EAST COWES TOWN COUNCIL

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 12th June 2025 at 6pm**

Present
Councillors: Reardon, Lake, Palin, Love, Warleigh-Lack, Pragnell, Cllr Brimble-Brennan
Clerk: S Chilton
Deputy Clerk: C Jones
Also present: 1 members of the public

Meeting opened at 6.00pm
MAYORS PRESENTATION: Prior to the start of the meeting the Mayor presented outgoing councillor Bob Packham with a retirement gift and flowers for Mrs Packham. She thanked him for his eight years of service and commitment to the community. Mr Packham said it had been an honour and a privilege to serve on the council.

6.00pm PUBLIC FORUM

Mr Packham asked about the shelter on the Esplanade which has fallen into disrepair. Cllr Pragnell responded that he had inspected it with the Facilities Officer, and it was felt that, in its current condition, it was not cost effective to repair it, other than repairs for health and safety measures; and that it needed to be replaced. The Clerk advised that replacement would be in the region of £20 - £25 thousand pounds. Cllr Pragnell stated that this should be a consideration in the next budget.

69/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received and accepted from Cllr Hendry who had a work meeting.

70/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

2.1 Cllr Love declared a non-pecuniary interest as IW Ward Councillor and as a member of the East Cowes Community Partnership, East Cowes Business Association and East Cowes Heritage. Cllr Reardon declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the East Cowes Community Partnership and East Cowes Business Association.
2.2 No written requests for dispensations were received

71/25 MINUTES

3.1 The Council approved and signed the minutes of the Annual Meeting of East Cowes Town Council held on Thursday 15th May 2025 and Full Council held on 15th May 2025
Resolved: To approve and sign the minutes of the Annual Meeting of East Cowes Town Council held on Thursday 15th May 2025 and Full Council held on 15th May 2025

72/25 EAST COWES CARNIVAL

4.1 The Council considered granting a dispensation for the use of the amenity land hire charge for the carnival at a cost of £36.00
Resolved: To grant dispensation to the Carnival Association

73/25 FLOATING BRIDGE

5.1 The Council received monthly statistics for the floating bridge together with additional financial information. Following the meeting with Foster-Robinson that had taken place prior to the Full Council meeting, councillors restated that they were dissatisfied with the progress and the exorbitant cost of consultants being

employed by the IW Council who were going back to square one regarding whether to replace FB6. They were also unhappy that the Town Council had not been involved in this decision. Cllr Palin proposed that IW Cllr Julie Jones-Evans, Chair of the Economy, Regeneration and Infrastructure Committee be requested to attend a town council meeting before September. Cllr Love said that he would like a letter of thanks to be sent to the operational staff explaining that the Town Council was acting in their best interests and those of the community. He said that the current operation could not sustain a million pound a year loss. Cllr Reardon stated that was why a new bridge was needed. Cllr Love said it would be cheaper to replace than to modify the current vessel.
Resolved: To request IW Cllr Julie Jones-Evans attend a council meeting before September and that a letter of thanks be sent to operational staff

74/25 WATERFRONT REGENERATION UPDATE

Gino Wooldridge sent an update stating that they are still awaiting planning's decision and are hoping this will be determined soon. Tender documentation is completed and ready to publish once planning permission is awarded. Ross Edmunds has been working hard on the public realm heritage bid and is currently pulling together further cost estimates and finalising documentation for the submission. Instructions have been given on some investigation and required reports ahead of time on the Prom building to ensure work can begin as quickly as possible. Barracks has a roughly 8-week delay because of the incident on the extension. However, it is now progressing well and is not expected to see any further delay to delivery. Property services, Alex Minns and Gino are meeting to finalise some Heads of Terms. The Columbine Disposal papers were approved as of last Thursday which means they can move forward with the prom building. Councillors agreed that it would be beneficial to invite Gino to the next meeting for an update.
Resolved: To invite Gino Wooldridge to the July meeting

75/25 FINANCES

7.1 The Council approved and agreed payments as presented and ratify payments made by Direct Debit and
7.2 The Council noted the bank reconciliation for May2025
Resolved: To approve and ratify the payments including by Direct Debit and BACS as presented for May 2025 and to note the bank reconciliation for May 2025.

76/25 ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT 24/25

8.1 The Council noted the Annual Internal Audit Report 24/25, together with the separate internal audit report to council, stating that management and governance of the council appears robust and well executed, regarding council business including policies, agendas & minutes, accounting and financial statements and other documents relevant to the audit; and that there are no recommendations made by the Internal Auditor. It was proposed and seconded to approve and accept the written report and the Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25
Resolved: To approve and accept the written report to Council and the Annual Internal Audit Report 2024/25

77/25 ANNUAL GOVERNANCE STATEMENT 24/25 (SECTION 1)

9.1 The Council considered the accounting statements made in the Annual Governance Statement 24/25 (Section 1) and agreed that they had complied with the statements. It was proposed and seconded to agree the statements made within Section 1 of the Annual Governance Statement
Resolved: To agree the statements had been complied with and to approve the Annual Governance Statement (Section 1)

78/25 AGAR ACCOUNTING STATEMENTS 24/25 (SECTION 2)

10.1 The Council consider the Accounting Statement 24/25 (Section 2) as presented. It was proposed and seconded to approve and sign the Accounting Statement 24/25 Section 2
Resolved: To approve and sign the Accounting Statement 24/25 (Section 2)

79/25 AGAR EXERCISE OF PUBLIC RIGHTS 24/25

11.1 The Council considered the 17th June as the date of commencement for the Exercise of Public Rights. This was proposed and seconded.
Resolved: To set the commencement date of 17th June 2025 for the Exercise of Public Rights

80/25 AGAR CONFLICT OF INTEREST 24/25

12.1 Councillors discussed whether there were any conflicts of interest with BDO LLP Auditors. It was confirmed that there were none. It was proposed and seconded that there is no conflict of interest with BDO LLP Auditors

Resolved: To confirm there is no conflict of interest with BDO LLP Auditors

81/25 MAYORS CHARITY EVENT

13.1 Councillors discussed a new date for the Mayors Charity Event. It was suggested by Cllr Lake that it might be better to hold an event next year to coincide with Cowes 200. Councillors agreed that it would give more time to plan.

Resolved: To hold a charity event to coincide with Cowes 200 (2026)

82/25 VJ DAY 80th COMMEMORATION

14.1 Councillors discussed arrangements for VJ Day 80th Commemoration and decided that it would be best to hold it on the Esplanade as they had don with VE Day. They agreed to have a Beacon Lighting, some music with a 40's theme including the Bluebirds singing group if possible. Cllr Warleigh-Lack provided contact details for them. Cllr Love said that he would organise a dog-show and that the council's marquee would be required.

Resolved: To arrange a Beacon Lighting, 40's themed evening with music, a dog show and bring your own picnic

83/25 BUMBLE BEE PLAYGROUND MEMORIAL GARDEN

15.1 Councillors considered match funding monies being raised by Friends of Keziah for a memorial bench or shelter for the Bumble Bee Playground. Sample costs produced by the Clerk showed them to be approximately £3000 for each item plus delivery and installation. The Mayor stated that the Friends had raised around £500 and that the fund-raising was winding down. Cllr Palin proposed that a donation of £1500 should be given rather than match-funding. This was agreed.

Resolved: To donate £1500 to the purchase of a bench or a shelter for the Bumble Bee playground

84/25 STRATEGIC PLAN UPDATE

16.1 Councillors agreed that they would need to arrange a separate meeting to give sufficient time to discuss and review the council's strategic plan and to agree the council's short, medium and long term priorities. It was proposed that the Clerk arrange a meeting

Resolved: To arrange a meeting for Councillors to review the Strategic Plan

85/25 REPORTS

17.1 Clerk's report – The Clerk displayed a draft for the Esplanade interpretation board to be located alongside the telescope. Councillors had a variety of views but felt over all that this should be deferred until the Albany Green project had been completed.

17.2 Mayors Report – The Mayor reported on the condition of the pathway on both sides of the Esplanade were uneven, with an adverse camber which made it difficult for parents/carers with buggies and wheelchair users to travel along the pathways. She asked the Clerk to write to Highways and point out the Health and Safety risk. It would also be useful to have a programme of when the road would be resurfaced.

17.3 IWC Ward Councillor reports:

Cllr Love informed the council that he was now a Governor at St George's school. He reported that he had a meeting on the coastal path on the 11th and had already complained that the Town Council and Ward Councillors have not been consulted. A public consultation is due. He noted that there had been 3 significant falls on the landslip and that trees were leaning over.

17.4 Town Councillor reports:

Cllr Pragnell stated that the Marina for East Cowes was still going ahead and dredging at risk was planned for August.

Cllr Palin reported that he had spoken to Island Roads about the dangers of the York Avenue pedestrian crossing in its current location and that it would be put onto their programme for review. He had been pursuing the allotment project with St Georges school and how water access could be achieved for watering in the school holidays. He was still in conversation with Barratts and SSE regarding the overhead cables and had received a date of Dec 2025 – Nov 2026. He reported on ticket sales so far for the midyear production by Amy White Theatre. Saturday performances were quite low, and it was suggested that free tickets be given to groups using the hall and the East Side Curve and residential homes in the area.

Cllr Brimble-Brennan reported on a conference she had attended by community and voluntary groups which highlighted the strengths/challenges and opportunities for young people. A number of actions would be developed to safeguard youngsters in the community, and she would like to bring them to a future agenda of the council. The July meeting was suggested.
Cllr Warleigh-Lack discussed the cost of the Boogie, Woogie girls singing act for the VJ Day celebration and gave an approximate hourly cost of £210 to the council. He agreed to pass a contact number to the Clerk.

86/25 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 should be excluded. (1960 Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act s1 (2)). This item was taken early due to the early finish of the annual meeting and councillors retired to the Curve.
Resolved: To exclude the press and public

Staffing and Contractual Matters were discussed.

Meeting closed at 7.55pm

Signed:

Dated: