



East Cowes Town Council

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Minutes of a meeting of the **East Cowes Town Council** held at East Cowes Town Hall, York Avenue, East Cowes
Thursday 19th September 2024 at 6pm

Present

Councillors: Reardon, Packham, Palin, Lake, Love

Clerk: S Chilton

Also present: Sharon Betts and Erin Rhodes, IW Council, 5 members of the public

Public Forum

A member of the public raised concerns regarding the future of East Cowes Fire Station following the demolition of the Fire Station, in respect of public safety. She reiterated the points made at an earlier meeting regarding short/long term plans and whether further public actions need to be planned. She requested that the Town Council take a leading role, including arranging a public meeting. She outlined various incidents that had affected the town recently, which had brought into sharp focus how vulnerable the town is. Cllr Reardon stated that she confirmed at the July meeting that Cllr Love was looking into this, and that he would report back in due course. Cllr Love stated that he had been in talks with the Fire Brigade and the IWC Cabinet Member for Regulatory Services, Community Protection and ICT, Karen Lucioni (KL), and confirmed that no planning application had been made to rebuild, only to demolish the current building. He had spoken with the RNLI to arrange that the fire engine could be temporarily housed there and would be following this up. He has been assured by KL that the fire station will be rebuilt in this area, and he will be asking her, and the local Fire Officer, for an update. He stated that he was not in favour of a public meeting until the plans are known. A second member of the public stated that the new station needed to be a suitable, permanent location.

98/24 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Hendry due to a family commitment, and Cllr Brimble Brennan who was on annual leave.

99/24 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

2.1 Cllr Reardon declared a non-pecuniary interest in the East Cowes Community Partnership and the East Cowes Business Association. Cllr Love declared a non-pecuniary interest in the East Cowes Community Partnership, East Cowes Business Association and as an IWC Ward Councillor.

2.2 No written requests for dispensations were received

100/24 IW COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT CONSULTATION – IWC BENEFITS MANAGER

3.1 The Council received a briefing from Erin Rhodes, IWC Benefits Manager, setting out the rationale for this year's Council Tax support proposals. They were for the scheme to stay the same, aside from the following amendments to align with national changes:

- To replace the current earnings disregards of £25.00 and £17.10 per week with one standard earnings disregard of £45.00 per week.
- To remove the 'extended reductions' element of the scheme
- To remove the childcare costs and disregard childcare element of Universal Credit from the calculation of Local Council Tax Support.

- To disregard in full any Post Office Compensation Scheme payments
- To disregard in full any Vaccine Damage Payments
- To disregard in full any payments from the Infected Blood Inquiry

The government's alleged proposal to remove the 25% single person's allowance on Council Tax was discussed, as was concern around the current cost of living crisis. It was stated that the council needed to make sure that, those most in need, received the support necessary. Examples in the consultation document illustrated that recipients would receive the same, or more, support under the proposals for the scheme. Sharon Betts, IWC, suggested that the council incorporate a comment that consideration be given for hardship funding within their response.

Resolved: Councillors resolved to support the IW Council Tax Support scheme staying the same with the proviso that consideration be given for hardship funding.

101/24. RESIGNATION OF COUNCILLOR

4.1 The Clerk announced the resignation of Cllr Holly Irwin which was duly noted. Councillors placed on record their thanks to Holly for her contribution to the Council and hoped they could work with her on future projects.

4.2 The Council discussed when the Notice of Casual Vacancy for Osborne Ward should take place.

Resolved: That the Notice of Casual vacancy be arranged as soon as possible.

102/24 MINUTES

5.1 The council approved and signed the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Thursday 18th July 2024

Resolved: To approve the minutes of Full Council held on Thursday 18th July 2024

103/24. IWC ENVIRONMENTAL OFFICER - REPORT

6.1 The Council noted the report from the IWC Environmental Officer and thanked her for her work in the community.

104/21 GRANTS

7.1 The Council considered the following grant applications:

- UKSA £1260.00 – To support 30 East Cowes schoolchildren to participate in the "Test the Water programme
- East Cowes Town Crafters £300.00 – Displays around East Cowes
- IW Pantries £2000 – running costs, including rent, staffing and vehicle costs, for a distribution centre supplying island pantries with surplus food

Resolved: The council agreed the following grants: UKSA £1260.00, EC Town Crafters £300, IW Pantries £1000

105/24 FLOATING BRIDGE

8.1 The council received an update on the Floating Bridge statistics. They also received a briefing from Colin Rowland (CR), IWC Strategic Director of Community Services, advising that the IW Council would prepare an answer to a question raised by Cllr Love on the progress being made, and the next steps being taken, in looking at a replacement for FB6 at their meeting on 18th September. CR he would be sharing this with the Town Council and other local stakeholders. The Council will discuss the response at the October meeting. Cllr Palin suggested that it be circulated to councillors beforehand so they could digest it before the meeting. Cllr Love stated that he had also written to CR regarding concerns on the noise emanating from the floating bridge, which was recorded at 120db when the acceptable level was around 86/7, outlining his concerns on the impact this was having on staff and users. He suggested the Council make their concerns known to CR.

Resolved: The Clerk to communicate with Colin Rowland setting out their concerns in respect of the noise levels affecting staff.

106/24. WATERFRONT REGENERATION UPDATE

9.1 The Clerk confirmed that Ross Edmunds, IWC was arranging a meeting for councillors on the Waterfront Regeneration project

107/24. FINANCES

10.1 The Council approved and agreed payments as presented and ratify payments made by Direct Debit and BACS

10.2 The Council noted the bank reconciliation for July 2024 and August 2024

Resolved: To approve and ratify the payments including by Direct Debit and BACS as presented. To note the bank reconciliation for July and August 2024

108/24. REVIEW OF POLICIES

11.1 The Council undertook the bi-annual review of the following GDPR and other policies:

- a) CCTV Policy
- b) Disposal of Documents Policy
- c) Information & Data Protection Policy
- d) Publication Scheme
- e) Removable Media Policy
- f) Retention of Documents Policy
- g) Transparency Code compliance Policy
- h) Email Contact Privacy Notice
- i) Consent to hold contact information
- j) Privacy Notice
- k) Dispensation Policy
- l) Grants Policy
- m) Health & Safety Policy

Resolved: To adopt the revised GDPR and other Policies

109/24. BEACH HUT

12.1 The Council considered a joint project with Wild Isle Nature School, which involved an educational beach combing walk followed by an environmentally focussed craft project which would be placed somewhere in East Cowes to remind residents/visitors of the impact plastic use and encourage them to dispose of their waste responsibly. Sessions would be over the October half term period or on Saturdays, and open to all ages. Payment for sessions and purchase of resources necessary for the sessions would need to be agreed on an hourly/day rate per member of staff required with resources priced on top of this or a set fee for the duration of the project including planning and resourcing etc. Councillors felt that this was a very worthwhile project but needed to have more information on costs. They agreed to support it in principle pending further information on cost.

Resolved: To agree to support in principle, pending information on cost, which should be circulated to councillors for final decision.

110/24. LITTLE LIGHTS AUCTION

13.1 Following the recent display of the Little Lights in the East Side Curve, in support of the Southampton Hospitals Charity; councillors considered if they wished to bid for one of the lights at the charity auction on September 20th. Councillors agreed that this was a worthy cause and that they would like to support it as island residents used Southampton hospitals. A maximum bid was agreed and the Mayor would attend to bid on behalf of the Council.

Resolved: To bid up to a maximum of £1000 for a Little Light at the Charity Auction on September 20th

111/24. REPORTS

14.1 The Clerk gave a short report which included news on the beach clean taking place at East Cowes Esplanade on Sunday 29th September 2024, which has been organised by FAECES (Fight Against Environmental Contamination of Estuaries & Seafronts) and Surfers Against Sewage. Participants to meet in the Esplanade Car Park at 2.30pm. They would welcome the use of the Beach Hut. The Clerk also reported that the finger sign for the library, which had been broken by Island Roads, had now been replaced and was now pointing in the correct direction.

14.2 No report from the Mayor

14.3 Cllr Love gave his report on the following matters: He had attended a Cowes Harbour Commission meeting where it was reported that there were 30 CCTV cameras on the river and that there had been several boats fined for speeding. There had been no incidents at the Cowes Week racing, which had been successful but there were less entries this year. There was news of a potential development of a new marina. The issues raised around the fireworks will be sorted for 2026: The Sea Eagle Mural launch went well, and discussions are taking place about decorating the other side of the building: East Cowes Welcome signage needs replacing: Film Studio plans are going well but there had been some concerns about noise and environmental issues. But on the whole things are extremely positive: Concerns about dental provision across the island: A resilience meeting with Darren Steed IWC had taken place dealing with flood, civil and other emergencies: Studio School is providing additional facilities for East Cowes: IWC are consulting on the potential closure of 6 schools, but this number may increase in the future. East Cowes schools are not affected now, but this may change: Have stepped up pressure on Red Funnel and has had an email from a potential investor. He is of the view that regulation is required. Slipways depend on Red Funnel application: Norris Castle has until mid-October to appeal so the outcome should be known by the date of the next Town Council meeting: Could there be a paddling pool Doggy Day on the last day of the season, or if too late next year. Clerk to investigate.

14.4 Cllr Palin informed the meeting that he had attended Cowes Week reception, Beach Hut open Day and the skatepark consultations during the summer: There had been a few near misses at Saunders Way and Barratts have agreed to install some concrete barriers. IWC have requested SSEN to provide plans for telephone cables with an update due at the end of the month. Legal issues will then be completed. Island Roads will then need to agree traffic calming: Film Studio concerns have been raised with Planning re lighting and security, opportunities for apprenticeships will be massive: Indonesian Day had gone well with the Ambassador attending: St Georges Studio school – looking into a joint project with the Town Council and will report back: Cllr Palin now sitting on the IWC Planning Committee as IWALC representative. He can speak on applications but not vote.

Cllr Packham reported that the Sustainability and Environment Forum had been cancelled (*amended – the meeting had clashed with full council and he could not attend*) - agreed

Cllr Lake had attended the Sea Eagle launch event and Indonesian Day. She reported that there was a smell of sewage around Saunders Way and Osborne House vicinity. She wondered if it was linked to the recent sewage pipe works that had taken place at New Barn Rd. Cllr Love mentioned that he has spoken to Southern Water and told them they would not be allowed to take over Albany Green in similar circumstances. They need to adopt an emergency plan that would see sewage pumped to Spring Hill. Cllr Lake gave apologies for the next 3 months owing to a medical condition. This was formally noted.

112/24. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

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)).

Resolved: To exclude the press & public

The confidential minutes of the July meeting were agreed and signed

The Council discussed staffing and contractual matters

Meeting closed at 8.50pm

Signed:

Dated: