

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Projects Committee Meeting held in the Dining Room, Northwood House, Cowes on Tuesday 9 September 2025 at 6.15pm

Present: Councillors Rafferty (Chair), Adams, Ellis, Nicholson, Sanders, Walters and White

In attendance: Councillors Swallow and Wardrop (Non-Voting); David Gordon, Facilities and Town Manager; Kate Scragg, Deputy Town Clerk; one representative from Community Action Isle of Wight

680. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Dodwell and Peacey Wilcox.

681. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

682. MINUTES RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Projects Committee meeting held on 12 August 2025 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

683. UPDATE ON EXISTING PROJECTS

a) The Cut - Enhancements

Following a further email from Cllr Peacey Wilcox, the IW Council's Contract Management Team have advised that they are reviewing the project and will engage with Ringway Island Roads to establish what capacity they may or may not have to assist in moving the matter forward, including costings. The Mayor provided an update, advising that Ringway Island Roads have been asked for a quotation for the works.

b) Medina Road Public Conveniences – Disabled Door

We are waiting for Island Roads to fit the safety barriers. Once installed, the door can be commissioned and the facility opened for use. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Facilities and Town Manager will re-examine the recommendations in the Accessibility Audit report in relation to audio and visual warnings for the powered door.

c) Cowes High Street Events and Improvements

The Facilities and Town Manager is endeavouring to obtain the permission of the adjacent landowner before the litter bin can be moved, however, the planters will be installed with or without the relocation of the litter bin in the High Street area by 'Salt'.

The resident who asked the Town Council to consider installing permanent string lighting in the High Street has requested an update. A budget estimate for string lighting has been received. Councillors agreed to ask the Place Plan Advisory Group to score the proposal. The Mayor sought support from Councillors to expand the Festive Light Switch-on event to be a full day of celebration, running from the Duke of York through to The Parade.

In lieu of no budget allocated to a Christmas event it was:

RECOMMENDED

That the Finance, Acquisitions and Staffing Committee considers supporting this idea and identifies a budget heading for up to £5,000 for a Christmas event in the town.

It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Deputy Town Clerk will ask the Place Plan Advisory Group to score the string lighting proposal.
2. The Mayor and Facilities and Town Manager will arrange a meeting with traders to discuss Christmas in the town.

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

The topographical surveys were undertaken at The Parade public conveniences on 22 August 2025 and survey drawings have been received and circulated. The Architect was not able to attend the meeting to present her concept options. To keep the project on track, an additional Projects Committee meeting may need to be scheduled.

Councillor Nicholson and the Facilities and Town Manager met with a representative from Emerald Construction at The Parade public conveniences to discuss the current condition of the roof. Condensation continues to be an issue with the current design. A quotation for remedial works is awaited.

e) **Living Wall**

Care in the Garden have commenced planting for the Living Wall, starting with the new flowerbed.

The Facilities and Town Manager has obtained costs to pressure wash the living wall, which is due to be undertaken the week commencing 8 September. Once cleaned, the wall will be painted and the supporting framework for the plants installed. The planters are on order.

f) **Public Conveniences Accessibility Audit**

A draft Licence is awaited for the new wayfinding signs at Queens Road and Park Road.

The Facilities and Town Manager is researching GSM system costs. Fire risk assessments for the public conveniences were discussed. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Facilities and Town Manager will write fire risk assessments for the public conveniences.

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

Councillor Sanders met with the Chief Operating Officer of Northwood House Charitable Trust Co. Ltd to discuss installing a permanent flagpole in Northwood Park, using the existing footings by the War Memorial. It was:

RECOMMENDED

That Cowes Town Council writes to Northwood House Charitable Trust Co. Ltd to request permission to install a permanent flagpole by the war memorial.

h) **Smart CCTV cameras**

Councillor Fuller has been requested to follow up on the costs for a smart CCTV camera trial at the bottom of Shooters Hill. Councillors wished for this trial to be carried out promptly. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Facilities and Town Manager will ask the IW Council to provide the costs for the smart CCTV camera trial, copying in Councillor Nicholson to the correspondence.

i) **Cowes200 Events**

Cowes200 have changed their name to 'Experience Cowes'.

A representative from East Cowes Town Council will be invited to attend our next Cowes Week Bicentenary Working Group meeting, to discuss shoreside activities for 2026.

It was agreed:

ACTION

The Deputy Town Clerk will remove this item from future Projects Committee agendas, to avoid a duplication with the Cowes Week Bicentenary Working Group.

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

A draft map leaflet was circulated to Councillors as a separate background paper. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Deputy Town Clerk will ask all Councillors to forward any suggested amendments.

k) **Former Methodist Church site, Birmingham Road**

A structural engineer's survey on the site is due to be carried out shortly, commissioned by the Town Council. Once the survey report has been received, the Town Council will consider purchasing the building. Subject to a satisfactory survey, a business case will need to be compiled to look at the viability of the site. It was agreed:

ACTION

Councillors Sanders and White will work together to compile a draft business case.

Councillor Wardrop left the meeting at 7.19pm.

l) **Vacant High Street sites**

Title ownership for 6 High Street (former Poundland) has been obtained and circulated to Councillors. Councillors felt this location should not be pursued as a potential site for purchase at this time.

The Trustees of Cowes Yacht Haven have not decided on the future use of the former World Leisurewear property, but it is not likely to be imminently available for sale.

This item will be removed from future agendas.

m) **Town Council's Website**

The Mayor and / or the Facilities and Town Manager met with several web designers to look at the costs to design a new website for the Town Council. Quotations were circulated to Councillors prior to the meeting. Councillors agreed it was advisable to include a 20% contingency sum for the new website. Following discussion on each quotation, it was:

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That the Finance, Acquisitions and Staffing Committee be asked to identify a suitable budget heading for the cost of a new website, in the sum of £6,000, representing the cost of £5,000 plus a 20% contingency amount.**
- 2. That Cowes Town Council engages Contractor B to design and implement a new website for the sum of £5,000.**

684. NEW PROJECTS

a) **Northwood Recreation Ground Survey**

Councillors discussed the need to undertake a survey of users of Northwood Recreation Ground, to obtain their views on the current facilities and aspirations for the future. Previously suggested items included a multi-use pathway, refreshment provision, shelter and pump track. It was agreed:

ACTION

Councillor Nicholson will produce suggested questions for the survey.

b) **Pump Track**

A request had been received from a resident, asking the Town Council to consider installing a Pump Track at Northwood Recreation Ground. This suggestion will be included within the survey, item above.

685. MAINTENANCE ISSUES WITH EXISTING PROJECTS

a) **Street Furniture**

The annual inspection of our assets are due to be undertaken this month by the Facilities and Town Manager.

The town map display boards have been updated.

Quotations are being sought for the fitting of the mechanisms and redecoration of the town clock.

b) **Public Conveniences and CCTV**

The new Wallgate units have been fitted at Mornington Road and Northwood Recreation Ground.

A significant amount of graffiti was found at our facilities at Mornington Road and The Parade. The Facilities and Town Manager purchased suitable cleaning materials to remove the paint, which took approximately 2 days' labour to complete. Several 'tags' have been identified and reported to the Police. Councillors thanked the Facilities and Town Manager for his hard work in getting the facilities cleaned and reopened swiftly.

The lighting sensor in the Ladies' facility at The Parade has been adjusted by FW Marsh, extending the time the lights remain on during use.

The Facilities and Town Manager has raised ongoing concerns regarding the standard of cleanliness with the cleaning contractor.

On 9 August 2025, CCTV footage showed a person damaging one of the doors at The Cut, resulting in it being bent at the bottom and not able to close, requiring replacement. The Facilities and Town Manager has retrieved the footage and logged the incident with the Police. There was a further incident where one of the doors appears to have been kicked from the inside, resulting in it being bent at the bottom and not able to close, requiring replacement. The two doors are currently locked off as we obtain costs for their replacement.

A further door at the Cut has a broken handle, which will be replaced shortly.

Councillors requested that an insurance claim be submitted for the two replacement doors.

It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Police will be asked to continue to identify and prosecute those causing criminal damage to the public conveniences at The Cut.
2. The Town Clerk will advise our insurer that we would like to make a claim for the costs to replace the two vandalised metal doors at The Cut.

Councillor Walters left the meeting at 7.50pm.

c) **Northwood Recreation Ground**

The Playbuilder basket swing has been removed due to damage; the IW Council will provide a replacement.

d) **Asset Complaints / Concerns Log**

The Deputy Town Clerk advised Councillors that three complaints / concerns had been received since the last meeting, relating to: an unpleasant aroma in the Gents facility at Mornington Road; an issue with the Ladies' lighting at The Parade; and a complaint about

the smell and the number of closed cubicles at The Cut. All enquiries had been responded to.

686. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

- Christmas event

The proceedings terminated at 8pm.

CHAIRMAN