

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee Meeting held in the Dining Room, Northwood House, Cowes on Tuesday 26 August 2025 at 6.15pm.

Present: Councillors Ellis (Chair), Marriott, Nicholson, Peacey Wilcox & Rafferty.

In attendance: Debbie Faulkner, Town Clerk.

In the absence of the Chairman, Councillor Ellis took the Chair.

1033 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Carter, Hollis & Walters.

1034 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ellis declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 1036 (ii) as he knows the proprietors of Angel Radio Isle of Wight.

Councillor Ellis declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 1036 (iii) as he had previously been a member of Cowes Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society.

1035 MINUTES RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 22 July 2025 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

1036 APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT

The Town Clerk advised that £11,900 remains in the budget heading 'Grants' for the financial year 2025 / 2026. Councillors were asked to consider the following applications for grant:

- i. Association of Sail Training Organisations (ASTO) – 2025 small ships race – up to £1,500.
- ii. Angel Radio Isle of Wight – Minidisc players, mixing unit, three laptops - £1,500.
- iii. Cowes Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society – Replacement roof - £1,500.

After a full discussion about each application (Councillor Nicholson abstained from the vote regarding Cowes Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society) it was:

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That Cowes Town Council makes a grant of £1,250 to the Association of Sail Training Organisations (ASTO) with a request that ASTO promote the financial support that the Town Council has provided in any literature.**
- 2. That Cowes Town Council makes a grant of £1,500 to Angel Radio Isle of Wight with a request that their website recognises the support that the Town Council has provided. The Town Council is supportive of this group as they are based in Cowes and therefore happy to support a local radio station.**
- 3. That Cowes Town Council makes a grant of £1,500 to Cowes Amateur Operatic and Dramatic Society.**

1037 LLOYDS BANK MANDATE (MIN NO 925 REFERS)

At the Finance, Acquisitions and Staffing Committee meeting on 26 November 2024 it was suggested that following the newly elected Town Council's approval the Town Clerk would change the Lloyds Bank mandate to enable payments to be made by one authorised user as from May 2025; the May 2025 election left two vacant seats which have now been filled. The benefit being reduced bank charges, the expediency of making payments and reducing the inconvenience of contractors and staff who must bank cheque payments; cheque payments being a very antiquated option for making payments. The Town Clerk will continue, as usual, to report all payments made to Full Council monthly. It was:

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That Cowes Town Council amends the Lloyds Bank mandate to allow one authorised user to make payments on behalf of Cowes Town Council.**
- 2. Subject to approval of point 1, Financial Regulations will be amended accordingly.**

1038 AUTHORISATION OF EMERGENCY / URGENT PAYMENTS BY THE TOWN CLERK, TOWN MAYOR OR COMMITTEE CHAIR.

Financial Regulations allow the Town Clerk to authorise emergency / health and safety expenses up to a value of £500. The Town Mayor or Committee Chair can authorise such payments up to a value of £1,500. As the cost of works are increasing on a regular basis, it was:

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That the Town Clerk can authorise emergency / health and safety expenses up to a value of £1,000.**
- 2. That the Town Mayor or Committee Chair can authorise emergency / health and safety expenses up to a value of £3,000.**
- 3. Subject to approval of points 1 and 2, Financial Regulations will be amended accordingly.**

1039 UPDATE ON EXISTING HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND OF £5,000

The Town Clerk gave Councillors an update on the Household Support Fund. Cowes Town Council had received £5,000; the Clerks have purchased vouchers to the full value of the £5,000. The Clerks have handed out 71 vouchers from the 100 Aldi vouchers purchased, 29 remain available for issue. It was agreed:

ACTION

- 1. The Foodbank, Food Pantry, and local schools will be encouraged to refer further people to apply for the £50 Aldi vouchers.**
- 2. The Admin Assistant will enquire about how the 'Warmer Spaces' in Northwood are organised by the Parish Council and whether Cowes Town Council can mirror this scheme.**

1040 LOCAL GOVERNMENT SERVICES PAY AGREEMENT 2025 / 2026

Councillors received details of the Local Government Services Pay Agreement for 2025 / 2026; this was agreed between the employers and the unions. The increase is just over 3% and is not negotiable as this is agreed at national level. It was:

RESOLVED

That the Local Government Services Pay agreement for 2025 / 2026 is received and noted.

1041 HANDLING OF COUNCILLORS ENQUIRIES AND INTERNAL COMMUNICATION PROCEDURE

At the recent Chairs and Clerks meeting it was agreed to produce a 'Handling of Councillors Enquiries and Internal Communication Procedure'. This was to improve communication and set protocols for Councillors and Staff which included the first point of contact, role of the Chair, time limit for queries, full Council decisions, escalation, professional expectations, enforcement and Email protocol. It was:

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council adopts the 'Handling of Councillor Enquiries and Internal Communication Procedure'.

1042 OTHER STAFFING MATTERS

Councillors present at the meeting raised an issue regarding a proposed revised job description for the Facilities and Town Manager asking why it was being considered for revision. The Town Clerk explained that parts of the current job description were unachievable as parts are outside of the remit of the postholder. The Town Clerk, in consultation with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, had offered a revised job description to the postholder for him to consider, to make the expectations of the job more achievable. The Town Clerk is currently awaiting comments from the postholder; prior to the next probationary review meeting.

1043 HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS

There were no health and safety matters to consider.

1044 STAFF CONCERNS

No staff concerns have been raised with the Town Clerk.

1045 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

No items were raised for inclusion on a future agenda.

The proceedings terminated at 7.38pm.

CHAIRMAN