



## 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 16<sup>th</sup> January 2025 at 6pm**

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### Present

**Councillors:** Reardon, Packham, Lake, Palin, Pragnell, Love, Brimble-Brennan, Hendry

**Clerk:** S Chilton **Deputy Clerk:** C Jones

Also present: 4 members of the public

### Public Forum

A query was raised regarding the wrapping of Wightfibre Cabinets. The Deputy Clerk explained that Wightfibre will only wrap cabinets that have been graffitied, of which there appear to be none in East Cowes. There is a charge of approximately £1000 involved.

An update on the post office was requested. The Clerk explained that despite repeated requests to the post office to allow an outreach administered by the Town Council, they had stated that they were not interested in following this route but rather, they wanted the premises sold as a business incorporating the post office. Councillors highlighted the outreach at Freshwater. The Clerk to investigate how this was achieved.

A request was made to look at the lights at the Romanov monument and consider lighting the RNLI mural in Clarence Rd (GKN building) which might enhance the appearance.

### 1/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 No apologies received

### 2/25 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. Cllr Hendry declared a non-pecuniary interest as an IWC Ward Councillor

2.2 No written requests for dispensations were received

### 3/25 MINUTES

3.1 The council approved the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024

**Resolved:** To approve and sign the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Thursday 19<sup>th</sup> December 2024

### 4/25 FLOATING BRIDGE

4.1 The Council received the statistics for the floating bridge operations for last month. No other updates had been received. Councillors discussed the replacement bridge and agreed that the council should ask for further information from the IW Council in respect of the profit and loss for each month for the bridge, a copy of the procurement tender documents and a progress update on whether there was a successful tenderer. They also discussed whether consultation dates had been set for stakeholder & community engagement. The council also stated that they would like to see an update on tender project timeline.

**Resolved:** The Clerk to write to the IW Council requesting a response on the following matters:

Profit and loss for each month, a copy of the procurement tender documents and a progress update, Details of the successful tenderer, Consultation dates to begin stakeholder & community engagement, an update on the tender project timeline.

## 5/25 WATERFRONT REGENERATION UPDATE

5.1 A meeting has been arranged by the IW Council for January 28<sup>th</sup> with the town council, to discuss the following matters, Public Realm, Heads of terms, Risks, and Heritage Partnership agreement. Councillors were of the view that information on these topics should be made available before the meeting to enable a productive meeting. **Resolved:** The Clerk to request further details from Gino Wooldridge IW Council, in respect of Public Realm, Heads of Terms, Risks, and Heritage Partnership agreement prior to the meeting scheduled for the 28<sup>th</sup> January.

## 6/25 FINANCES

6.1 The Council approved and agreed payments as presented and ratify payments made by Direct Debit and BACS for December and January.

6.2 The Council noted the bank reconciliation for November 2024

6.3 The Council noted the 3rd Qtr. Budget report

**Resolved:** To approve and ratify the payments including by Direct Debit and BACS as presented for December and January. To note the bank reconciliation for December 2024 and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter Budget report.

## 7/25 COWES 200

8.1 The Council agreed to bring this item (Agenda Item 8) forward. The Council considered a contribution of £15,000.00 towards the start-up costs of Cowes 200 celebrations. The Mayor explained that this would be an events programme lasting 200 days celebrating 200 Years of Sailing Excellence in 2026, bringing together regattas, racing and powerboat events for 2026. The aim being to make 2026 the year Cowes Sailing & Powerboat events reconnect with the businesses and residents of the Isle of Wight, attracting valuable tourism from the mainland and internationally to showcase Island-wide hospitality, attractions and artisan foodie culture. She said it was an exciting opportunity for East Cowes to be in at the start and to be at the forefront of this important event. She felt that it could kick start a revival of the town's businesses and that if the council didn't get involved the town could lose out. The Cowes 200 committee are looking for new sponsorship and big brand finance interest and there is an initial scoping project underway. Several other sponsors would be invited to make contributions to the soft launch cost. Councillors agreed that this could present an exciting opportunity for the town and agreed "in principle" to contribute £15,000.00. The contribution will be dependent on successful donations being secured from the required number of partners to be viable for a set-up budget.

**Resolved:** To agree a contribution "in principle" of £15,000.00, dependent on successful donations being secured from the required number of partners to be viable for a set-up budget

## 8/25 BUDGET 2025/2026

8.1 It was agreed that this item (Agenda item7) would be discussed following Cowes 200 (Agenda item 8). An alternative budget was put forward by Cllr Hendry which omitted the remedial works to the Esplanade paddling pool. Councillors were reluctant to take this action as the pool would not be able to open this year without the remedial work and if it was put off for another year the cost would very likely be higher. It was also noted that the results of the public consultation held in October identified works to the Esplanade paddling pool, rebuilding the skatepark and refurbishing the Esplanade toilets as community priorities. The public were also asked if they would support a small increase in the precept to enable these projects to go ahead and the vast majority voted in favour of an increase of 50p per week. The Council decided that they would agree a budget that would enable them to undertake the urgent pool repairs, continue supporting the local community's priorities and tackle larger town projects. Councillors noted that this would be the first increase since April 2023. The budget was therefore agreed at £570,807.00 for the year 2025/2026.

8.2 Following the setting of the budget and taking account of the projected income for the year 2025/2026, Councillors agreed to set the precept at £430,457.00, resulting in an annual increase for a band D property of £15.46 or approximately 30p per week.

**Resolved:** To agree a budget of £570,807.00 for 2025/2026. To agree a precept of £430,457.00 for the year 2025/2026

## 9/25 SPONSORSHIP POLICY

9.1 Councillors considered adoption of a Sponsorship Policy which would enable them to explore opportunities for sponsorship to help support council finances. The Clerk drew attention to Clause 3.2 which included an amendment and now read "The Council will retain the right to decline or terminate sponsorship from any organisation or individual, or in respect of products, that the Council, at their sole discretion, consider inappropriate, offensive or are incompatible with the Councils' principles. Any sponsorship monies received will be non-refundable". This would enable termination of an inappropriate sponsor and ensure that any sponsorship received would be non-refundable. Councillors agreed the amendments. Cllr Pragnell drew Councillors' attention to Clause 3.7f, which effectively would exclude companies such as GKN from sponsoring. Discussion regarding the other categories listed under 3.7 took place and it was agreed to exclude 3.7 in its entirety.

**Resolved:** To adopt the Sponsorship Policy with the amendments to 3.2 and the exclusion of para 3.7

## 10/25 REPORTS

10.1 Clerk's report – The Clerk gave an update received from the Footprint Trust outlining the numbers of East Cowes households that have received assistance

10.2 The Mayors report had been circulated

10.3 IW Ward Councillors – Cllr Love highlighted the large number of scams and that it would be useful to have the IW Council scam alert information on our website and Facebook page. He spoke about the vacancy for a School Governor at Holy Cross and encouraged councillors to think about applying. He informed the council that he had now resigned from the IW Council Alliance group but that this would not impact on the local community.

Cllr Hendry spoke briefly on the IW Council's decision to agree an Expression of Interest in Devolution and how that may impact of local elections this year and that they could be deferred until 2026. He also spoke about the proposed school closures which he did not agree with and informed the Council that the headteacher of Queensgate was leaving.

10.4 Town Councillors reports – Cllr Brimble-Brennan had visited the community pantry at the Pavillion and was encouraged to see how many local organisations were applying for the Community Capacity grant. She g=had attended the Cowes 200 meeting and had found it very interesting.

Cllr Palin had attended the memorial service for Nikki Flux-Edmunds at the Bumble Bee playground which he had found very touching. He noted that it was hoped to raise funds for a memorial bench to be placed in the playground. He spoke about the wear and tear of some playground equipment. He also stated that the Headteacher at Queensgate was taking a post at the IW Council. Jane at the pantry had thanked him for the contribution made from the Panto refreshments.

Cllr Packham had attended the Environment & Sustainability Forum in January. It was a short meeting and had focussed on a Nature Recovery Strategy. It had also identified a loss of butterflies and certain bird species.

## 11/25 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 and public

Contractual Matters were discussed

Meeting closed at 7.37 pm