



East Cowes Town Council

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Minutes of a meeting of **East Cowes Town Council** held at East Cowes Town Hall, York Avenue, East Cowes
Thursday 21st March 2024 at 6pm

Present; Chair: Cllr Reardon (Mayor) **Councillors:** Packham, Palin, Love (arrived at 7.40pm), Lake, Hendry, Irwin
Clerk: S Chilton **Deputy Clerk:** Charlotte Jones
Denise Adams, Assistant Facilities/Community & Events Officer
Also present: Jade Kennett, Strategic Development Manager for Education, IW Council
P.C Henry Trotman & Sgt Matthew Browne
6 members of the public
Louise Hill, IW County Press

Public Forum

David Burdett, EC Heritage Centre thanked the council for the grants for the RNLI commemoration weekend exhibition taking place 24th – 27th May and the Clarence Rd Mural. He praised the quality of a film put together by Ken Wheeler. A press release has been issued. He asked if the Council could help with the cost of printing programmes. This would be followed up

PC Henry Trotman, East Cowes Beat Officer and Sergeant Matthew Brown introduced themselves to the Council. They informed the council that information leaflets on policing were available for distribution. There will be more of a presence from June 2024, with the addition of PCSO's. There are no major local crime issues. There has been a small amount of anti-social behaviour including shoplifting, and community protection notices are being issued. There have been some issues regarding drug use and the more reports the police get regarding these issues the more they will be able to resolve them. They reiterated that the public should continue to contact them through 101, 999 and their website. The Mayor requested leaflets which include QR codes for contact.

28/24 STUDIO SCHOOL CONSULTATION

The Council received an update from Jade Kennett (JK), Strategic Development Manager for Education, IW Council, on the proposal to use the Studio School as an SEMH satellite for St Georges School. JK explained that there would be 20 places focussing more towards vocational, arts, IT, coding and looking at the pathways to adulthood and hopefully employment. This was seen as Step 1 of a much wider expansion plan. She informed the council, that there would be an open session at the school on the 5th of April to encourage people to come along see the building and ask questions, representatives from the IW Council will be in attendance. Cllr Hendry asked about the age range. This would be 11 – 16. He asked whether there would be transport to school. JK replied that typically 8 – 10 out of 20 will be transported. She is working through children with the highest level of need, their locality, and their transport needs. There would be limited onsite parking. Cllr Palin asked about the financial viability as there had been 120 pupils accommodated on the site previously. How would 20 pupils be viable with the £200,000 that had been allocated. JK stated that the satellite site will be run under the leadership team at St Georges. The school have done their own research around a funding model and staffing structure and will fund at the highest band possible. Initially it will be 15 children which will grow to 20 with additional funding, to allow for staff training and set up costs. CP asked if there was a long-term plan to increase numbers. JK stated that this might be a possibility, however it would not increase to much more than 40 – 50 over time. Education is reviewing all SEN provision across the island and considering more satellite places. The urgency for this site was to ensure children had a place in September, which is when the site will open. Cllr Reardon asked about the proposal

for the new school in Carisbrooke and whether that was delayed. JK stated that there had been some delays, but it is still needed and is on the table. Education cannot wait for a new build and the former Studio school is well suited and has the facilities required. CP asked about parking and whether the recreation ground adjacent would be needed as this is now under ECTC. JK stated that they had looked at the outdoor environment and currently only need a playground. They are waiting for input from the children attending. But don't see a need as children will be accessing facilities at the St Georges site. Cllr Lake asked why there were only 20 places if the need is so high. JK stated that it is better to start small and expand and grow. It was not advisable to start with high numbers and they are also expanding SEN provision at Greenmount primary which will provide an extra 6 spaces. Cllr Irwin asked whether this would be permanent. JK confirmed that it would be permanent as they have a good variety of funding and capital funding and that the building is perfectly suited. The Mayor thanked Jade for attending.

Item 11.1 It was agreed to take an item from the Clerk's report at this point. The Asst Facilities/Community Events & Project Officer, Denise Adams (DA) spoke about her role change since January, and that she had been tasked with improving the access, facilities, and activities in the East Side Curve. The council received an update on progress so far.

- Since January three new groups have started. The first is the Senior Moments group. Really great feedback has been received.
- Two Games clubs, started at the beginning of February, run weekly on a Tuesday afternoon and Thursday morning, and are run by one of our volunteers.
- Two new groups are using The East Side Curve in the evenings: Ted Theatre Educational and the Women's Institute.
- Living Well and Early Help, CAST and Barnardo's now use The East Side Curve for monthly drop-in sessions.
- Coffee mornings are held monthly to support local charities. Last year £960 was raised for local groups.
- An arts and crafts session during half term where 12 children of all ages attended raising a small amount for Barnardo's. Plans to run another session during the Easter holidays and May half term.
- Sing About session run by Independent Arts twice a month.

Future plans include the Men's Art Shed for which a successful National Lottery grant application for £7000 has been agreed. A new group - Tots Time will start in April providing a structured play session for children aged 0 to 4 years old. As a result, East Side Curve has increased occupancy by 25% the last few months. The Town Hall is extremely busy, and the stage improvements are encouraging more bookings. On behalf of the Council the Mayor thanked Denise for all her efforts and hard work.

29/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence, Cllr Love arrived at 19:45

30/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

- 3.1 Cllr Reardon declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the East Cowes Community Partnership and East Cowes Business Association. Cllr Hendry declared a non-pecuniary interest as an IW Councillor
- 3.2 No written requests for dispensations were received.

31/24 MINUTES

- 4.1 The minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Thursday 15th February 2024 were approved and signed.
Resolved: To approve the minutes of Full Council on the 15th February 2024

32/24 FLOATING BRIDGE

- 5.1 The Council noted the statistics for the Floating Bridge
- 5.2 The Council were given an update by Cllr Palin on the 3S Business Review Ltd Floating Bridge report prepared for the IW Council, which proposed multiple options. The IW Council Cabinet have agreed to begin the procurement process for a new floating bridge as the report shows this is the only viable way forward. The Mayor stated that this was a positive step forward although it will still take some time for a new floating bridge to be in service. CP said that the IW Council need to begin moving the process forward and that the IWC have estimated it will take 2 years.

33/24 RESOLUTION TO BORROW

6.1 The Council received the Report to Council, including costings, and the borrowing approval application for a public works loan for £150,000.00 for the redevelopment of the Esplanade toilets. The content of the report and the costings were discussed. The Clerk read a letter from a member of the public raising some issues regarding the undertaking of the loan and the implications for future councils. The Council was advised that the project had been the subject of the annual public consultations that had been undertaken in previous years and had been supported by those responding. Councillors spoke about anti-social behaviour at the Esplanade and that the new design would hopefully discourage anti-social behaviour and reduce crime in the area. Councillors agreed that the area was very well used, especially in the summer months and that the toilets were essential.

6.2 The council considered seeking the approval of the Secretary of State of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities for a Public Works Loan of £150,000.00; repaid over a term of 22 years, for the redevelopment of the Esplanade toilets. The Council were made aware that the annual loan repayments would be around £11,700 per annum and that the loan would not result in an increase to the precept for 2024/2025. It was proposed and seconded to apply for a PWL of £150,000.00.

Resolved: It was resolved to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to apply for a PWLB loan of £150,000.00 over the borrowing term of 22 years for the purpose of the redevelopment of the Esplanade public toilets. The annual loan repayments will come to around £11,700.00 per annum.

6.3 The Council received the Report to Council, including costings, and the borrowing approval application for a public works loan for £100,000.00 for the redevelopment of the Skatepark. The content of the report and the costings were discussed. The Clerk read a letter from a member of the public raising some issues regarding the undertaking of the loan and the implications for future councils. The Council was advised that the project had been the subject of the annual public consultations that had been undertaken in previous years, together with specific consultations with users during 2023 and had been supported by those responding. The Mayor said that previous quotes had been around £80k. Cllr Palin said that the skatepark had been there 20 years and was in need of redevelopment, in addition the new park will be concrete, which will be safer and will last longer. Cllr Irwin said that the metal ramps currently in place were not safe and that the new park would attract more families.

6.4 The Council considered seeking the approval of the Secretary of State of Levelling Up, Housing & Communities for a Public Works Loan of £100,000.00; repaid over a term of 22 years, for the redevelopment of the Skatepark. The Council were made aware the annual loan repayments would be around £7,800 per annum and that the loan would not result in an increase to the precept for 2024/2025. It was proposed and seconded to apply for a PWL of £100,000.00.

Resolved: It was resolved to seek the approval of the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to apply for a PWLB loan of £100,000.00 over the borrowing term of 22 years for the purpose of the redevelopment of the Skatepark. The annual loan repayments will come to around £7,800.00 per annum.

34/24 REVIEW OF TRAFFIC REGULATION ORDERS – DISTRICT 1, COWES, EAST COWES, GURNARD, NORTHWOOD, AND WHIPPINGHAM

7.1 The Council discussed whether the TRO requests that have been submitted over the last two years were still required and to add any other areas that they would like added to the list for consideration. The council confirmed that the existing items should be confirmed and that the following are added to the list for consideration:

Church Path – yellow lines in place but not enforced

Consort Gardens – very narrow and parking creates hazards

Cromwell Avenue/Chinchen Close curve – double yellow lines please

Resolved: To confirm the current list and to request that Church Path, Consort Gardens and Cromwell Ave/Chinchen Close are added for consideration.

35/24 CASUAL VACANCY

8.1 The Council were advised that as of midnight on the Thursday 7th March 2024 the Proper Officer of the IW Council had not received the required number of requests from Registered Electors from the area for a by-

election to be held to fill the vacancy, and as such, the vacancy must be filled by the Parish Council by means of co-option.

8.2 The Council considered the proposed timetable for co-option of a councillor and agreed to go ahead as per the timetable. Applicants to be invited for interview on 18th April, with a view to a successful candidate attending their first meeting in May.

Resolved: To advertise the vacancy to be filled by Co-option

36/24 FINANCES

9.1 The Council considered the payments as presented including by Direct Debit and BACS

9.2 The bank reconciliation for February was noted

Resolved: To agree the payments as presented and to note the bank reconciliations for February

37/24 DISPENSATION REQUEST

10.1 The Council considered a request for dispensation of hire charges for the Indonesian Culture Day celebrations on Saturday the 31st August 2024 at a cost of Total £122.50 and agreed that it should be granted

Resolved: To grant dispensation of hall hire charges for the Indonesian Culture Day celebration.

38/24 REPORTS

11.1 The Clerk reported that Mr Michael Douse had asked that a reminder be given for the forthcoming beach clean and hoped that the council could supply refreshments from the Beach Hut. Councillors agreed to support this. The Church path report was being actioned by Mark Downer. In response to recent concerns from elected members about intimidation in public life, Councillors were made aware about the sensitive provisions in Section 32 of the Localism Act 2011.¹ The sensitive interests' provisions provide for details about a registered interest to be excluded from versions of the Register of Interests available for public inspection (or published online) where a member and monitoring officer agree that the disclosure of that interest could lead to violence or intimidation of them or their family. They provide for members to disclose that they have an interest but for the details to be withheld from the public register. The Government encourages monitoring officers to look sympathetically at accommodating requests for the withholding of home addresses from published versions of the register of interests where there are legitimate concerns of violence or intimidation. We have been successful in gaining a grant for £3000 from IW Council for creating the mural in Clarence Rd.

11.2 No Mayors report

11.3 No IW Ward Councillors reports

11.4 Cllr Palin reported that his Young Councillor interview with NALC went very well and they had been interested in how our council holds public consultations to inform the budget and strategic planning. It could be used as a model for elsewhere.

Cllr Lake stated that she thought Red Funnel had agreed to share details of their planning application with the Town Council prior to application. Cllr Hendry suggested that the Town Council arrange a catchup meeting with RF.

Cllr Packham reported that the Env & Sustainability Form were meeting on the 21st March and so he could not attend.

39/24 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Resolved: The Council resolved that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, that it is in the public interest that the press and public are excluded. (1960 Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act s1 (2)). Staffing and contractual matters were discussed

Meeting closed at 8.27pm
