

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Projects Committee Meeting held in the Dining Room, Northwood House, Cowes on Tuesday 10 March 2026 at 6.15pm

Present: Councillors Rafferty (Chair), Adams, Ellis and Peacey Wilcox.

In attendance: Councillor Wardrop (Non-Voting); David Gordon, Facilities and Town Manager; Captain Jon Kidd, Cowes' Harbour Master; Kate Scragg, Deputy Town Clerk

719. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Nicholson.

720. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

721. MINUTES RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Projects Committee meeting held on 13 January 2026 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

722. UPDATE ON EXISTING PROJECTS

a) **The Cut - Enhancements**

The Town Council had received confirmation from the IW Council that the S.106 funding allocation for The Cut enhancement project is restricted for spend on transport infrastructure, transport facilities or sustainable transport. They can reallocate the funding to an alternative highway project in the Cowes area if The Cut project does not proceed, but it would have to be transport / highway related. Councillors discussed the ongoing difficulties in bringing this project to fruition, following which it was:

RECOMMENDED

- 1. That Cowes Town Council discontinues with The Cut enhancement project.**
- 2. That Cowes Town Council reallocate the balance of funds from the North Medina Community Development Trust towards the public conveniences' refurbishment programme.**
- 3. That Cowes Town Council requests the IW Council reallocates the S.106 funding for The Cut to a future highways/transport project in Cowes.**

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

Costs are being obtained for the seating, plants, planters and S.115 licence. Once these costs are known, the IW Council will provide a purchase order that the Town Council can invoice against to claim the project costs.

The Campaign for Real Ale (CAMRA) October Fest focuses on eight areas of the Island, accessed by public transport links. Each area would have a co-ordinator who liaises with local traders to showcase food and drink in their town during the event. Councillors were supportive of the Town Council raising the profile of the event through sharing information on social media and promotion of event posters. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Deputy Town Clerk will ask CAMRA for contact information for the Cowes area co-ordinator, making contact with them once this information is provided.

- c) **Parade Public Conveniences Refurbishment**
Formal contract negotiations had been undertaken and will be discussed at an extraordinary Town Council meeting on Thursday 12 March 2026.
- d) **Living Wall**
The Facilities and Town Manager advised that the wall is very wet due to the amount of recent rainfall. Once the wall has dried out, it will be painted and the plants' support structure installed.
- e) **Public Conveniences Accessibility Audit**
The GSM call-out system for the accessible toilets is due to be installed shortly. A fault with the emergency alarm in the Disabled toilet at Medina Road has resulted in its temporary closure. The emergency alarm will be repaired and linked to the new GSM call-out system. The Chairman and Facilities and Town Manager had reviewed the findings of the Accessibility Audit; additional mirrors and hooks are outstanding.
- f) **Installation of a permanent Flagpole in Northwood Park**
There is no update on this item. It was agreed:
ACTION
The Town Clerk will write to the Trustees of Northwood House for permission to site a permanent flagpole by the War Memorial.
- g) **Smart CCTV cameras**
The Chairman contacted a local business to seek permission to install a smart CCTV camera on their building. The camera would have a built-in WiFi connection and only require an independent power source. It was agreed:
ACTION
The Facilities and Town Manager would liaise with the supplier to check the camera's system requirements.
- h) **Northwood Recreation Ground Users' Survey**
A draft survey had been produced on SurveyMonkey. It was agreed:
ACTION
The Deputy Town Clerk will review the survey questions with the Mayor to ensure the survey incorporates the suggestions from recent Youth Voice sessions.
- i) **Christmas Events**
A report reviewing the Christmas 2025 event had been circulated to Councillors. Councillors agreed that organisation of a Christmas event for 2026 needed to be started much earlier. It was agreed:
ACTION
This item will be referred to the Events Working Group for in-depth discussions and planning.
- j) **Cowes Armada Board**
Councillors had been provided with background information on the gathering of secret armadas off Cowes in the 1500's and were asked to consider creating a commemorative information board to promote the history in our town. Councillors were supportive of the idea and required costs and identification of a suitable location to progress this project.

723. NEW PROJECTS

a) **Public Conveniences Refurbishment Programme**

Councillors felt we should be concentrating on The Parade refurbishment before considering the next facility to be refurbished. It was agreed:

ACTION

The Facilities and Town Manager will look at the life expectancy of our facilities and create a risk management plan for Councillors' consideration.

b) **Lamp Light of Peace**

The Town Council had been invited to take part in the Lamp Light of Peace Remembrance Service on 11 November 2026, and annually thereafter, remembering those lost in conflict. A Proclamation of Peace would be read by the Mayor, followed by the lighting of a red hurricane lamp as an emblem of our shared commitment to peace. Councillors were supportive of taking part in the Service and purchasing a red hurricane lamp; the location would be discussed further before the event. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. The Deputy Town Clerk would register the Town Council for the event.
2. The Deputy Town Clerk would source and purchase a red hurricane lamp.

c) **Public Swimming Area, Cowes Harbour**

Captain Kidd, Cowes' Harbour Master, was in attendance to present a potential community project to create a sea swimming pool in Cowes Harbour; this followed years of unsafe swimming / youths jumping into the busy Harbour area. He outlined the project which had been discussed by the Harbour Commissioners, and sought the support of the Town Council on this project, for the benefit of the community. A local company had created a design and outline costings, being in the region of £100,000. Councillors felt that youths wanted to jump into the water, rather than swim. They discussed the former floating rafts which were located along Cowes and Gurnard seafronts in the 1980's, which were very popular. It was acknowledged that rafts would not provide a safe swimming area as the location had a high number of watercraft and regular competitive sailing events close to the shore. The scheme being proposed would see the creation of a ballasted pontoon structure forming a swimming enclosure within Cowes Harbour. The depth of the water would rise and fall in line with the height of the tides. External funding would need to be sourced. Community and wellbeing projects could be considered as a potential Connecting Cowes (Place Plan) project. It was agreed:

ACTIONS

1. Captain Kidd would share the outline report and design with the Town Council.
2. The Facilities and Town Manager would provide Captain Kidd with the Connecting Cowes project proposal form.

724. MAINTENANCE ISSUES WITH EXISTING PROJECTS

a) **Street Furniture**

Councillor Wardrop requested the Town Council follow up again with Island Roads regarding the missing bench at the bottom of Market Hill.

The Town Council's clock on Shooters Hill was raised. The clock is awaiting repair and redecoration. The Facilities and Town Manager advised that he is seeking suitable contractors to maintain / decorate various items of street furniture.

The Facilities and Town Manager provided an update on safety testing of the flags and banner fixings. He is awaiting one further quotation before all the quotations are considered. Councillors acknowledged the potential high costs for providing flags and banners safely in the town and discussed the pros and cons of these provisions.

It was agreed:

ACTION

The Deputy Town Clerk will contact Island Roads regarding the missing bench on Market Hill.

Councillor Wardrop left the meeting at 7.17pm.

b) **Public Conveniences and CCTV**

No significant issues had been raised regarding the public conveniences or CCTV. There had been a recent spate of heavy graffiti at The Cut and Mornington Road public conveniences, which the cleaning contractor had promptly removed.

c) **Asset Complaints / Concerns Log**

The Deputy Town Clerk advised that no formal complaints had been received since the last meeting of the Projects Committee.

725. ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

- Skatepark upgrade – Councillor Ellis.
- BT Street Hubs – Facilities and Town Manager.

The proceedings terminated at 7.36pm.

CHAIRMAN