

## COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Projects Committee Meeting held in the Drawing Room, Northwood House, Cowes on Tuesday 11 March 2025 at 6.15pm

**Present:** Councillors Rafferty (Chair), Adams, Dodwell, Ellis, Nicholson, Peacey Wilcox and Sanders

**In attendance:** Kate Scragg, Deputy Town Clerk; one representative from Community Action IOW

### 645. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Oliver.

### 646. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

### 647. MINUTES RESOLVED

**That the Minutes of the Projects Committee meeting held on 11 February 2025 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.**

### 648. UPDATE ON EXISTING PROJECTS

#### a) **The Cut - Enhancements**

Councillor Peacey Wilcox has been pressing the IW Council for an update; none has been forthcoming. She will continue to do so. The Mayor has also spoken to the relevant IW Council Officer, who confirmed they have been unable to progress our project due to other priorities.

The Mayor raised an email from Ross Edmunds, Area Regeneration Officer, IW Council, suggesting the Town Council consider applying for a temporary road closure at The Cut, to remove access to vehicles and enable the area to be used only by pedestrians. Councillors felt they wanted to keep to the current scheme of relocating the loading bay to create a level area for use by the public.

It was agreed:

#### ACTION

Councillor Peacey Wilcox will contact the Service Director to push for progress of this project.

#### b) **Medina Road Public Conveniences – Disabled Door**

The Chairman carried out a site visit at the facility with an access consultant to look at options to get the disabled facility open. The consultant suggested the installation of a wall-mounted safety barrier, positioned behind the powered door, and the addition of reflective tape on the door edge. It was agreed:

#### ACTIONS

1. The Chairman will ask the access consultant if an audible warning on opening the powered door is required.
2. The Chairman will obtain costs for a wall-mounted safety barrier.

#### c) **Cowes High Street Events and Improvements**

At the Town Council meeting on 6 March 2025, Councillors approved use of the ring-fenced funds of £6,000 to reposition the current benches; add two large contemporary planters; add four new large square contemporary planters at either end of the existing benches; add one 'plant lock' bike planter; and relocate the existing bin, subject to permission for the changes being obtained from Island Roads.

A sign has been installed in the BT telephone box outside Sainsbury's in the High Street, advising that BT are planning to remove the payphone. Objections need to be raised within 90 days of the notice date, from 28 January 2025.

A member of the public has requested the Town Council consider installing a permanent string of lights along the length of the High Street. Councillors have been looking at costs for the supply of permanent lighting, which appear to be very expensive. It was agreed:

**ACTION**

Councillor Ellis will make enquiries of a local electrical contractor for outline costs to install lighting using the existing Festive lighting fixing points.

**d) Public Toilets Refurbishment - Forward Plan**

The Town Council has appointed JH Architecture to create the architectural design to refurbish The Parade public conveniences. An update is expected at the next meeting.

**e) The Cut Mural Wall**

Councillor Peacey Wilcox met with a potential contractor to discuss the design and installation of a living wall at The Cut, to cover the existing mural and utilise water run-off from the public conveniences. She is due to meet with a second contractor shortly. Once quotations have been received, these will be considered by Councillors. Manpower will be needed to prepare the wall for the new installation: to remove the flaking paint and coat the wall with a textured paint for the plants to adhere to the surface.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that Southern Water will be paying the balance of their contribution by the end of March 2025.

**f) Litter Bin Audit**

Councillor Oliver had provided an update to be read in his absence. He has photographed 70 litter bins in Cowes and identified their What3Words locations. He has identified two which may be surplus to requirements in their current location, meaning there is the potential to relocate them to other areas where there is a need. Once all the bins have been photographed and mapped, Island Roads will be asked to comment on the usage of any bins identified for possible relocation by the Town Council.

**g) Public Conveniences Accessibility Audit**

The key actions identified in the Accessibility Audit are being worked through.

A specific audit has been carried out on The Parade accessible facility.

**h) Parcel of Land, top of Upper Moorgreen Road**

A cost is still awaited from the IW Council to cut the grass every three weeks during the summer and trim the hedge once per year.

**i) VE Day 80<sup>th</sup> Anniversary – 8 May 2025**

Councillor Ellis, assisted by the Clerks, has been engaging with various organisations to obtain permission for a parade through the High Street and provide entertainment for veterans and members of the public on The Bandstand, prior to the lighting of the beacon.

**j) Installation of a permanent Flagpole in Northwood Park**

There is no update on this item.

- k) **Management of the Town Council's facilities**  
The advert for a full-time Facilities and Town Manager closed on 28 February 2025. Interviews are being held the week commencing 17 March 2025.
- l) **Updating the Town Maps**  
The Deputy Town Clerk will send a list of updates to the artist; the Town Clerk will authorise the costs relating to the production of the updated map.
- m) **Visit of the Spanish Galleon 'Nao Santa Maria'**  
The Mayor has written to local schools, advising that the Spanish Galleon, Nao Santa Maria, will be visiting Cowes in May 2025, which coincides with the 1575 pre-armada reconnaissance visit based at Cowes, providing an opportunity for educational enrichment. Currently no replies have been received. The Mayor is in discussions with Ventnor Town Council, who are organising walks, and the Royal Yacht Squadron to request a gun salute for the arrival of the Galleon. It was agreed:  
ACTION  
The Mayor will follow up with local schools by telephone.
- n) **Community Noticeboard**  
Councillors have been asked to consider installing a community noticeboard in the town centre, by a member of the public. They are reluctant to take responsibility for any/all material that members of the public add to a community board. It was agreed:  
ACTION  
Councillor Oliver will be asked to produce a management plan for Councillors' further consideration.

#### 649. NEW PROJECTS

- a) **Smart CCTV cameras**  
Councillor Rafferty provided some background information on smart cctv cameras for Councillors' consideration. He gave a brief overview of the features available. This will be discussed further at the next meeting. It was agreed:  
ACTION  
Councillor Rafferty will ask the supplier if the camera equipment can be rented.
- b) **Cowes 200**  
Cowes 200 is set to comprise of 200 days of events on and off the water in 2026, to coincide with the 200<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Cowes Week. Cowes 200 are looking to secure investment from stakeholders to run a programme of events. The Finance, Acquisitions and Staffing Committee are currently considering the funding request. This item will be removed from the Projects Committee.
- c) **Purchase of the former public conveniences, Park Road**  
At the Town Council meeting on 6 February 2025, Councillors noted that the unused Park Road toilet block has received planning permission for change of use to a café, including a toilet. Councillors questioned whether the Town Council may be able to purchase this facility, and the matter was referred to the Projects Committee for consideration. As the information on the sale of the property is not yet available, this item was deferred, pending the property being put up for sale and the estate agent's pack being available.

d) **Town map displays**

At the Town Council meeting on 6 February 2025, Councillors discussed the lack of tourist information in the town. The last Tourist Information Office has closed and the racks at the Red Funnel terminal hold no specific information relating to Cowes. The racks belong to a separate company and therefore Red Funnel cannot agree to place any unsolicited information into the racks. However, after a discussion with Councillor Peacey Wilcox, Red Funnel's Chief Executive has agreed to display Cowes' maps at their terminal in Cowes and possibly Southampton too. Other options include the possibility of a display stand being placed in a busy tourist spot in Cowes, for example on The Parade. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Clerks will research former town maps and bring samples to the next meeting.
2. Councillor Ellis offered to speak to a local printing company for ideas.
3. Michael Paler offered to provide the Clerks with a copy of the map of East Cowes, which is currently being displayed onboard Red Funnel ferries.

**650. MAINTENANCE ISSUES WITH EXISTING PROJECTS**

a) **Street Furniture**

Community Payback have completed the painting works to the benches and Parade public conveniences.

The IW Council have given permission for replacement flagpole footings to be installed at Princes Green, and the existing flagpole relocated to the new footings.

Councillor Sanders suggested the Town Council fly the Union Jack flag between 8 – 11 May, to celebrate the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe. Councillors felt it was appropriate to fly the Union Jack on our flagpoles on the seafront and at Francki Place throughout the commemorative period.

Councillor Oliver provided photos of the Seafront Shelter, which is looking rather grubby. Councillors felt a pressure wash was required. As the oak shelter was built by G J Banks (IW) Ltd, the company will be asked for recommendations on safe ways to clean the oak.

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that she is looking at costs to repair / replace the Town Clock on Shooters Hill. The mechanisms are not working and the clock needs painting.

It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Deputy Town Clerk will source two Union Jack flags.
2. The Deputy Town Clerk will write to G J Banks (IW) Ltd for cleaning advice for the Seafront Shelter.
3. The Deputy Town Clerk will look for contractors to get the Seafront Shelter pressure-washed.
4. The Deputy Town Clerk will obtain costs to repair / replace the Town Clock.

b) **Public Conveniences and CCTV**

The baby changing unit has been removed from the accessible toilet at The Cut.

The baby changing unit has been moved from the accessible toilet at Medina Road to replace the broken unit in the Gents' facility at this location.

Additional grab rails have been installed on the inside of the ambulant disabled facilities at Medina Road; unfortunately, the grabrail in the Gents ambulant facility was vandalised within days of installation.

Hooks were fitted to the Gents and Ladies' entrance doors at Medina Road, to keep the doors open. Unfortunately, the hook on the Gents' entrance door was vandalised within days, out of the cctv camera's view.

Two replacement drinking taps have been fitted at Northwood Recreation Ground and The Parade.

Hillbans have been requested to look into a report of rats in the Accessible toilet service area at Medina Road public conveniences. They are undertaking a four-week treatment initially.

The alarm in the Accessible toilet at The Cut was found to be not working during a routine inspection. An electrician has been asked to investigate; the facility is locked until the alarm is working.

A significant amount of graffiti was found during routine inspections in The Cut public conveniences; the cleaner has been asked to remove.

The Wallgate unit in the Gents facility at Northwood Recreation has been deemed unrepairable. Replacement costs from one supplier were discussed; another quotation is awaited. The Deputy Town Clerk advised that a number of units are out of service contract, due to their age. Councillors felt costs should be obtained to replace all the out-of-contract Wallgate units at Mornington Road and Northwood Recreation Ground. The Wallgate units at The Parade will be replaced as part of the planned refurbishment (Minute 648.d. above refers). It was agreed:

ACTION

The Deputy Town Clerk will seek quotations for the replacement of the Wallgate units at Mornington Road and Northwood Recreation Ground.

c) **Asset Complaints / Concerns Log**

The Deputy Town Clerk advised Councillors there were no entries in the Log since the last meeting.

**651. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS**

No items were raised for discussion at a future meeting.

The proceedings terminated at 7.28pm.

**CHAIRMAN**