

Minutes of Cowes Town Council extra-ordinary meeting to discuss the Town Council's response to the Northwood House Consultation, held on 16th May 2011 at 7.00p.m. 2011 at Northwood House Community Hall, Cowes.

Present

5 members of the public

Chairman Cllr McGregor

Cllrs Birch, Banks, Brown, Ellis, Hammond, Jones, Sanderson, Matthews, Wells, Walters

6473 Apologies

Cllrs Wilcox and Peacey – Wilcox sent their apologies.

6474 Questions from members of the public

Before members of the public were invited to speak Cllr McGregor clarified the standing orders relating to questions from the public.

Janet Allen – Northwood House Trustee

Will Councillors be attending the open house on 22nd May?

Yes, and I am sure that fellow councillors will be attending as well.

6475 Declarations of Interests

None were made.

6476 Consideration of response to Northwood House Consultation.

Cllr Wells led the discussions as chair of the Northwood House sub-group. He summarised the two recent meetings held about Northwood House:

At first meeting there was a general discussion of the consultation and it was agreed to submit individual “must-haves” and “must-have-nots”. These were then collated and this made the basis of a documents for the second meeting.

The discussions of the second meeting then created the discussion document circulated to councillors prior to this Town Council meeting.

Each of the sub-headings was discussed separately and relevant resolutions made.

a Consultation Document:

RESOLVED

That this statement be submitted by the council to Northwood House Trustees without amendment.

b Trustee Transparency

No other charity is required to make this information public by law and charity commission – however it was felt that it could be helpful for the trust to be more open. The difficulty could come from the park's history as a municipal park and move from the public domain has created a public expectation of more transparency. The more that the trust is open the more likely the trustees are to have public support.

RESOLVED

That “lack of transparency” be changed to “more transparency”.

To add “ That the history as the municipal area has created an expectation of transparency.”

c Trustees structure

RESOLVED

That the council submit this comment in response to the consultation without amendment.

d Charity Commission

RESOLVED

That the council submit this comment in response to the consultation without amendment.

e Business Plan

A range of points were made about this item

- The trustees should be allowed to run the charity as they fit.
- Without a robust business plan the trustees cannot show that they need funding, how they will use funding and for example if the council were to provide funding it is public monies and needs transparency.
- This section is in response to the consultation document and which states that there will be business plan.

RESOLVED

That the council submit this comment in response to the consultation without amendment.

f Use of Accommodation

Encourage the registrar's office to return to Northwood House, CTC could be making representations to the IW Council to encourage this move. The loss of the house to the public should be a last resort and mixed use with public-areas would prevent this and preserve the Town's heritage. Rooms seem to be priced out of reach at compared to other venues.

RESOLVED

That the council submit this comment in response to the consultation without amendment.

g Park and Swings

RESOLVED

That the council submit this comment in response to the consultation without amendment.

h The Lawn

Beds have been planted recently and herbaceous borders have improved by volunteers and the council should recognised and support this work.

RESOLVED

That the council submit this comment in response to the consultation but add "future sponsor" at end and "applaud volunteer involvement"

i Other Buildings/Developments

RESOLVED

That the council submit this response without amendment.

j Car Parking

The commuter market seems to be lost – this statement is unsubstantiated in our comments although based on observations by councillors and residents who see that the car park is fairly empty and the roads fuller than before. The perceived change shows a valid reason to consult on the issue of car parking. Reducing charges slightly lower than the IW Council could achieve this.

RESOLVED

That the council submit this response changing the car park name to "Park Road".

k Village Green Application

Cllr Walters declared a personal interest and remained in the room. Cllrs Hammond and Ellis personal and prejudicial interest due to Cowes Week car parking and left the room at 7.49pm.

A range of views were expressed over the pros and cons of a village green

- If the trustees wanted to look at enabling development but there was a village green status in place and this could prevent an enabling development from taking place.
- The application covers the open parkland, car park and flower beds by the Park Road toilets (which does include some areas which the trust does not manage). Without the Village Green status land can be “nibbled” away.
- A Village Green could place too much restriction on the trust for development and viability for the long-term future of the house and park.
- Without clarity about long-term enabling developments a Village Green Status would protect all the land.
- The Village Green application is in response to not being clear about how things could develop and what enabling-development means. With greater clarity it is not likely that a village green application would have been made.
- There has been a historical encroachment into the parkland with the car park and Medina Housing development.
- For most people in Cowes the parkland is more important than the house and so a village green would preserve this.

RESOLVED

That the council submit this response without amendment.

8.10 Cllrs Hammond and Ellis returned to the meeting.

l Other Issues

This does not constitute part of the consultation document a separate letter to the trustees not part of the consultation could be submitted.

RESOLVED

That the council use the last paragraph as the basis of a letter to the trustees seeking clarity over these issues – to be submitted by the assistant Town Clerk.

6477 AON Insurance

The assistant town clerk submitted a quote for the annual insurance at the request of the Town Clerk. The Assistant Town Clerk was unable to provide details of the cost of last year’s insurance.

RESOLVED

That the power to make a resolution on this matter be delegated to the finance committee.

Meeting closed 8.17p.m.