COWES TOWN COUNCIL

POLICY ON DEBATE AND VOTING AT MEETINGS

The Local Government Act 1972 Sch 12 para 39(1) explains that:

"Every decision, save to appoint a Freeman, must be made by a majority of the members *present and voting*. Provided that a quorum is present it is immaterial that a quorum of members take part in the voting. A motion may therefore be carried by a single voter if nobody votes against him. The person presiding (Chairman) may vote even if by doing so he creates an equality of votes, and if there is an equality of votes he has a second or casting vote"

Without prejudice to what is required by statute, Cowes Town Council agrees to adopt the following policy and procedures with respect to the manner in which its members (whether elected or co-opted) participate in debate and vote on decisions and/or resolutions at all Full Council and Committee meetings:

All Members should be aware that:

- Formal resolutions must be proposed and seconded before they can be voted upon or the resolution is defeated.
- The opportunity to vote and comment, both individually and corporately, is a privilege which should be valued accordingly, and therefore a decision to abstain should not be taken lightly.
- Resolutions, once proposed and seconded, will be voted upon by a show of hands either "in favour", "against" or "abstention".
- The final majority of the votes made will be taken from those Members **who vote "for" or "against" NOT from all those present.**
- Resolutions made are corporate decisions made by the Council, not by one or other Member.

Adopted October 2015
Amended October 2016
Reviewed October 2017, October 2018, October 2019, October 2020, October 2021, October 2022, October 2023, October 2024
Reviewed and Amended October 2025

The Chairman

- Will introduce the agenda item, and confirm/explain from the agenda what the desired outcome is (ie a decision, to note, for information only etc).
- Will allow enough time for debate and not accept any proposal until he/she draws the debate process to a close.
- Will, where and when appropriate, ask for a proposal and, once it has been made, summarise the proposal for clarity and will only allow one proposal at a time to be tabled.
- Will ask for a seconder to the proposal.
- Must, if there is no seconder, declare the proposal defeated.
- Must, if there is a seconder, ask for a show of hands in support of the proposal.
- Must ask for a show of hands opposing the proposal.
- Must ask for a show of hands from those who are abstaining from the vote.
- Will declare the result of the vote (in consultation with the Clerk if necessary).

The Council or Committee Members

- Will contribute to the debate process only after the Chairman has introduced the agenda item and invited comments and opinions from Members.
- Will **always** direct comments during the debate **through the Chairman** by a show of hands and will not speak until individually invited to by the Chairman.
- Any proposal or resolution should be made through the Chairman.
- Will vote either "for", "against" or "abstain" when requested to by the Chairman by a show of hands.
- Will make the show of hands clearly visible to allow the Chairman and Clerk sufficient time to ensure an accurate count.
- Will support the resolution arrived at **as the Corporate Body**

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