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 17th April 2025**

Present
Councillors: Reardon (Mayor), Palin (Deputy Mayor), Packham, Lake, Pragnell, Brimble-Brennan
Clerk: S Chilton **Deputy Clerk**: C Jones **Also present:** 6 members of the public

Public Forum
A member of the public raised the issue of a joint notice board in Kings Square. The Clerk informed them that this was under the jurisdiction of Isle of Wight Council and there had been a delay in a response due to a new management team for the Public Realm. It was suggested that Red Funnel be approached to ask if a board could be attached to their fence. Clerk to contact Red Funnel. A member of the public who was arranging a beach clean on the 27th April asked about the use of the beach hut. It was agreed that this could be used and refreshments made available. There were two queries raised about the council's website – the dates of meetings and agenda were not showing or were not easy to find. The Deputy Clerk thought it was probably an issue with viewing on a mobile phone but would investigate further and rectify.

With the Town Council elections due on the 1st May, the Mayor thanked councillors for their support and commitment throughout the previous term. She wished those who were standing for re-election good luck; and thanked those who were not for their hard work and achievements on behalf of the community and the council.

39/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllrs Hendry and Love who were on holiday

40/25 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 Palin declared a non-pecuniary interest in Item 7 – Island Games application
2.2 No written requests for dispensations were received

41/25 MINUTES

3.1 The council approved the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Thursday 20th March 2025
Resolved: To approve and sign the minutes of the Full Council meeting held on Thursday 20th March 2025

42/25 FLOATING BRIDGE

4.1 The Council received the monthly statistical data for the Floating Bridge. Cllr Palin questioned the response by Mark Downer in respect of the request for details of the last two years income and expenditure. Mr Downer had explained that as it was year-end he would endeavour to send the details through by 27th April. Cllr Palin gave a brief report of the tour of the floating bridge undertaken by himself, the Mayor and Cllr Brimble-Brennan. He explained about refit and operational issues, refit costs and the expected life of the parts. He said he had written to the leader of the IW Council for an update on the procurement process. Cllr Lake said she had recently used it, and it was very noisy and slow. Cllr Palin explained the reason behind this and that it should improve with time as the new parts bedded in. Cllr Pragnell asked if local companies had been invited as part of the procurement process. Cllr Palin stated that the process was laid down by the Green Book regulations and that final decisions would be made by the new council. The money for this had been ringfenced but any decisions already made by the current council did not need to be honoured.

43/25 WATERFRONT REGENERATION UPDATE

5.1 The Council were given a brief update from the Clerk on the meeting with Gino Wooldridge. A decision on the planning application was expected very soon, tender documentation was being prepared and would go out as soon as approval had been granted. Heads of Terms were being prepared in tandem so that the council could sign them following the planning and tendering process. Everything was on track and moving forward positively.

44/25 FINANCES

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

6.2 The Council noted the end of year bank reconciliation for March 2025, and the quarter 4 budget report

Resolved: To approve and ratify the payments including by Direct Debit and BACS as presented for March 2025 and to note the end of year bank reconciliation and quarter 4 budget report.

45/25 GRANTS AND DONATIONS

7.1 The Council considered the following grant and donation applications:

- East Cowes Carnival Asso, various carnival items - £1228.38. The Council agreed to grant £750.00
- East Cowes Crafters, displays around East Cowes - £500. The Council agreed to grant £500.00
- Armed Forces Day, to sponsor an item from the itemised list. The Council agreed to grant £250.00
- Island Games, support for two East Cowes swimmers representing the Island at the 2025 Orkney Island games – Each individual's costs are £1350. The Council agreed to grant £1350.00
- IW Venue Campaign, grant for promotion of Operation Geranium art exhibition. The Council did not agree to award this grant

Resolved: To award the grants as itemised above, totalling £2850.00

46/25 REPORTS

8.1 Clerks Report

Luncheon Club

The inaugural Luncheon Club was successful. The total cost amounted to £268.80, of which the Council contributed £104.00. The next luncheon club will be introducing a more diverse menu that includes gluten-free options based on user feedback.

Banking Hub

The installation of the banking hub pod, CCTV and wi-fi went to plan without too much disruption to the groups that regularly use the hub which enabled the hub to open on the scheduled date of 8th April. We have two bank staff in attendance daily from 9 – 5 Monday – Friday, as well as a banking representative from each of the 5 banks available for face-to-face meetings. A lot of the businesses in the town are beginning to use the banking facility, and members of the public are starting to increase slowly. Regular groups that use the hub such as Tots Time and Senior Moments have taken place with no problems. All in all, with the efforts of staff, the banking hub has blended in very smoothly. It is intended to "launch" the banking hub following the elections.

8.2 Facilities Officer's report

A brief report was given on the town hall and other facilities matters. An update was given on the progress of the toilet refurbishment and the paddling pool project (detailed report attached) Toilet block: Works have continued to follow the timeline on both projects, however in respect of the paddling pool, it is now entering the phase where the weather has the biggest impact as the decoration requires the driest conditions. With the pool location giving rise to long drying times if wet, work could be delayed. There is potential that completion may move back by a week if the weather forecast is accurate.

47/25 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 8.15 p.m.