

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Projects Committee Meeting held in the Dining Room, Northwood House, Cowes on Tuesday 8 April 2025 at 6.15pm

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

In attendance: David Gordon, Facilities and Town Manager; Kate Scragg, Deputy Town Clerk; one representative from Community Action IOW

652. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Dodwell.

653. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Peacey Wilcox declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No. 656b as she is the IW Council's Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Biosphere and Waste.

654. MINUTES RESOLVED

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

655. UPDATE ON EXISTING PROJECTS

a) **The Cut - Enhancements**

Councillor Peacey Wilcox has been pressing the IW Council for an update. Traffic order changes and revised costs and scheduling of the works are awaited.

Ross Edmunds, Area Regeneration Officer, IW Council, has made an enquiry with the IW Council's Contracts Management team into the possibility of a temporary road closure at The Cut, to create a pedestrian only zone at one end. Councillors felt this would impact on the use of the loading bay in its current location; our focus should remain on the original scheme. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Deputy Town Clerk will advise Ross Edmunds not to continue with his enquiries for a temporary road closure for The Cut.

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

The Chairman and the Facilities and Town Manager are discussing options for installing a door-mounted barrier, to act as a safety door stop, should the door automatic closer fail. The Chairman consulted with an accessibility specialist regarding the powered accessible toilet door, which opens directly onto the pavement. After reviewing the relevant regulations and best practice guidance, the BS 8300-2:2018 standard, which sets out best practice for inclusive design, strongly recommends both visual and audible warnings for powered doors that open into public areas or pedestrian routes. This alerts passers-by and prevents potential injuries caused by the door's movement. The Equality Act 2010 requires reasonable adjustments to prevent disadvantages for disabled people. While it does not specifically mention audible warnings, adherence to BS 8300 is considered part of meeting this duty. Under the Health and Safety at Work etc. Act 1974, there is a general duty to protect both users and the public from foreseeable risks. Given the position of this door and the pavement, an audible warning would be considered a sensible control measure. He recommended that an audible and visual warning is installed for the powered door. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Facilities and Town Manager will prepare a Risk Assessment for the installation of audible and visual warnings and a door-mounted barrier for the powered door.
2. The Facilities and Town Manager will contact local steel fabricators for outline costs to design and supply a door-mounted barrier for the powered door.
3. The Facilities and Town Manager will research audible and visual warning systems for the powered door.

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

Ross Edmunds is liaising with Island Roads and has requested a Section 115 licence to allow the installation of new planters and relocation of the existing litter bin.

The IW Council's Planning Department have put up a notice on the British Telecom (BT) phone box in the High Street, to notify of BT's proposal to remove it; comments are to be made to the IW Council by 23 April 2025.

Councillor Ellis has contacted a local electrical company for advice and outline budget to install a permanent string of lights along the length of the High Street.

Councillor Nicholson provided background information following discussions with Southampton University's Future Towns Innovation Hub. Two projects are being considered for Cowes:

1. The development of the High Street through community engagement.
2. Exploring how a local built and natural environment strategy could be linked to the Place Plan's main objective of improving the health and wellbeing of its community.

Councillor Nicholson advised there was felt to be a need for better hotel accommodation, connectivity and infrastructure to encourage people to come and work at Cowes' businesses. Discussions with BAE Systems could drive a local planning strategy. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. Ross Edmunds will continue to liaise with Southampton University.
2. Councillor Nicholson will follow up discussions with BAE Systems and the Local Planning Authority.

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

Jasmine Hayden, architect for The Parade public conveniences refurbishment project, was not in attendance, but had provided an update. She is currently working on RIBA Stage 0-1, the Initial Feasibility Assessment, establishing principles of development and has engaged in correspondence as follows:

- Island Roads – Initial enquiry sent to gauge reaction to relocating access to the street and options for improved accessibility.
- Neighbouring landowners (site boundaries) - Included within Island Roads enquiry, plan supplied to agree areas deemed to be within our control.
- A structural engineer – Initial project enquiry sent to suitable engineers.
- Party wall surveyor – Assessment undertaken.
- Slope stability consultant – enquiries made for slope stability report fee proposals.

The above will culminate in an outline gold level pre-planning application to the Local Authority. A report will be made at the next Projects Committee meeting for approval of this submission. She will arrange for a digital dimensional and topographical survey of the existing building and site to be carried out by a consultant surveyor, and will pick up detailed floor plans and elevations along with existing site boundaries.

Jasmine will attend a briefing meeting with Councillors, record the confirmed brief, take photographic records across the property and undertake site analysis to inform the design process. This brief will be taken at the next Projects Committee meeting.

e) **The Cut Mural Wall**

Councillor Peacey Wilcox met with three potential contractors to discuss the installation of a living wall in The Cut. Contractor A has decided not to tender. Contractor B provided outline budget costs of £15,000. Contractor C provided outline budget costs of approximately £4,000. The mural wall will need to be pressure-washed and primed prior to the installation of any plants and support structure. The guttering from the public conveniences will need to be altered to feed the plants. It was:

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council agree in principle to Contractor C being engaged to install a Living Wall at The Cut, at a cost up to £4,000, with the cost to be met from the grant of £3,000 from Southern Water and the shortfall to come from the 'New Projects' budget heading, subject to satisfactory paperwork being completed.

It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Facilities and Town Manager will obtain costs to prepare the wall and revise the guttering system for the installation of a living wall.
2. This agenda item will be renamed 'Living Wall' for future agendas.

f) **Litter Bin Audit**

Councillor Oliver has photographed all the litter bins. He suggested one of the litter bins by Cowes Library could be relocated, as two were very close to each other. At the bottom of Market Hill, there are five litter bins in close proximity, providing an opportunity to relocate one to another location. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. Councillor Oliver will send his photographs and report to the Clerks.
2. The Deputy Town Clerk will ask Island Roads for details on the usage of the litter bins in these two locations.

g) **Public Conveniences Accessibility Audit**

The key actions identified in the Accessibility Audit continue to be worked through. Island Roads have submitted a request to the IW Council for permission for the Town Council to install additional wayfinding signage at the public conveniences at Northwood Recreation Ground and Mornington Green. A response is awaited.

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

A cost is still awaited from the IW Council to add the parcel of land to the grounds maintenance contract. Councillor Peacey Wilcox suggested the Clerks consider attending the IW Council Public Realm and Coastal Meetings, to enable this sort of issue to be raised directly with the service representative. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Deputy Town Clerk will contact the IW Council for details of the next Public Realm and Coastal Meeting.

i) **VE Day 80th Anniversary – 8 May 2025**

The IW Council have waived the usual cost to hire the Bandstand. Councillor Ellis provided an update on the event. He has distributed promotional posters throughout High Street businesses, been in contact with a local ice-cream seller and is obtaining contact details for veterans to be invited to the Bandstand area for commemorative cake and refreshments. A parade marshal has been secured. The poster and press release have been promoted. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. Councillor Sanders will assist in the identification of veterans.
2. Councillor Peacey Wilcox will look into promoting the event on Southern Vectis bus screens for routes 1 and 5.
3. Councillor Nicholson will provide the propane gas for the beacon.

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

Councillor Sanders has looked at the existing temporary flagpole site next to the War Memorial. It was agreed:

ACTION

Councillor Sanders will seek the permission of Northwood House Charitable Trust Co. Ltd to install a permanent flagpole using the current fixing.

k) **Management of the Town Council's facilities**

David Gordon commenced employment as Facilities and Town Manager on 1 April 2025. This item can be removed from future agendas.

l) **Updating the Town Maps**

The revised map is to be proof-read by the Town Council's staff.

m) **Visit of the Spanish Galleon 'Nao Santa Maria'**

Ventnor Town Council have approached Cowes Town Council to ask if we would like to co-host the opening of their Armada Heritage Trail on 21 May. Councillor Nicholson and the Facilities and Town Manager attended a working group meeting at Ventnor Town Council on Tuesday 8 April, where plans for the launch of the Trail were outlined, which include installation of a commemorative plaque, information board, walks and talks. A bowls match has been organised between Ventnor and Cowes Bowls Clubs, which is planned to be held annually. Ventnor Town Council are encouraging their hospitality businesses to provide Spanish-themed food to coincide with the launch of the Trail. We could encourage Cowes' businesses to do the same. It was agreed:

ACTION

Councillor Nicholson will progress ideas for commemorating the Armada in Cowes.

n) **Community Noticeboard**

Councillor Oliver reported on correspondence with a mainland town council, following an enquiry asking how they manage their community noticeboard. They advised that their staff check the community noticeboard when they are attending to their own official noticeboard; no issues have arisen. Northwood House Charitable Trust Co. Ltd's noticeboard at Carvel Lane has recently been removed, leaving an empty backing board. It was agreed:

ACTION

Councillor Oliver will ask Northwood House Charitable Trust Co. Ltd if they intend to replace the noticeboard at Carvel Lane.

o) **Smart CCTV cameras**

Councillor Rafferty provided background information on smart CCTV cameras for Councillors' consideration. Cameras can record footfall, vehicles and cyclist numbers, in either direction of travel. The company do not rent out the equipment and there is a large demand for cameras currently, with a backlog for delivery. A proposal needs to be worked on, looking at camera locations, permissions, funding, protocol and ensuring the town's flags and banners will not obscure the data being captured. It was agreed:

ACTION

Councillor Rafferty will draw up a proposal for Councillors' further consideration.

p) **Cowes 200 Events**

Councillor Oliver shared an example of a promotional booklet which outlined a programme of events. He felt the Town Council could consider compiling a similar programme to support the Cowes 200 project. He suggested a number of items that could be included in the event programme. There is scope for an ongoing programme of events, walks etc in Cowes.

Councillors felt it was important for the Town Council's Cowes Week Bicentenary Working Group to continue, to run events alongside Cowes Week's bicentenary in 2026.

It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. Councillor Nicholson will present the ideas for an event programme to the Cowes 200 group.
2. The Town Clerk will include the allocation of members to the Cowes Week Bicentenary Working Group at the Annual Town Council Meeting.

q) **Town Map Handouts and Display Units**

A selection of former maps were available to view at the meeting. It was felt beneficial to look at the map produced by East Cowes Town Council, which is on display on board Red Funnel ferries. It was agreed:

ACTION

Councillor Ellis will obtain a copy of East Cowes Town Council's promotional map.

656. NEW PROJECTS

a) **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.

b) **Biosphere Festival**

The IW Council have written to the Town Clerk to ask if the Town Council has any plans to be involved in this year's Biosphere Festival. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Deputy Town Clerk will ask the Cowes' Area Regeneration Officers if they are involved in events for the Biosphere Festival in Cowes.

657. MAINTENANCE ISSUES WITH EXISTING PROJECTS

a) **Street Furniture**

Confirmation of the date for the replacement flagpole footings on Princes Green are awaited.

The oak seafront shelter, built by G J Banks (IW) Ltd, requires cleaning. The company was asked for recommendations on safe ways to clean the oak structure; they recommend water pressure jet only. Councillors considered a quotation for a pressure wash of the seafront shelter for the sum of £260 plus VAT.

The Deputy Town Clerk outlined costs to repair / replace the Town Clock on Shooters Hill and presented a number of options to Councillors. Costs to supply a replacement clock ranged from £3,970 to £5,500 (excluding delivery, removal of the current clock and installation). The cost to supply new battery powered mechanisms for both clock faces, including delivery, is £414.50. If the existing clock is retained, it will require repainting. A new painter/decorator is required, to add to our approved contractors list. The flowerbed on Bath Road needs weeding, weed suppressant and new chipped bark. It was:

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That Cowes Town Council agree the cost of £260 for a steam clean of the seafront shelter, with the cost to be met from the 'Street Furniture Maintenance' budget heading.**
- 2. That Cowes Town Council agree up to £1,500 for the supply and fitting of two replacement clock mechanisms, and redecoration of the town clock, with the cost to be met from the 'Street Furniture Maintenance' budget heading.**

It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Deputy Town Clerk and Facilities and Town Manager will tidy the Bath Road flowerbed.
2. The Deputy Town Clerk and Facilities and Town Manager will seek a new painter/decorator.

b) Public Conveniences and CCTV

The Cut Disabled Toilet alarm is not working. Our approved electrical contractor has been requested to carry out a repair.

The Changing Places toilet was flooded on Friday 4 April, caused by misuse of the shower. A group of youths were seen to enter the premises using a Radar key. The Police have been informed and a request for CCTV footage is expected.

The public conveniences' cleaning contractor commenced on 1 April 2025. COSHH paperwork has been requested for the cleaning products being used. The Facilities and Town Manager will identify and raise a programme of repairs with them, following routine inspections.

Councillors were presented with quotations for the removal of graffiti at Mornington Road and Northwood Recreation Ground public conveniences, being £505 and £202.50 respectively.

The Deputy Town Clerk presented two quotations for the replacement of eight Wallgate units that are out of contract, at Northwood Recreation Ground and Mornington Road public conveniences. Costs to supply and install eight Wallgate Thrii units and dispose of the old units are £38,499.89 from Contractor A and £31,681.14 from Contractor B. Councillors viewed the colour pallets for the Wallgate Thrii units and backing panels. Their preference was for the Wallgate units to be in 'Charcoal Grey' and the backing panels to be in 'Primary Blue'.

Costs for additional CCTV cameras and protective cages were discussed for Northwood Recreation Ground and The Cut. A decision on the fitting of protective cages at The Cut was deferred, pending an inspection by the Facilities and Town Manger to measure the clearance from the ground to the bottom of the proposed cages. Costs for an additional camera to cover the Changing Places entrance door is awaited. The Deputy Town Clerk presented costs for an additional camera at Northwood Recreation Ground and protective cages on all CCTV cameras at this location, for the cost of £2,327.90.

It was:

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That Cowes Town Council agree the cost of £505 for removal of graffiti from Mornington Road public conveniences, with the cost to be met from the '5 public toilets – cleaning and other costs' budget heading.**
- 2. That Cowes Town Council agree the cost of £202.50 for removal of graffiti from Northwood Recreation Ground public conveniences, with the cost to be met from the '5 public toilets – cleaning and other costs' budget heading.**
- 3. That Cowes Town Council considers suspending Financial Regulation 5.8 to allow consideration of two quotations.**
- 4. That Cowes Town Council appoints Contractor B to replace eight Wallgate units, for the cost of £31,681.14, with the cost to be met from the 'Public Toilet refurbishment & Capital Projects' budget heading.**
- 5. That Cowes Town Council agree the cost of £2,327.90 for one additional CCTV camera and protective cages for all the CCTV cameras at Northwood Recreation Ground, with the cost to be met from the '5 public toilets – cleaning and other costs' budget heading.**

It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Facilities and Town Manager will request COSHH datasheets for the toilet contractor's cleaning products.
2. The Facilities and Town Manager will identify repairs at the public conveniences and provide a programme of repairs to the cleaning contractor.

c) Northwood Recreation Ground

The MUGA requires jet washing and the line markings repainted. Councillors considered a quotation in the sum of £762.50 for the pressure washing.

The Playbuilder basket swing has two broken sections. This has been passed to the IW Council to repair.

A weld repair to the Skatepark is awaited. The cleaner has removed the remainder of the graffiti in the Skatepark.

Rust is appearing on the Outdoor Gym equipment.

The refurbished Community Orchard plaque has been refitted, with the addition of a Perspex cover to protect the varnish from the weather.

There is graffiti on the underside of the octagonal shelter. A new approved painter will be sought to paint the shelter.

There was graffiti on the plaque at the entrance to Northwood Recreation Ground, which was removed by the Deputy Town Clerk.

It was:

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council agree the cost of £762.50 for a jet wash of the MUGA, with the cost to be met from the 'Northwood Rec – Skate Park / MUGA / Outdoor Gym Maintenance' budget heading.

d) Asset Complaints / Concerns Log

The Deputy Town Clerk advised Councillors that one complaint had been received regarding the condition of The Cut toilets. The complainant had reported a lack of toilet paper, a number of doors not closing and the disabled facility being locked.

658. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

- Removal of shared path barriers, Northwood Recreation Ground
- Vacant site - Methodist Church, Birmingham Road
- Vacant site - Former 'World Leisurewear' premises

The proceedings terminated at 8.31pm.

CHAIRMAN