will follow up the earlier letter to NHCTCL to see if any progress has been made in this regard.
2. The member of the public has been advised to encourage other people adversely affected by the steps to write individually to NHCTCL.

9040 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.

Concerns were raised to the IW Council's Planning Department about the proposal to build homes at Thetis Yard and J.S. Whites sites. To date a reply has not been received.

Councillor Nicholson was asked why he would not be attending the Remembrance Sunday Service in Cowes. He advised that he will be attending and laying a wreath at the Northwood Remembrance Sunday event as IW Councillor for Cowes South & Northwood.

Councillor Peacey Wilcox advised that the problems regarding the upcoming works at Pelham Road had been resolved. Drainage works to Mill Hill Road are pending; Bellevue Road parking problems are being dealt with.

9041 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

a) Projects Committee

The Minutes of the Projects Committee meeting held on 8 October 2024 were received and noted. It was:

RESOLVED

- 1. That Cowes Town Council suspends Financial Regulation 5.8 and appoints Extracta Cleaning for the deep cleaning of the public conveniences at The Cut, The Parade and Mornington Road for the total cost of £3,500 subject to the satisfactory completion of the requested paperwork.**
- 2. That Cowes Town Council approves Councillor Rafferty's Accessibility Audit report in principle.**
- 3. That Cowes Town Council sets aside a budget of up to £2,500 for costs associated with VE Day 2025 with the cost to be met from the Ear Marked Budget Headings of 'New Projects' and 'D-Day 2024'.**

b) Planning & Licensing Committee

The Minutes of the Planning & Licensing Committee meeting held on 24 October 2024 were received and noted.

c) Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee

The Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 22 October 2024 were received and noted. It was:

RESOLVED

- 1. That Cowes Town Council receives, notes and approves the Financial Statement as at 30 September 2024.**
- 2. That Cowes Town Council receives and pays the invoice for the storage unit on behalf of the Cowes Heritage and Community Group, in the sum of £1,246.**
- 3. That Cowes Town Council makes a grant of £1,260 to UKSA for the 'Test the Water' programme.**
- 4. That Cowes Town Council releases the funding of £500 held for the 'Warmer Cowes' scheme.**
- 5. That Cowes Town Council pays the Deputy Town Clerk for 60 hours of the additional hours worked at the hourly rate of £16.10.**

d) Supporters of Cowes Library

The Minutes of the meeting of the Supporters of Cowes Library held on 30 September 2024 were received and noted.

e) Inteliports Drone Trial Residents Meeting

The Notes of the Inteliports Drone Trial Residents meeting held on 9 August 2024 were received and noted.

9042 MAYOR'S UPDATE

The Mayor reported on 'Taking responsibility is about visionary steering, not blindly representing' and 'One eye on the future (and protecting our achievements)'.

9043 PARADE TOILETS

Councillors discussed the poor condition of The Parade public conveniences following unfavourable comments from visitors. These toilets are very old and as clean as they can be but need upgrading; these will be the next block of toilets to be refurbished.

9044 DONNA JONES – COWES POLICE STATION

Councillors discussed issues with policing in Cowes under Minute No 9037 and actions were agreed.

9045 PICNIC IN THE PARK 2025

Councillors discussed Picnic in the Park 2025. This community event has in the past been mostly funded by Cowes Town Council and organised and hosted by Northwood House staff. The date of the 2025 event has not yet been decided but Councillors thought it should be either Sunday 11 May 2025 or Sunday 8 June 2025. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council allocates £3,500 in the 2025 / 2026 budget for Picnic in the Park 2025.

9046 COWES TOWN COUNCIL OFFICES

Councillors discussed the three vacant offices on the first floor of Northwood House and whether they would be suitable for Cowes Town Council. It was acknowledged that there would not be disabled access, however a meeting room on the ground floor would be made available for any disabled visitors. It was agreed:

ACTION

Councillors Peacey Wilcox, Rafferty and Sanders will visit the offices to review and assess their suitability.

9047 PROPOSAL TO ADVERTISE FOR A FULL TIME TOWN CLERK

Councillors discussed the proposal to advertise for a full-time Town Clerk to work alongside and be trained by the Locum Town Clerk. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council advertise for a full-time Town Clerk.

It was agreed:

ACTION

The Locum Town Clerk will present a draft job description, person specification and advert for consideration / approval at the next Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting on 26 November 2024.

Councillor Brown left the meeting at 9pm.

9048 CHEQUE PAYMENTS AND PETTY CASH PAYMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF OCTOBER 2024

The Town Clerk had circulated details of cheque and petty cash payments for the month of October 2024. Cheque payments totalled £16,662.76; petty cash payments totalled £30.47. It was:

RESOLVED

That the cheque payments for October of £16,662.76 and petty cash payments of £30.47 be received, noted and approved.

9049 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES PAY AGREEMENT 2024 / 2025

The Town Clerk advised Councillors that the Local Government Services Pay Agreement for 2024 / 2025 had been approved. This resulted in an hourly increase of 61p for the Town Clerk and 62p for the Deputy Town Clerk backdated to 1 April 2024. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council notes the Local Government Services Pay Agreement for 2024 / 2025

9050 UPDATE REGARDING THE DRONE TRIAL AT MORNINGTON ROAD CAR PARK (MIN NO 8995 REFERS)

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 residents to express their concerns and ask questions about the proposed drone trial at Mornington Road Car Park. The letter was acknowledged by the IW Council; subsequently the Town Council have been advised that the drone trial at Mornington Road Car Park will not be proceeding.

9051 UPDATE REGARDING THE PROPOSED CLOSURE OF COWES PRIMARY SCHOOL (MIN NO 9015 REFERS)

Following the Town Council's opposition to the closure of Cowes Primary School, Councillors have now received a copy of a proposal by families from Cowes and Gurnard Primary Schools. Councillor Rafferty asked Councillors to support / endorse the proposal. It was

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council writes to the IW Council to support and endorse the proposal made by the families of Cowes and Gurnard Primary Schools.

9052 NORTHWOOD HOUSE NOISE COMPLAINT (MIN NO 9012 REFERS)

Northwood House Charitable Trust Co. Ltd (NHCTCL) have engaged a consultant to complete a noise assessment. It was agreed:

ACTION

NHCTCL will be asked to advise the Town Clerk of any recommendations made by the noise consultants.

9053 ANNUAL DONATION TO MOUNTBATTEN ISLE OF WIGHT

Cowes Town Council have traditionally donated to Mountbatten Isle of Wight at Christmas. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council donates £250 to Mountbatten Isle of Wight.

9054 IW COUNCIL'S OFFER TO PLANT A TREE IN THE MIDDLE OF THE PARK ROAD ROSE BED

Councillors discussed the IW Council Tree Officer's offer to plant a tree in the Park Road rose bed. Councillors agreed that it was not a suitable location. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Town Clerk will advise that the offer is declined but the Town Council would consider a more suitable location for a gifted tree.

9055 LANESEND PRIMARY SCHOOL'S DANCE LIVE 2025 EVENT

Councillors discussed whether to donate to Lanesend Primary School's Dance Live Event 2025. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council donates £100 for Lanesend Primary School's Dance Live 2025 event.

Councillors Walters and Wardrop left the meeting at 9.11pm.

9056 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.

9057 REVIEW OF COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S POLICY – AUDIO RECORDING – TOWN COUNCIL & COMMITTEE MEETINGS

A review of Cowes Town Council's Policy – Audio Recording – Town Council & Committee meetings was carried out and no amendments were required. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the Policy – Audio Recording – Town Council & Committee meetings.

9058 REVIEW OF COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S GRIEVANCE PROCEDURE FOR EMPLOYEES

Councillors discussed the Town Council's Grievance Procedure for Employees. Several amendments were suggested by the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approve the amendments and adopts the Grievance Procedure for Employees.

9059 REVIEW OF COWES TOWN COUNCIL'S GENERAL DATA PROTECTION REGULATIONS (GDPR) PRIVACY NOTICE

A review of Cowes Town Council's GDPR Privacy Notice was carried out and no amendments were required. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the GDPR Privacy Notice.

9060 UPDATE FROM THE ENVIRONMENT OFFICER

The Environment Officer provided a report of her activities in Cowes which included dog fouling patrols; foot / vehicle patrols and general inspections.

9061 MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

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

9062 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

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

The proceedings terminated at 9.13pm.

CHAIRMAN