

COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Annual Meeting of Cowes Town Council held in the Drawing Room, Northwood House, Cowes on Thursday 14 May 2026 at 7pm.

Present

Councillor Ellis (Town Mayor) (Chairman).

Councillors Adams, Barney, Dodwell (until 8.05 PM), Fuller, Hollis, Marriott, Nicholson (from 7.10 PM), Peacey Wilcox, Rafferty, Sanders, Walters, Wardrop and White.

In Attendance

Patrick Jolin (Town Clerk), Tracy Jones (Deputy Town Clerk), Kate Scragg (Deputy Town Clerk), David Gordon (Facilities and Town Manager), Sarah Preston (Communications and Funding Manager), Richard Shaul (Responsible Financial Officer), IWC Councillor Gordon Adam, a representative from Community Action IOW, a representative from Hampshire and IW Police, 1 members of the public.

Prior to the start of the meeting, the Mayor read out a statement extending the Council's deepest sympathies to the family and friends of Mr. James, and all those affected by the tragic incident that had recently occurred within one of the Council's public buildings.

9372 ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR

Councillor Ellis was proposed for Town Mayor by Councillor Dodwell and seconded by Councillor Fuller. Following a show of hands, it was:

RESOLVED

That Councillor Ellis be elected as Town Mayor to serve until the Annual Town Council meeting in 2027.

Councillor Ellis thereupon made a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

9373 ELECTION OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR

Councillor Peacey Wilcox was proposed for Deputy Town Mayor by Councillor Rafferty and seconded by Councillor Dodwell. Following a show of hands, it was:

RESOLVED

That Councillor Peacey Wilcox be elected as Deputy Town Mayor to serve until the Annual Town Council meeting in 2027.

Councillor Peacey Wilcox thereupon made a Declaration of Acceptance of Office.

9374 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

9375 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

9376 APPOINTMENTS TO FINANCE, ACQUISITIONS & STAFFING COMMITTEE

There are nine representatives on the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee. The Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor are 'ex officio' on all Committees. It was:

RESOLVED

That the following members be appointed to serve on the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee until the Annual Town Council meeting in 2027:

The Town Mayor, the Deputy Town Mayor and Councillors Adams, Marriott, Rafferty, Walters and White. There remain two vacancies on this Committee.

9377 APPOINTMENTS TO PLANNING & LICENSING COMMITTEE

There are nine representatives on the Planning & Licensing Committee. The Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor are 'ex officio' on all Committees. It was:

RESOLVED

That the following members be appointed to serve on the Planning & Licensing Committee until the Annual Town Council meeting in 2027:

The Town Mayor, the Deputy Town Mayor and Councillors Barney, Hollis, Sanders, Wardrop & White. There remain two vacancies on this Committee.

9378 APPOINTMENTS TO PROJECTS COMMITTEE

There are nine representatives on the Projects Committee. The Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor are 'ex officio' on all Committees. It was:

RESOLVED

That the following members be appointed to serve on the Projects Committee until the Annual Town Council meeting in 2027:

The Town Mayor, the Deputy Town Mayor and Councillors Adams, Rafferty, Sanders & White. There remain three vacancies on this Committee.

9379 APPOINTMENT TO EVENTS WORKING GROUP

There are nine representatives on the Events Working Group. It was:

RESOLVED

That the following members were appointed to serve on the Events Working Group until the Annual Town Council meeting in 2027:

The Town Mayor, the Deputy Town Mayor and Councillors Adams, Marriott & White. There remain four vacancies on this Working Group.

9380 APPOINTMENT TO NORTHWOOD HOUSE REVIEW WORKING GROUP

There are nine representatives on the Northwood House Review Working Group. It was:

RESOLVED

That the following members were appointed to serve on the Northwood House Review Working Group until the Annual Town Council meeting in 2027:

The Town Mayor, the Deputy Town Mayor and Councillors Adams, Barney & Walters. There remain four vacancies on this Working Group.

9381 APPOINTMENT TO WEBSITE AND IT WORKING GROUP

Following a discussion about appointments to the Website and IT Working Group, it was:

RESOLVED

That the Website and IT Working Group be disbanded.

9382 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVES TO OTHER BODIES

Following a discussion about appointments to other bodies it was:

RESOLVED

That the following representatives have been appointed to serve on the following other bodies until the Annual Town Council meeting in 2027:

Civil Military Partnership

Lead: Councillor Sanders.

Deputy: Councillor Nicholson.

Connecting Cowes Advisory Group

Councillors Nicholson and White.

Cowes Harbour Commission Advisory Committee

Lead: Councillor Hollis.

Deputy: Councillor Fuller.

East Cowes Town Council Liaison

Following discussion it was agreed not to appoint a representative, but to request meeting Minutes as required for information.

Environment & Sustainability Forum

Lead: Councillor Fuller.

Deputy: Current vacancy.

Experience Cowes

Lead: Councillor Ellis.

Deputy: Councillor Peacey Wilcox.

Friends of ORP Blyskawica Society Executive Committee

Lead: Councillor Sanders.

Deputy: Councillor Walters.

Highways P.F.I. District One

Councillor Peacey Wilcox.

Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils Executive Committee (IWALC)

Lead: Councillor Fuller.

Deputy: Councillor White.

Member Internal Financial Reviewers – Town Council Accounts

Councillors Barney and Sanders.

Northwood House Charitable Trust Co. Ltd - Park Forum

Lead: Councillor Adams.

Deputy: Councillor Barney.

Supporters of Cowes Library

Lead: Councillor Wardrop.

Deputy: Councillor Walters.

Tree Wardens

Councillor Sanders (one vacancy).

To ensure information arising from Councillor attendance at Other Bodies meetings is made available, the following **ACTION** was agreed:

- That the Town Clerk will request copies of meeting minutes from attending Councillors to any Other Body meetings and will then distribute information received to the full Town Council Chamber.

9383 STANDING ORDERS

A review of Standing Orders was carried out and no amendments were made. It was:
RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the Standing Orders.

9384 FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

A review of Financial Regulations was carried out and no amendments were made. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the Financial Regulations.

9148 CODE OF CONDUCT

A review of the Code of Conduct was carried out and no amendments were made. It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the Code of Conduct.

9385 POLICIES, PROCEDURES AND RISK ASSESSMENTS

A review of the following documents was carried out and no amendments were required:

- i) Complaints Procedure.
- ii) Complaints Procedure for complaints against members.
- iii) Internal Grievance Procedure.
- iv) Freedom of Information under the model publication scheme.
- v) Risk Management Policy.
- vi) Health & Safety Policy.
- vii) Policy for dealing with abusive, persistent or vexatious complaints or complainants.
- viii) Information and Data Protection Policy.
- ix) Document Retention and Disposal Policy.
- x) Community Emergency Plan.
- xi) Risk Assessment.

It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council approves the annual reviews as listed above.

**9386 DATES OF COUNCIL AND COMMITTEE MEETINGS FOR THE MUNICIPAL YEAR
2026 / 2027**

RESOLVED

**That the Town Council and Committee meetings be held on the following dates
and start times for the Municipal Year 2026 / 2027.**

TOWN COUNCIL 7pm
11 June 2026
16 July 2026
03 September 2026
01 October 2026
05 November 2026
17 December 2026
04 February 2027
04 March 2027
01 April 2027
06 May 2027 Annual Town Council Meeting

FINANCE, ACQUISITIONS & STAFFING COMMITTEE 6.15pm
26 May 2026
23 June 2026
28 July 2026
25 August 2026
22 September 2026
27 October 2026
24 November 2026
26 January 2027
23 February 2027
23 March 2027
27 April 2027

PROJECTS COMMITTEE 6.15pm
09 June 2026
14 July 2026
11 August 2026
08 September 2026
13 October 2026
10 November 2026
12 January 2027
09 February 2027
09 March 2027
13 April 2027

9387 ATTENDANCES

The Town Clerk reported that the attendances of Members at Town Council and Committee meetings during 2025 / 2026 were as follows:

TOWN COUNCIL			
COUNCILLOR	MAXIMUM	ATTENDANCES	%
A. Adams	12	8	67
S. Barney	12	4	33
A. Carter	12	6	50
S. Dodwell	12	6	50
S. Ellis	12	11	92
P. Fuller	12	8	67
R. Hollis	12	8	67
K. Marriott	10	8	80
J. Nicholson	12	6	50
L. Peacey-Wilcox	12	11	92
J. Rafferty	12	9	75
P. Sanders	12	7	58
N. Swallow	10	3	30
D. Walters	12	7	58
W. Wardrop	12	8	67
L. White	12	8	67

FINANCE, ACQUISITIONS & STAFFING COMMITTEE			
COUNCILLOR	MAXIMUM	ATTENDANCES	%
S. Barney	1	0	0
A. Carter	11	5	45
S. Ellis	11	11	100
R. Hollis	11	3	27
K. Marriott	10	8	80
J. Nicholson	11	7	64
L. Peacey-Wilcox	11	10	91
J. Rafferty	11	7	64
D. Walters	11	9	82

PLANNING & LICENSING COMMITTEE			
COUNCILLOR	MAXIMUM	ATTENDANCES	%
S. Barney	12	0	0
S. Dodwell	13	4	31
S. Ellis	13	10	77
R. Hollis	13	11	85
J. Nicholson	13	4	31
L. Peacey-Wilcox	13	3	23
P. Sanders	13	6	46
W. Wardrop	13	12	92
L. White	13	8	62

PROJECTS COMMITTEE			
COUNCILLOR	MAXIMUM	ATTENDANCES	%
A. Adams	11	8	73
S. Dodwell	11	4	36
S. Ellis	11	11	100
J. Nicholson	11	8	73
L. Peacey-Wilcox	11	9	82
J. Rafferty	11	10	91
P. Sanders	11	6	55
D. Walters	11	2	18
L. White	11	7	64

9388 REPORT FROM THE LOCAL SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER

A report from the local Safer Neighbourhood Officer (PC Manning) was received.

PC Manning also advised that should Councillors be directly approached by members of the public regarding incidents of crime, then all such reports should be passed directly to PC Manning and his PCSO team.

Councillor Fuller asked about the current staffing levels and opening hours of the Cowes Town Police Hub. PC Manning confirmed that full details of all opening times are now available on social media and that the Cowes Town Police Hub has additional cover now available from his PCSO team.

To further ensure this information is readily available to the public, the following **ACTION** was agreed:

- That the Town Communications and Funding Manager will liaise directly with PC Manning's team to additionally publicise the Cowes Town Police Hub opening hours within the Cowes Town Council social media service.

Councillor Peacey Wilcox thanked PC Manning and his team for their continued support and service to the Cowes Town community and Councillor White added that as a town, Cowes should be celebrated as a safe place to live.

9389 MINUTES

RESOLVED

That the Minutes of the Town Council Meeting held on Thursday 02 April 2026 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

9390 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Regarding the recent terrible and deeply upsetting incident at a Town Council managed facility, a personal statement was read out by friends of Mr. James. The Mayor reiterated the Council's statement read out at the start of the meeting and again extended the Council's deepest sympathies to the family, friends, and all those affected by this tragic incident.

The following **ACTION** was agreed:

- The Town Clerk will ask Island Roads for an update on the monitoring of the town's CCTV cameras.

Councillor Dodwell left the meeting at 8.05pm.

9391 REPORTS FROM ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLORS

Written reports focussing on local matters and Isle of Wight Council activities were received from Councillors Fuller, Peacey Wilcox and Rafferty.

Councillor Ellis welcomed the new IWC Councillor for Cowes South and Northwood (Councillor Gordon Adam) and IWC Councillor for Cowes North (Councillor Jock Rafferty). He thanked Councillor Nicholson and Councillor Quigley for their service to the Cowes Town community during their tenure as Isle of Wight Councillors.

Councillor Adam confirmed that his monthly IWC Councillor report will be made available for all future Cowes Town Council meetings.

9392 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS

a) Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee

The Minutes of the Finance, Acquisitions & Staffing Committee meeting held on 28 April 2026 were received and noted. Following discussions, the following outcomes were recorded:

1. Regarding minute 1153 (CTC Financial Statement as at 31 March 2026). It was:
RESOLVED
That Cowes Town Council receive, note and approve the Financial Statement as at 31 March 2026.
2. Regarding minute 1154 (Town Clerk's Expenditure Limit). It was:
RESOLVED
That the Financial Regulations section 5.9 is amended to:
 - **The Town Clerk can authorise operational expenses up to a value of £2,000.**
3. Regarding minute 1155 (Update to Financial Regulations – Debit Cards). It was:
RESOLVED
That Financial Regulations are updated to include:
 - **Debit card be kept by RFO/Clerk to make operational expenses up to £1,000.**
 - **Payments should be supported by Receipts, invoices or other evidence.**
 - **Debit card payments must be retrospectively approved at the following Cowes Town Council meeting.**
4. Regarding minute 1156 (Update to Financial Regulations – Bank Transfers). It was:

RESOLVED

That financial regulations are updated to include:

- **Transfers between Cowes Town Council accounts with Lloyds bank may be made by The Clerk or RFO without further authorisation by Councillors.**

5. Regarding minute 1157 (Update to Financial Regulations – Payment by Single User). It was:

RESOLVED

That minute number 9226.8 relating to payments by a single user be reversed.

6. Regarding minute 1158 (Application to Crisis and Resilience Fund). It was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council investigate submitting an application for a grant under the Crisis and Resilience Fund.

b) Planning & Licensing Committee

The Minutes of the Planning & Licensing Committee meetings held on 22 April 2026 and 13 May 2026 were received and noted.

c) Projects Committee

The Minutes of the Projects Committee meeting held on 14 April 2026 were received and noted.

d) Supporters of Cowes Library

The Minutes of the Supporters of Cowes Library meetings held on 14 March 2026 and 18 April 2026 were received and noted.

The following **ACTION** was agreed:

- That the Town Clerk contacts the IW Council for an update on Cowes Library's current building works and reports any response received to the Town Council Chamber.

e) Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee

The Minutes of the Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee meeting held on 15 April 2026 were received and noted.

f) National Assembly of Local Councils (NALC)

The Minutes of the NALC meeting held on 24 March 2026 were received and noted.

g) Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (IWALC)

The Minutes of the IWALC meeting held on 26 March 2026 were received and noted.

h) IWC Public Realm and Coastal (West) Meeting

The Minutes of the IWC Public Realm and Coastal (West) meetings held on 07 April 2026 and 05 May 2026 were received and noted.

i) Isle of Wight Bus and Rail User Group

The Minutes of the Isle of Wight Bus and Rail Users Group meeting held on 25 April 2026 were received and noted.

9393 MAYOR'S REPORT

The Mayor provided a written report summarising notable Cowes Town Council activities, events and initiatives during 2025 / 2026.

The Mayor thanked on his and the Town Council's behalf, the retiring Deputy Town Clerk (Kate Scragg) for all her support, expertise and outstanding service to Cowes Town Council over the last nine-and-a-half years.

The Mayor also welcomed the most recently recruited Council Office members (Tracy Jones, Deputy Town Clerk; Sarah Preston, Communications and Funding Manager).

9394 TOWN QUAY HARBOUR COMMISSION REPORT

A written report was received and noted from Councillor Walters. After discussion, the following **ACTION** was agreed:

- Councillor Hollis will raise the items in Councillor Walters' report at the next Cowes Harbour Commission Advisory Committee meeting, and for Councillor Hollis to work with Councillor Adams to identify any other bodies that may be affected by the items discussed in the report.

9395 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE AND ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN (AGAR) FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

The Responsible Financial Officer presented Councillors with the Town Council's Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR) for the year ended 31 March 2026. The date of the period for the Exercise of Public Rights has been set for Monday 01 June 2026 to Tuesday 14 July 2026 inclusive. It was:

RESOLVED

That the Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2026 be approved and signed by the Town Mayor and Town Clerk.

9396 STATEMENT OF ACCOUNTS FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

The Responsible Financial Officer presented Councillors with the Town Council's Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026. It was:

RESOLVED

That the Statement of Accounts for the year ended 31 March 2026 be approved and signed by the Town Mayor and Town Clerk.

9397 INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT FOR THE YEAR ENDED 31 MARCH 2026

The Responsible Financial Officer presented Councillors with the Town Council's Internal Auditor's Report for the year ended 31 March 2026. It was:

RESOLVED

That the Internal Auditor's Report for the year ended 31 March 2026 be received and noted.

9398 CHEQUE AND PETTY CASH PAYMENTS FOR THE MONTH OF APRIL 2026

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

RESOLVED

That the cheque payments for April 2026 of £61,022.47 and petty cash payments of £76.30 were received, noted and approved.

9399 COUNCILLORS' REGISTER OF INTERESTS

The Town Clerk reminded Councillors to complete a new Register of Interest form. This should be completed and returned to the Clerks within 28 days.

9400 RENEWAL OF COWES TOWN COUNCIL ZURICH INSURANCE FOR 2026 / 27

Following discussions regarding the CTC Zurich insurance renewal quotation for the period 2026 / 27, it was:

RESOLVED

That Cowes Town Council renews the Zurich insurance policy for 2026 / 27 in the sum of £3,320.06.

9401 UPDATE FROM THE TOWN CLERK

A report on the CTC Town Office achievements for April 2026 was received from the Town Clerk and noted.

9402 UPDATE FROM THE PUBLIC REALM OFFICER

A report on the Public Realm Officer activities for April 2026 was received and noted.

9403 MISCELLANEOUS PUBLICATIONS AND CORRESPONDENCE

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

9404 ITEMS FOR INCLUSION ON FUTURE AGENDAS

No items were received for a future agenda.

The proceedings terminated at 8.53pm.

CHAIRMAN