



East Cowes Town Council

Town Hall, York Avenue, East Cowes, Isle of Wight, PO32 6R
Tel: (01983) 299082 Email: clerk@eastcowestowncouncil.co.uk

Minutes of a meeting of the **East Cowes Town Council** held at East Cowes Town Hall, York Avenue, East Cowes
Thursday 20th February 2025 at 6pm

Present

Councillors: Reardon (Mayor), Palin (Deputy Mayor), Packham, Lake, Pragnell, Brimble-Brennan

Clerk: S Chilton **Deputy Clerk:** C Jones **Also present:** 5 members of the public and the County Press representative

Public Forum

A member of the public mentioned that the information panel in Cadets Walk needed some attention. This was noted.

12/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

1.1 Apologies were received from Cllr Hendry who had a work commitment and Cllr Love who was on annual leave

13/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

2.1 Cllr Reardon declared a non-pecuniary interest in the East Cowes Community Partnership and the East Cowes Business Association.

2.2 No written requests for dispensations were received

14/25 MINUTES

3.1 The council approved the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Thursday 16th January 2025

Resolved: To approve and sign the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Thursday 16th January 2025

15/25 FLOATING BRIDGE

4.1 The Council received the statistics for the floating bridge operations for last month, together with a financial statement showing profit and loss, and responses to questions the council raised at the January meeting. Further discussion took place on these items and about the quality of replacement parts being used on FB6, as the generators had recently failed after a relatively short time span. Councillors agreed that they needed further information and clarity on the points raised. Specifically:

- The income and expenditure statement showed that employee costs for December 2024 were approximately double the monthly average
- Which company has been awarded the recent tender and what is the timescale for the project
- What was the life span of the previous generators, and what is the new generators life span expected to be

Resolved: The Clerk to write to the IW Council requesting a response to the matters raised

16/25 WATERFRONT REGENERATION UPDATE

5.1 A meeting took place with representatives of the Regeneration team of the IW Council on January 28th to discuss the following matters, Public Realm, Heads of terms, Risks, and Heritage Partnership agreement. IW Council are currently awaiting the outcome of the Albany Green planning application and have some legal matters, including disposal orders to deal with prior to issuing Heads of Terms to the council.

17/25 COWES 200

6.1 The Mayor announced that information will be shared on this item following the launch in March

18/25 HALL HIRE - REVIEW OF CHARGES

7.1 Councillors considered a report outlining actual average monthly running cost of the town hall, including all utility costs, premises insurance, rates and licences. The report showed that despite income levels increasing year on year since Covid, rising utility and insurance costs are eroding any real cost benefits to the council, resulting in the council subsidising the current hourly charges. Councillors were also given details of charges made by similar halls around the island. Various options were put forward which included introducing an Events hire charge for weddings and large parties (over 50 attending) and investigating wider use of amenity land. The point was made that if hire charges were increased it may result in some lost income. However, councillors felt that they could not continue to subsidise the current use of the hall to the extent that they were and that the hourly charge would have to be increased. After much discussion, Cllr Palin proposed a £2.50 hourly increase to both the commercial and non-commercial rate. Cllr Reardon proposed that the council should consider the events and amenity ground options at a future meeting.

Resolved: It was resolved to increase the hourly hire charge for both commercial and non-commercial rates by £2.50 from April 1st 2025, and to bring consideration of an events charge and amenity land charge to a future meeting

19/25 FINANCES

8.1 The Council approved and agreed payments as presented and ratify payments made by Direct Debit and BACS for January 2025.

8.2 The Council noted the bank reconciliation for January 2025

Resolved: To approve and ratify the payments including by Direct Debit and BACS as presented for January 2025. To note the bank reconciliation for January 2025.

20/25 DISPENSATION REQUESTS

9.1 The Council considered dispensation requests from:

- Community Bingo – dispensation request for Keyholder annual charge (maximum 52 sessions) £520.00 – it was felt that a small entry fee could be considered by the organisers to cover the cost of the key holder charges. This request was declined
- Indonesian Event 10 hours plus keyholder (one off event) = £130.50 – it was considered that as an entrance fee of £10 was being charged and that it was not an event that was open to the community it would be inappropriate to support this request
- Royal British Legion Annual Meeting (one off 2026 event) - £72.50 – councillors appreciate the work of the RBL, which is a recognised charity, and supported this request
- East Cowes Heritage Treasures exhibition (one off) – £392.50 – councillors agreed that as this was a free event open to the community, and was raising awareness of East Cowes heritage, they would support this request

Resolved: To refuse the requests from Community Bingo and the Indonesian Event and to agree the requests from the Royal British Legion and East Cowes Heritage Treasures Exhibition

21/25 AMAZON – PRIME ACCOUNT

10.1 The Council considered signing up for an Amazon Prime Account at a cost of £95.00 per year to save approx. £ 350.00 in current delivery charges/shipping costs

Resolved: To sign up to Amazon Prime membership at a cost of £95.00 per year

22/25 REPLACEMENT OF DOG BIN JUBILEE RECREATION GROUND

11.1 The Council considered whether a suggestion from Cllr Palin to replace a dog bin for a litter bin from Jubilee Recreation Ground and the bin to be relocated at Hawthorn Meadows as there are none there currently. The estimated cost would be £652.57. Discussion centred around the limited resources and inability of Island Roads to service additional areas not included in their current schedule. Councillors proposed reviewing this request in June/July when the situation of what would be provided at Hawthorn Meadows by Island Roads may be clearer. Cllr Pragnell suggested contacting Island Roads and suggesting stickers on litter bins advising dog owners they could deposit dog waste in them.

Resolved: To review the request to relocate a bin to Hawthorn Meadows in June/July and to request that Island Roads affix stickers to litter bins advising dog owners that they can deposit dog waste in them.

23/25 IW THEATRE AWARDS

12.1 Councillors were informed that the Amy White Theatre has been nominated for 7 awards at the IW Amateur Theatre Award ceremony this year. This is the first time they have ever received a nomination and was this is

therefore a significant achievement. It was proposed that, should there be any tickets available, two be purchased for the Mayor and Chair of the Theatre Committee to attend. Councillors agreed that this was a well-deserved honour, and they would approve the purchase of 2 tickets

Resolved: To purchase two tickets at a cost of £10

24/25 REPORTS

13.1 The Clerk reported that the deadline for the Expression of Interest for the Luncheon Club was 7th March and that it would be advertised in the IW Observer on 21st February, but to date none had been received. A quote for the Romanov lights was pending. The Facilities Officer's report was read out and Cllr Packham congratulated him on such a comprehensive report. The Environmental Officer's report outlined the areas where she had been patrolling and mostly focussed on dog fouling and fly tipping. Councillors suggested requesting contact numbers for Sovereign Housing and Southern Housing to enable the council to make contact when the EO service ceases at the end of March

13.2 The Mayor's report had been circulated and there were no questions

13.3 There were no IW Ward Councillors' reports as both councillors were absent

13.4 Town Councillors reports:

Cllr Lake reported that the Waterfront Regeneration meeting had been positive, and that progress was being made. Cllr Pragnell reported that there were lots of events planned for next year from May – October linked to the Cowes 200 project and there would be more news to follow.

Cllr Brimble-Brennan reported that Community Capacity grant, available from April to September, had been taken up by the East Cowes Youth group and that the Studio school had received monies. East Cowes Carnival had received a grant, and she wondered whether the town council could support them in any other way. The Mayor said that the town hall could not accommodate floats and storage was in short supply, but suggested that they could have a free stall at the community market to raise funds. Cllr Palin stated that he had attended a carnival meeting and that he had made them aware of grants and the market. He will follow up with further information with the Chair.

Cllr Packham had attended a meeting with the school council of Holy Cross school and was very impressed with the calibre of the questions the children asked, and how well behaved they were. The Environment & Sustainability forum had been cancelled.

Cllr Palin reported that he had a site meeting with Barratts site manager on the 21st February, and he had a number of issues from residents that he would be raising with him including Saunders Way issues with traffic calming. He is hopeful that it will be a positive relationship. He would be taking the Environment Officer's report with him to discuss the problems with dog fouling in the area. He had reported some abandoned vans in Kingston Rd and one had been removed. He had accompanied the Mayor to a meeting with Cowes College 6th formers who were undertaking a regeneration project and wanted to investigate the East Cowes experience. He mentioned the Betong Park skatepark consultation with users, that had taken place earlier that day with the aim of finalising the design. He had attended a briefing with NALC three weeks ago, covering devolution and the cancellation of local authority elections. They had discussed which local authority models worked well. NALC are lobbying government for proper recognition of the role of parish and town councils. They had acknowledged how progressive some of the island councils were in taking on projects that the IW Council could not. He stated that he would be seeking mitigation in respect of concerns of a rat run through Kingston Rd, Minerva Rd and Saunders Way.

Cllr Pragnell discussed the potential of purchasing some beach huts to be located at the end of the Esplanade. Cllr Reardon explained that this was not within our leased area, the land belonged to IW Council, and we would not be allowed to place huts on their land.

25/25 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

Legal and contractual matters were discussed

Meeting closed 7.50 p.m