

## COWES TOWN COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the COWES TOWN COUNCIL held at Northwood House, Cowes on Wednesday, 2<sup>nd</sup> December, 2009 at 7.00 p.m.

Present: Councillor Wells (Town Mayor) (Chairman)  
Councillors Banks, Birch, Deacon, Giffard, Hammond, Jones, McGregor, Matthews, Mazillius, Peacey-Wilcox, Sanderson, Thwaites, Walters, Wells and Wilcox.

### 6271 PRESENTATION – OVER 21 ALCOHOL SCHEME

The Town Mayor introduced and welcomed Claire Thomas from the I.W. Council Licensing Team who had attended to inform the Town Council of an ‘Over 21 Alcohol Scheme’ that was being extended to Cowes and East Cowes.

Claire commenced by stating that this was a voluntary scheme whereby participating shops refuse to sell alcohol to anyone aged under 21 years old on Fridays and Saturdays from 6pm until closing time. The initiative was first launched on the Island in Ryde in May 2008 and had since been rolled out to include Sandown, Shanklin and Ventnor; it would be further extended to include Cowes and East Cowes before the end of December. The scheme was aimed at tackling alcohol-related anti social behaviour and to encourage responsible drinking. Statistics from each of the participating areas had indicated that the level of alcohol-related crimes had reduced since the scheme had been introduced and participating businesses had also reported less trouble. The problem of ‘proxy purchasing’ where those of legal age bought alcohol to pass onto young people had also been reduced. The scheme would operate in tandem with other Trading Standard and police initiatives including test purchasing exercises, enforcement visits and local ‘pubwatch’ schemes. The Licensing Team knew from the test purchasing exercises that the vast majority of off-licences were extremely responsible when it came to selling alcohol and it had been pleasing to see how supportive the off-licences had been for the scheme in the participating towns. She understood that there would be 100% support and uptake in Cowes and East Cowes.

Sgt. Cocks reported that her officer had issued the invitations to off-licences to attend a meeting on 24<sup>th</sup> November; every off-licence in East Cowes had been represented and they had welcomed the scheme. Unfortunately, very few off-licences from Cowes had been represented and her officers were chasing those businesses not attending; this was a very valuable scheme and although it was voluntary it did require total support if it was to succeed.

Following a number of questions from members, the Town Mayor thanked Claire Thomas for attending to outline this excellent scheme; anything that would assist the police in dealing with alcohol-related anti-social behaviour would be welcomed and supported by the Town Council.

### 6272 APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Slade.

### 6273 QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

A member of the public asked the following question:

**Q. What did the Town Council intend to do about one of its members bringing the Town Council into disrepute; the member was sitting in reserved seats representing the Council at the Remembrance Day Church Service when he made a personal protest by leaving in a very obvious, discourteous and disrespectful manner? Choosing to do nothing would lead members of the public to believe that the Town Council condoned the behaviour.**

A. The Town Mayor stated that the matter had been referred to the Ethical Standards Committee; it would be inappropriate to permit further debate surrounding the event so as to not prejudice their investigation. However, Councillor Banks had also requested an agenda item primarily seeking an update; it was agreed that this item be brought forward and dealt with at this point.

Councillor Banks had been satisfied with the information given; however, he questioned whether the Councillor should be suspended from all committees of the Town Council pending the outcome of the hearing.

Following much discussion it was accepted that no further action be taken by the Town Council pending the outcome of the investigation by the Ethical Standards Committee.

## **6274 REPORTS BY ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLORS**

An apology for his absence had been received from Councillor Brown.

**Councillor Mazilius had submitted a written report which referred to:**

- a). That he had raised further concerns he had in respect of the BAE Systems planning application with the Case Officer.
- b). That he had asked how the I.W. Council might assist employees following the announcement of proposed redundancies at BAE Systems.
- c). That despite the bad weather, the works to the Cowes/Newport cycle path were still expected to be completed by 11<sup>th</sup> December.
- d). That he continued to pursue Southern Water and the Highways Department for a conclusion to the works required to enable the roads and footpaths on the Westbury Estate to be formally adopted by the I.W. Council.
- e). That the controversial Cheverton Down wind turbine application would be determined by the I.W. Council's Planning Committee on 3<sup>rd</sup> December.
- f). That Councillors Peacey-Wilcox and Jones had spoken most effectively against the planning application for light industrial units at the rear of the Mill Hill Road Co-op. If another application was to be made he would speak on the issues as an adjoining ward member.
- g). That the long running works by British Gas on the A3020 near the prison complex had now been completed.
- h). That the ill-informed and inaccurate comments that had been posted in the Village Forum pages of the Northwood Village website had now been removed.

**Councillor Peacey-Wilcox reported as follows:**

- a). That she had supported Cowes Town Council in objecting to the planning application for the industrial units to the rear of the Mill Hill Road Co-op; the Planning Committee subsequently refused the application.
- b). That along with other I.W. Councillors had received approximately 15 letters requesting support for the wind turbine planning application for Cheverton Down.
- c). That the Bus shelter at the Cemetery had been damaged on 11<sup>th</sup> November; it was hoped that CCTV might be able to identify the culprits.
- d). That workmen were cutting back overgrown trees and vegetation at the Northwood Cemetery; small hedging shrubs would be planted which should make the area much safer.
- e). That she had been dealing with safety issues (lighting and slippery leaves) in the Maxted Close and Windmill Close area.
- f). That she had received a number of requests that Arctic Park be designated a 'dog free' area; the park either had to contain play equipment or there had to be an official request from the Town Council for this designation to occur. It was for the local Neighbourhood Watch to determine which of these routes they wished to take in respect of Arctic Park.

**Councillor Fuller circulated a detailed written report referring to the following:**

- a). That despite many objections, permission had been granted to build four properties in the Victorian Kitchen Garden of Egypt House.
- b). That following consultation with local residents he had received 'support in principle' for the extension of a footpath between Pine Tree Close and Egypt Hill in Baring Road; his finding had been reported to the I.W. Council. He was also investigating the widening of the footpath in Baring Road at the junction with Tuttons Hill.
- c). That consultation on Traffic Orders for Crossfield Avenue and Egypt Hill were ongoing although he expected the new Orders to be operational by the end of January 2010.

- d) That residents were concerned by a decision of Cabinet members to end concessionary bus fares before 9.30am for the over 60's.
- e). That he had received complaints from Cliff Road residents that three Corsican/Austrian Pine trees had been planted in Mornington Road to replace two dead Poplars.
- f). That he had received complaints that a fence had been erected on the Crossfield Estate despite it being designated an 'open plan' estate.
- g). That he had recently been appointed by the I.W. Council to the Local Access Forum, which would oversee Rights of Way and access to the coast by way of the UK Marine and Coastal Access Act which came into force on 12<sup>th</sup> November. He would also serve as a Deputy for the AONB Partnership and as a Cowes High School Governor.
- h). That he had requested the I.W. Council provide some form of street lighting and a litter bin in Blackberry Lane.

## **6275 REPORT FROM THE SAFER NEIGHBOURHOOD TEAM**

### **Sgt. Julie Cocks reported as follows:**

- a). Following a site meeting at Carvel Lane, Highways had agreed to change and improve the signs in the area to make it much clearer for motorists; they would also consider changing the direction of traffic.
- b). That it was hoped that Highways would implement a 2 hour parking restriction in York Street as soon as possible.
- c). That one of the police 'top 10' targets had been charged with a Section 4 'Public Order' offence.
- d). That the police had re-visited an address in Love Lane and a resident had been charged with the possession of cannabis. They were now in discussion with Medina Housing in respect of this address and another in Stephenson Road where a resident had been charged twice this year in respect of cannabis offences as to whether they would extend their residencies.
- e). That the police had completed a 'street mapping' process in Gurnard; they would be undertaking a similar process for the whole of Northwood and continuing 'street mapping' in the Cowes West ward early in the new year.

## **6276 REPORT FROM THE LOCAL ENVIRONMENT & NEIGHBOURHOOD OFFICER**

### **Jacqui Darby had apologised for her absence but had submitted a written report referring to the following, a copy of which had been circulated to each member:**

- a). That the I.W. Council were renewing the shelter at the bottom of Watch House Lane as part of the Public Realm improvements; students at Cowes High School had been requested to paint a beach or seascape on boards at the rear of the shelter.

Councillor Walters had received a complaint that the flat roof to the shelter had been replaced by a pitched roof blocking a resident's view and he questioned whether the change should have required planning consent.

### **RESOLVED**

That the Town Clerk writes to the Planning Authority questioning whether or not the changes to the roof of the shelter at the bottom of Watch House Lane should have required planning permission.

- b). That residents had complained of disturbances at the Brunswick Road play park which was no longer being locked at night. The Town Council agreed that the lock would be removed so residents did not expect the park to be locked at night and that the Town Council would re-look at the situation in the Spring.
- c). That rumours that Southern Vectis would stop running their buses in Fountain Quay and that there was a dispute regarding cleaning of the area from the arch to the Red Funnel terminal were both false.
- d). That incidents of dog fouling and graffiti had been on the increase; additional enforcement patrols had been established and these would continue.
- e). That bollards at The Cut and the top of Shooters Hill had been hit by vehicles and paving had been damaged; the guilty motorists would be charged with the cost of repairs.
- f). That Street Lighting were trying to organise temporary lighting round the Cross Street car park area while the Southern Water flood protection works were being undertaken in Francki Place.

g). That it was hoped that damage to the Cemetery bus shelter and theft of a bicycle would be picked up on the CCTV camera that remained in place in the area; there were also incidents of fly posting on the bus shelter and around Cowes and she continued to work with the police in an attempt to eliminate this problem.

f). That various other general defects had been reported to the Highway Authority.

## **6277 MINUTES**

### **RESOLVED**

That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 4<sup>th</sup> November, 2009 be taken as read, approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

## **6278 MATTERS ARISING**

### **a). Cross Street car park (Min. No. 6245 refers)**

The Town Clerk submitted a letter from the I.W. Council Parking Services Operations Manager regarding the additional signage that had been requested by the Town Council to alert shoppers to the concession granted by Sainsbury to users of the Cross Street car park.

It stated that when the concession commenced under the Somerfield banner many years ago, there was a sign indicating that one half of the parking ticket should be attached to the vehicle and the second half could be taken to the store to obtain a refund of one's shopping. The Operations Manager would obtain quotations for the production of an updated sign commensurate with the Sainsburys concession and providing the cost was reasonable, he would arrange for the new sign to be installed.

### **b). Web site (Min. No. 6265b refers)**

Councillor Matthews was disappointed that he could not report that the new Town Council web site was now live; he had received a full days training and was now empowered and would be able to make changes to the web site and to teach others the process. Councillor Matthews suggested that photographs should be included to identify individual Councillors listed on the web site; he would take all necessary photographs. He also questioned whether or not the web site should include an online Forum.

### **RESOLVED**

That the new web site should include photographs of those Councillors willing to comply but it would not contain a facility for an online Forum.

### **c). Adventure play area, Northwood Recreation Ground (Min. No.6265c refers)**

Copies of the final design for the adventure play area had been circulated to all members. Councillor McGregor stated that tenders should be received for consideration at the January meeting with the aim of starting construction towards the end of February. The Town Council had received the £10,000 funding from the Youth Opportunities Fund; conditions for the grant included that the Town Council submit a Child Protection Policy and have CRB checks carried out on all adults working or volunteering in the project. Councillor McGregor recommended that as Councillors were so involved in the community it would be advisable for all members to have the CRB checks completed. The Riverside Centre offered a CRB umbrella service to allow organisations and charities access to the checks for their employees and volunteers; the Town Council would have to complete a Service Agreement with that body. There would probably be a £10 administration charge for each application with an additional charge for the Town Clerk being employed by the Council. It was also agreed that the Town Mayor, Deputy Town Mayor and Town Clerk would draft a Child Protection Policy for submission to the next meeting.

Finally, Councillor McGregor stated that the Town Clerk had authorised Groundwork Solent to purchase a JCLI Landscape Contract document at a cost of £30 which was necessary for the tendering process.

### **RESOLVED**

- 1). That the action taken by the Town Clerk in authorising the purchase of the JCLI Landscape Contract document at a cost of £30 be noted and approved; and
- 2). That the Town Clerk be authorised to complete the Riverside Centre Criminal Records Bureau Umbrella Body Service Agreement and to issue Disclosure application forms to those Councillors willing to undergo the CRB checks.

**d). Public slipways (Min. No. 6243d refers)**

The Town Clerk submitted a letter from the Esplanade and Beaches Officer regarding the complaint from a member of the public in respect of the safety of and the closure of public slipways during Cowes Week. The letter confirmed that all Council managed public slipways were cleaned on a fortnightly basis throughout the summer and normally monthly during the winter. However, the letter did not explain the procedure and legal requirements for the temporary closure of public slipways; the Town Clerk had subsequently submitted three further requests for this information but had not received a response. He would endeavour to do so before the next meeting.

**e). The bandstand, The Parade (Min. No. 6254g refers)**

The Town Clerk had circulated a copy of the response that had been received from the I.W. Council Acting Head of Legal Services regarding the legislation in relation to Village Greens in terms of what could be done to them.

Councillor Banks remained of the opinion that as it was a bandstand, improvements to the seating and perhaps an awning to cover the area would be permitted under section 29 of the Commons Act 1876 as the provision of these facilities would assist in the enjoyment of the area.

It was agreed that the matter be referred to the Town Improvements Committee for further consideration.

**f). Island Plan (Min. No. 6253d refers)**

The Town Clerk submitted a letter from Planning Services which stated that following the initial postponement of the Examination Hearings into the Island Plan Core Strategy the I.W. Council had written to the Secretary of State requesting its withdrawal from the Examination process; the Secretary of State had subsequently agreed to that request.

The withdrawal would give the I.W. Council the opportunity to make further improvements to the Core Strategy which would not have been permitted if the Examination process had been continued; the I.W. Council now expects the preparation of the Core Strategy to run to the following timetable:

|                   |   |
|-------------------|---|
| April/May, 2010   | Proposed submission consultation          |
| July/August, 2010 | Submission and period for representations |
| October, 2010     | Pre Hearing meeting                       |
| December, 2010    | Examination Hearings                      |
| March, 2011       | Adoption                                  |

The new timetable for the Core Strategy meant that new national and regional policies and guidance could fully be taken into account, along with any changes that have occurred locally; however, it was not anticipated that there would be wholesale changes to the submitted Strategy.

The Town Clerk also submitted as part of the ongoing work on the Island Plan documents, details of an audit being conducted of Open Space provision on the Island; the survey questionnaire could be accessed via the I.W. Council website and it was agreed that individual members would complete that questionnaire.

**g). Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (Min. No. 6185d refers)**

The Town Clerk submitted a letter from the Chair of the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (IWALC) which stated that the I.W. Council withdrawal of the tri-partite agreement had created a financial pressure for IWALC; they would now have to fund a variety of services that were previously shared with the I.W. Council. The Financial Officer, in reviewing the budget for 2010/11, had discovered that a capped affiliation fee at 90% of the full rate for several larger Councils had not been uplifted since 2006; that meant that Cowes and some other Councils were now paying a rate equating to 66% of the rate for smaller Councils per elector. The Financial Officer had recommended that the capped rate be brought back to the 90% level. In order to gradually realign the fees it was proposed that the Cowes Town Council capped affiliation fee would rise by circa 17% whilst the uncapped rate would rise by 10.7% and similar increases would be implemented over the next two years. The Town Clerk reported that this measure would increase the Town Councils affiliating fee in 2010/11 from £800 to approximately £940.

Councillors Jones and Walters also reported on a recent IWALC Workshop; they stated that despite continued questioning at that event, they had been very disappointed and had been unable to glean any really worthwhile justification for recommending continued membership.

**RESOLVED**

That the Town Council formally withdraws from membership of the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils at the end of financial year 2009/10.

**h). Town Design Statement (Min. No. 6267e refers)**

The Town Clerk submitted a letter from the Cowes Group of the I.W. Society which stated that their March 2010 meeting had been re-scheduled to Thursday 4<sup>th</sup> March to accommodate the Town Council. That meeting would be discussing the development of a Community Led Plan which could take the form of either a Parish Plan or a Market Towns Healthcheck leading to a Town Plan or Town Design Statement. The intention was to explain these plans to local residents and to outline why there was an urgent need for such a plan for Cowes.

The Town Clerk explained that the Town Council had undertaken a Market Town Healthcheck project in 2003 which could form the basis for future plans. He would forward a copy of 'Local Voices, Island Issues', a guide on how to develop community led plans, to all Councillors prior to the March meeting with the I.W. Society.

(Councillor Sanderson left the meeting at 8.56p.m.)

**6279 REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND MEETINGS**

**a). Cowes Harbour Commission Advisory Group**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Cowes Harbour Commissioners Advisory Committee held on 30<sup>th</sup> October 2009 and a copy of the Constitution for that Committee were received.

**b). Northwood House**

Councillor Wells stated that he had been in discussion with the Northwood House Trustees and the I.W. Council in his attempt to develop a strategy by which the Town Council might assist in moving the Northwood House position forward. He was finalising a report that would be issued to members; he considered it to be a matter of such importance that he would like to call a separate meeting of the Town Council to discuss this one issue.

Councillor Thwaites gave a verbal report regarding Northwood House.

She stated that the Trustees welcomed this new initiative and they hoped that some positive outcome would be possible. In the meantime the Trust had met with the management of Park Court in an attempt to resolve minor boundary inconsistencies and the room above the bar which was causing some concern had been cleared. Although they had received some 'expressions of interest' in the House they would continue to welcome all resident suggestions.

**RESOLVED**

That another meeting of the Town Council be held on Tuesday, 15<sup>th</sup> December 2009 at 7p.m. to consider proposals that will be set out in a discussion document regarding Northwood House and grounds.

**c). Finance Committee**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Finance Committee held on 18<sup>th</sup> November 2009 were received.

**i). Applications for grants**

**RESOLVED**

1). That grants be made to the following organisations in accordance with the amounts shown:

|                        | £   |
|------------------------|-----|
| a). Plessey Bowls Club | 500 |
| b). Wight Brass        | 300 |

2). That the Town Council awards £250 to Medina Housing for year one of their Growing Spaces project in Cowes and based on feedback would further consider supporting year two at a future meeting;

3). That no grant be made in respect of the application from the Jordan Ayton; and

4). That the balance of £1,350 in the estimates be kept in reserve pending further applications which may be received.

**ii). Budget and Precept for the Financial Year 2010/11**

**RESOLVED**

That the final consideration of the budget and precept for the financial year 2010/11 be deferred until the January 2010 meeting.

**d). Cowes/Deauville Twinning Association**

The Minutes of the Meeting of the Cowes Deauville Twinning Association held on 21<sup>st</sup> November 2009 were received.

**e). IWC Budget Consultation**

Councillor Walters gave both a verbal and written report following a BMG Research organised Stakeholder Workshop held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2009 regarding the 2010/11 I.W. Council budget.

**6280 MATTERS SUBMITTED BY THE TOWN CLERK**

- a). To approve the action of the Town Clerk in respect of the following decisions:
  - i). A donation of up to £150 for the cost of materials towards the refurbishment of the shelter at the bottom of Watch House Lane.
  - ii) To record 'No objection' in respect of an application for the Variation of Premises Licence for Morgans Wine Bar, 15 Shooters Hill.
  - iii). The purchase of two floral 'Fountain' planters.
- b). Invitation to attend the Environment Agency 'IW Community Flood Planning' workshop to be held at the Broadway Centre on Friday 11<sup>th</sup> December..
- c). \*Guidance notes from the Ethical Standards Committee for dealing with notifications from the Monitoring Officer following the receipt of a complaint against a Parish or Town Councillor.
- d). \*Details of the Dog Exclusion (Isle of Wight) Order 2010.
- e). \*To consider whether or not to respond in respect of the Changing Places and the Wight Access Group – Fully Accessible Toilets.
- f). \*To receive details of miscellaneous correspondence.

(\* copies circulated to all members)

**RESOLVED**

- 1). That the action taken by the Town Clerk following discussion with the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor in respect of the urgent decisions be noted and approved;
- 2). That Councillor Matthews represent the Town Council at the Environment Agency 'IW Community Flood Planning' workshop on 11<sup>th</sup> December, 2009;
- 3). That the Guidance Notes from the Ethical Standards Committee for dealing with notifications from the Monitoring Officer be received and noted;
- 4). That no objection be made in respect of the Dog Exclusion (Isle of Wight) Order 2010; and
- 5). That no further action be taken in respect of Changing Places and the Wight Access Group – Fully Accessible Toilets

(The proceedings terminated at 9.40pm)

**CHAIRMAN**