

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee Meeting held in the Dining Room, Northwood House, Cowes on Tuesday 23 September 2025 at 6.15pm.

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

In attendance: Debbie Faulkner, Town Clerk.

1046 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

1047 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ellis declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 1049.2 as he knows members of the Vectis Corps of Drums.

Councillor Peacey Wilcox declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 1050.1 as she attends the Isle of Wight Literary Festival.

Councillor Peacey Wilcox declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 1050.2 as she is a Vice President of the Friends of Northwood Cemetery.

Councillor Carter declared a non-pecuniary interest in Minute No 1050.2 as she is a member of the Friends of Northwood Cemetery.

1048 MINUTES RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 26 August 2025 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

1049 APPLICATIONS FOR GRANT

The Town Clerk advised that £7,650 remains in the budget heading 'Grants' for the financial year 2025 / 2026. Councillors were asked to consider the following applications for grant:

- i. Cowes Men's Shed – Pressure washer – £200.
- ii. Vectis Corps of Drums – New uniform items - £1,500.

After a full discussion about each application, it was:

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That Cowes Town Council makes a grant of £200 to Cowes Men's Shed.**
- 2. That Cowes Town Council makes a grant of £500 to Vectis Corps of Drums.**

1050 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE PLACE PLAN ADVISORY GROUP

- i. Isle of Wight Literary Festival – Nil
- ii. Friends of Northwood Cemetery – Nil
- iii. Activ Fest - £8,000 - £10,000.

After a full discussion about each organisation, it was:

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That Cowes Town Council makes a grant of £1,500 to the Isle of Wight Literary Festival. Councillors would like this grant to be focussed on the youth element of the Festival.**

2. That Cowes Town Council makes a grant of £1,5000 to the Friends of Northwood Cemetery.

It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The IW Council Regeneration Officer will contact the organisers of Activ Fest requesting a detailed breakdown of their expected costs for the event and send this information back to a future Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting for consideration.
2. The IW Council Regeneration Officer will be asked to ensure that all applications for Place Plan funds are scored by the Advisory Committee.
3. The Town Clerk will organise an additional Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting to discuss the scoring process for new projects and existing organisations that require funding.

1051 NATIONWIDE SAVINGS ACCOUNT

The Town Clerk advised Councillors that the Nationwide Business Fixed Rate Saver Account had matured on 16 September 2025, and a decision had to be made about the future of the savings. Councillors discussed the various options and interest rates. It was:

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council reinvests the funds held in the Nationwide Savings Account into a Business 1 Year Saver Account with an annual interest rate of 3.60%.

1052 BUDGET FOR A CHRISTMAS EVENT IN THE TOWN

Councillors were asked to consider identifying a budget to support several Christmas events in the town. It was:

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council sets aside a sum of up to £5,000 from Reserves for a number of Christmas events in the town.

1053 BUDGET FOR A NEW TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITE

Councillors were asked to consider identifying a budget to support a new Town Council website. It was:

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council sets aside a sum of £6,000 from Reserves for a new Town Council website.

1054 WINTER PLANTING IN COWES

Councillors were asked to consider a quotation from Care in the Garden for winter planting in Cowes for the sum of £1,124. It was:

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council engages Care in the Garden for winter planting in Cowes for the sum of £1,124.

1055 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 79 vouchers from the 100 Aldi vouchers purchased, 21 remain available for issue.

1056 STAFFING MATTERS

The Town Clerk advised that the Facilities and Town Manager will shortly be having his three-monthly Probationary Review. The Deputy Town Clerk and Admin Assistant will shortly be having their annual appraisals. Following these meetings the Town Clerk will arrange her appraisal with the Mayor and Deputy Mayor. The weekly one to ones between the Town Clerk, Mayor and Deputy Mayor are proving to be very productive and positive.

1057 HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS

The Facilities and Town Manager advises the team of any health and safety matters that need to be addressed.

1058 STAFF CONCERNS

No staff concerns have been raised with the Town Clerk.

1059 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

- The mechanism for scoring new projects and existing organisations.

The proceedings terminated at 7.30pm.

CHAIRMAN