

Cowes Town Council and High Street Small Business Community – The case for Increasing the Town Council role in shaping the future of the Cowes

The recent initiative to recreate a dialogue between CTC and the small business community in Cowes (and especially along the High Street) is a very welcome and important move and a valuable addition to the development of the Town Council as a strategic and enabling body for Cowes as a place.

What we must seek to avoid is a low attendance talking shop that essentially becomes a place where everyday complaints are raised, many of which are not directly with CTCs ability to solve – we don't directly control the street cleaning for example

The business community in Cowes are smart, thoughtful and committed to the success of the town but possibly lack the co-ordinating mechanism or the time to think and act strategically – in my view the Town Council should think clearly, see how it can become the strategy partner for the town's commercial, retail, and leisure development

This might mean for example:

- Taking a lead role in the active promotion of the town as a tourist and visitor destination
- Acting as a partner in developing town commercial and footfall initiatives – a farmers' market? Christmas celebrations? Something else?
- Taking a position on how the town can back the larger regattas to maximise Cowes' success in these events – looking at how for example French towns compete and support a key visitor driver?
- Becoming a key focus for town centre public realm developments and funding bids that support the town as a high-quality destination
- Enabling as a stakeholder a strategy and a development plan for Cowes as a place to live, work and run a successful business

I think it is time for a small, engaged Cowes Business Development Committee reporting directly to FC to be established to look carefully how the council can strategically plan and aid the business and leisure development of the town, engage meaningfully with the key business community, build on the "Traders" initiative and support necessary investment in the future of the High Street and around.

I would like to put my name forward for any Development Committee agreed

Cllr Mark Reen

Medina Ward