

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the meeting of Cowes Town Council held in the Drawing Room at Northwood House, Cowes on Thursday 05 February 2026 at 7pm.

Present: Councillor Ellis (Town Mayor) (Chairman).
Councillors Barney, Fuller, Hollis, Nicholson, Peacey Wilcox, Sanders, Walters & Wardrop.

In attendance: Patrick Jolin (Town Clerk), Kate Scragg (Deputy Town Clerk), David Gordon (Facilities & Town Manager), two representatives from Experience Cowes and three members of the public.

Prior to the start of the meeting a presentation was received from representatives of Experience Cowes (EC). Details given included:

- That EC is an entirely separate entity from the existing Cowes Week 200 initiative.
- How the EC project runs on a not-for-profit basis with funding provided by a combination of private guarantees and other local body donations.
- The EC business objectives and potential revenue generating activities.
- That EC is staffed and managed on a volunteer basis.
- That EC aims to engender collaboration and enthusiasm for Cowes Town throughout the whole of the Cowes community.

Councillors asked questions relating to the EC website and sought clarification on monies already spent. Previous costs had been repaid by other entities. At the end of the presentation, the EC representatives highlighted their need for Cowes Town Council (CTC), as a key civic body, to support the EC initiative; specifically, regarding confirming the original CTC commitment to provide £15,000 of grant funding. The EC representatives closed their representations with an additional request to Councillors for feedback on the CTC view as to an event activity programme that would be of most benefit to Cowes Town.

The Mayor thanked the EC representatives for their attendance and presentation.

9303 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Adams, Carter, Dodwell, Marriot, Rafferty, Swallow and White.

9304 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

9305 REPORT FROM THE LOCAL SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER

The local Safer Neighbourhood Officer did not attend the meeting and did not provide a report.

9306 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Thursday 18 December 2025 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

9307 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A question was received from a member of the public on how CTC could advise on the best course of action regarding noise management and post-event marshalling of late-night events at Northwood House (NWH).

In response, Councillors advised that an appropriate course of action was to approach the formal bodies in charge of event management, namely the Isle of Wight Council (IWC) Licensing and Environmental Health departments (for noise and event marshalling management) and the Isle of Wight local police authority (for additional post event policing presence). Councillors suggested the members of the public maintain a log of issues.

The attending members of the public then left the meeting.

9308 REPORTS FROM ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLORS

Written reports focussing on local matters and IWC activities were received from Councillors Fuller, Nicholson and Peacey Wilcox and were circulated to all Town Councillors.

A question-and-answer session between Councillors followed, with the main topics of discussion being as follows:

- Councillor Fuller was thanked for arranging the Lionheart school visit. Councillor Fuller confirmed that further visits, possibly involving both Councillors and Cowes Town residents, could be arranged. Councillor Fuller also confirmed that school coffee mornings are open to public attendance.
- Councillor Peacey Wilcox was asked to give a status update on the IWC project to replace the Cowes-East Cowes floating bridge and confirmed that whilst investigations are ongoing into an appropriate replacement for the floating bridge vessel, progress to date is slow and inconclusive.
- Councillor Fuller was asked for a status update on the IWC Mayoral election budget expenditure and progress and current expenditure on asylum seeker accommodation. In response, Councillor Fuller could not provide exact financial details and would investigate further.

9309 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

a) Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee

The Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 27 January 2026 were received and noted. Following discussions, the following outcomes were recorded:

1. Regarding minute 1113 (CTC financial statement as at 31 December 2025). It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council receive, note and approve the Financial Statement as at 31 December 2025.

2. Regarding minute 1114 (CTC Draft Reserves Policy). It was:

RESOLVED

That approval of the draft Reserves Policy would be deferred pending further instructions from the Responsible Financial Officer.

3. Regarding minute 1115 (Application for Grants). It was:

RESOLVED

- i) **That the decision regarding the grant for Feeding Isle of Wight be deferred pending certainty that the relocation would take place.**
- ii) **That Cowes Town Council makes a grant of £1,000 to IW Community Club, but the payment of the grant would be subject to draw down and would only be paid when the target funds for the project had been achieved.**
- iii) **That Cowes Town Council makes a grant of £1,500 to Cowes Classics Day 2026. This grant to be used to facilitate the event by providing parking.**

The following **ACTION** was agreed:

- a) That the Town Clerk will ask the IW Council if they can subsidise the parking charges for the event.

4. Regarding minute 1116 (Strain Testing of Flags and Banner Fixings). It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves up to £10,000 in relation to strain testing of flags and banner fixings, with the cost to be met from the Facilities Management budget heading.

5. Regarding minute 1118 (Staff Membership of the Society of Local Council Clerks - SLCC). It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the Town Clerk becoming a member of the SLCC.

6. Regarding minute 1119 (Draft Contracts of Employment for Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer). It was:

RESOLVED

- i) **That Cowes Town Council approves the Town Clerk's Contract of Employment, subject to amendment that the Town Clerk should report to the Finance, Acquisitions and Staffing Committee rather than the Chair of the Committee.**
- ii) **That Cowes Town Council approves the Responsible Financial Officer's Contract of Employment.**

7. Regarding minute 1120 (Team Building and Alignment Plan). It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council agree with this proposal in order that further detailed work can continue.

b) Planning & Licensing Committee

The Minutes of the Planning & Licensing Committee meetings held on 14 January 2026 and 04 February 2026 were received and noted.

c) Projects Committee

The Minutes of the Projects Committee meeting held on 13 January 2026 were received and noted.

d) Lease Renewal Working Group

The Minutes of the Lease Renewal Working Group meeting held on 26 January 2026 were received and noted. Following discussions, the following outcomes were recorded:

1. Regarding minute 4 (CTC Office Lease Renewal). It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council extends the Lease for the Town Council Office and Storeroom at Northwood House on a standard commercial 12-month basis on the terms offered.

The following **ACTIONS** were agreed:

- a) That Councillor Peacey Wilcox will investigate potential suitable alternative CTC office accommodation as listed in the current IWC property list and that may be available after April 2026.
- b) That the Town Clerk will coordinate an investigation into the Business Rates currently paid by CTC.

e) Cowes Week Bicentenary Working Group

The Minutes of the Cowes Week Bicentenary Working Group meeting held on 02 February 2026 were received and noted. Following discussions, the following outcomes were recorded:

1. Regarding minute 38 (Commemorative Plaque). It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves a budget of up to £1,500 for a commemorative plaque.

2. Regarding minute 40 (Community Day). It was:

RESOLVED

That the Cowes Week Bicentenary Working Group be renamed the Events Working Group.

f) Experience Cowes Meeting

The Minutes of the Experience Cowes meeting held on 09 January 2026 were received and noted.

g) Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee

The Minutes of the Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee (CHAC) meeting held on 14 January 2026 were received and noted.

The following **ACTION** was agreed:

- a) That Councillor Fuller will raise with CHAC the ability to comment on published CHAC minutes and for CHAC to publish public contact details.

h) IWC Public Realm and Coastal Meeting

The Minutes of the IWC Public Realm and Coastal meetings held on 25 November 2025 and 06 January 2026 were received and noted.

9310 MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor provided a written report detailing various events and Working Groups attended in January and including the opening of a new pharmacy collection machine in Cowes, planning meetings in support of Cowes Week 200th anniversary and discussions on the Cowes-East Cowes floating bridge.

9311 NORTHWOOD HOUSE WIDER REVIEW

Councillor Barney's report was received and noted. Following discussions, it was:

RESOLVED

1. That a **WORKING GROUP** be convened to investigate the overall CTC-NWH working relationship, specifically reviewing:
 - a) The public funds CTC pays to NWH.
 - b) The changes made within the NWH grounds.
 - c) The NWH covenant and original Deed of Gift.
2. That the Working Group members will be Councillors Barney, Ellis, Hollis, Peacey Wilcox and Walters. The Town Council Office will be represented by the Town Clerk and/or the Facilities and Town Manager.

9312 CHEQUE AND PETTY CASH PAYMENTS FOR THE MONTHS OF DECEMBER 2025 AND JANUARY 2026

The Responsible Financial Officer's cheque and petty cash report for December 2025 and January 2026 was received and noted. Following discussions, it was:

RESOLVED

That the cheque payments for December 2025 of £38,504.84 and petty cash payments of £174.69 and that the cheque payments for January 2026 of £33,585.54 are received, noted and approved.

9313 IWC GROUNDS MAINTENANCE, ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER AND PLAY AREA SERVICES INVOICE

The IWC Grounds Maintenance, Environment Officer and Play Area services invoice for the period 2025/26 was received and noted. Following discussions, it was:

RESOLVED

To pay the IWC invoice as presented.

9314 APPROVAL OF ROACH PITTI'S' LEGAL SERVICES COSTS TO DATE

The Roach Pittis' legal services costs to date were received and noted. Following discussions, it was:

RESOLVED

To approve payment of Roach Pittis' legal costs to date.

9315 REAFFIRMATION OF EXPERIENCE COWES FUNDING COMMITMENT

The previous agreement by CTC to provide funding to EC was discussed. Following discussions, it was:

RESOLVED

To reaffirm the existing funding commitment of £15,000 to Experience Cowes on the proviso that:

- a) A business plan is received from EC.
- b) That regular EC reports are made available to CTC detailing expenditure and progress to date against the EC business plan.
- c) Any payments made will be on a drawdown basis.

9316 REVIEW OF COWES TOWN COUNCIL EMPLOYEE GRIEVANCE POLICY

A review of CTC's Employee Grievance Policy was undertaken and found to not need any amendments. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the Employee Grievance Policy.

9317 REVIEW OF COWES TOWN COUNCIL WEBSITE ACCESSIBILITY POLICY

A review of CTC's Website Accessibility Policy was undertaken and found to not need any amendments. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the Website Accessibility Policy.

9318 REVIEW OF COWES TOWN COUNCIL DISPLAY SCREEN EQUIPMENT POLICY

A review of CTC's Display Screen Equipment Policy was undertaken and found to not need any amendments. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the Display Screen Equipment Policy.

9319 CONSIDERATION OF ESTABLISHING A DEAUVILLE TWINNING WORKING GROUP

Councillors were asked to consider establishing a Deauville Twinning Working Group. It was:

RESOLVED

1. That a Deauville Twinning **WORKING GROUP** be established.
2. That the Deauville Twinning Working Group members would be Councillors Barney, Ellis, Peacey Wilcox and Walters.

9320 IWALC NEWSLETTER COSTS

A response from IWALC regarding newsletter costs was received and noted.

Following discussions, it was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council **WOULD NOT support or be involved with the production costs of the IWALC newsletter.**

9321 UPDATE FROM THE FACILITIES AND TOWN MANAGER

The Facilities and Town Manager provided a written a report of his activities during December 2025 and covering town asset repairs and maintenance, fire risk assessments, reviewing SHE policies, the installation of barriers at Medina Road toilets, architect meetings regarding the Parade Toilets specification, IWC Regeneration Officer meetings regarding the area outside Sainsburys, reviewing the

banner and flagpole maintenance schedule, discussions with High Street residents regarding planters and bin movement and managing out-of-hours callouts.

9322 UPDATE FROM THE PUBLIC REALM OFFICER

The Public Realm Officer provided a report of their activities in Cowes during January 2026 and covering foot patrols throughout the town, statutory playground inspections, statutory coastal inspections, statutory safety equipment inspections, placement of anti-dog fouling signage and fly-tipping and littering checks across parks, playgrounds, and public toilets.

9323 MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

Details of miscellaneous publications and correspondence were circulated to all Town Councillors.

9324 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

- Connecting Cowes Update – Councillor Nicholson and the Facilities & Town Manager.

The proceedings terminated at 9.00pm.

CHAIRMAN