

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee Meeting held in the Dining Room, Northwood House, Cowes on Tuesday 24 March 2026 at 6.15pm.

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

In attendance: Patrick Jolin, Town Clerk, Kate Scragg, Deputy Town Clerk, Richard Shaul, Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) and Councillor Wardrop (Non-voting)

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

1138 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Carter, Nicholson, Rafferty and Walters.

1139 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None received.

1140 MINUTES RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 24 February 2026 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

1141 REVIEW OF RING FENCED AND EARMARKED BALANCES FROM 2025-2026 BUDGET HEADINGS

The RFO presented a list of ring-fenced and earmarked balances, total £302,570.

RECOMMENDED

That the proposed list of ring-fenced and earmarked balances be taken forward to Cowes Town Council for approval.

1142 REVIEW OF FUTURE FUNDING ARRANGEMENTS FOR COWES LIBRARY

The IW Council have asked Cowes Town Council to commit to three years' funding contributions and enter into a partnership agreement. Following discussions, it was:

RECOMMENDED

That the currently agreed future amounts of £28,223 for 2027/2028 and £29,126 for 2028/2029 be included in future budgets but with no formal commitment to Cowes Library.

1143 REVIEW OF TOWN CLERK'S EXPENDITURE LIMITS

The Town Clerk can authorise emergency / health and safety expenses up to a value of £1,000. This can be slow and cumbersome for the day to day running of the Council.

RECOMMENDED

That the Town Clerk's expenditure authorisation be amended to "The Town Clerk can authorise operational expenses up to the value of £2,000".

1144 UPDATE ON THE EXISTING HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND OF £5,000

The RFO 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 had handed out 89 vouchers from the 100 Aldi vouchers purchased, 11 remained available for issue.

1145 REVIEW OF THE CURRENT OFFICE STAFFING STRUCTURE

The Town Clerk reported he would now be advertising the posts against the issued job descriptions.

1146 OTHER STAFFING MATTERS

Probationary reviews will be undertaken for the Town Clerk and Responsible Financial Officer.

1147 HEALTH AND SAFETY MATTERS

There has been an issue raised with the flagpole on the Police Station. Stress testing of all flagpoles has been booked.

1148 STAFF CONCERNS

None.

1149 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON A FUTURE AGENDA

a) Review of chart of accounts and budget headings

The Town Clerk and RFO would work on this review and present to a future FAS meeting.

b) Badge of office for Mayor's Consort.

The proceedings terminated at 6:43pm

CHAIRMAN