



EAST COWES TOWN COUNCIL

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Minutes of the meeting of **East Cowes Town Council Meeting** held on 20th November 2025 at the Town Hall, York Avenue, East Cowes to discuss the following matters set out in the agenda.

Present: Councillors: Reardon, Pragnell, Palin, Warleigh-Lack, Lake,

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

7 members of the public

6.00pm PUBLIC FORUM

Angie Mathews formally thanked members of the Council for their efforts to secure a positive outcome at the IW Council Economy, Regeneration, Transport and Infrastructure Committee meeting where the replacement of the Floating Bridge was agreed. Her thanks were endorsed by other members of the public. An issue was raised in respect of the floating bridge in the Island Transport Plan. It was not mentioned and record of its importance to the community was identified.

Thanks were given to the staff of Regent Pharmacy for their efforts since the former JHoots pharmacy had ceased its service.

Some concern was raised regarding the posters in the window of the Massage and Spa Centre, Lower York Avenue and it was queried whether planning permission was required. The Clerk agreed to raise the question with the Planning Authority.

Some concern was raised regarding the condition of the Shelter on the Esplanade. Cllr Pragnell explained that it was not cost-effective to spend further funds on it. He has made enquiries from local companies, GKN, Wight Shipyards and Aluminium Marine Consultants as to whether they would be able to design, support, fund or provide apprenticeship opportunities for a replacement shelter with a nautical/seaside theme.

An enquiry regarding the timetable of events for the Xmas switch on and whether it could be advertised on the council's Facebook/website.

It was noted that Southern Water were working at Albany Green and was confirmed that this was nothing to do with the Albany Green project.

Flagpole banners were discussed, and Ken Wheeler offered his design services should the council agree to go ahead.

114/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Love who was on annual leave, Cllr Hendry who was attending an IW Council Children's Services meeting and Cllr Brimble-Brennan who had suffered a bereavement

115/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

2.2 No requests for dispensation were received

116/25 MINUTES

3.1 The minutes of the September meeting were amended following a correction of item 12.4, raised by Cllr Warleigh-Lack, which should include the italicised text "Cllr Warleigh-Lack reported that the *approval of works* for the refurbishment of the railings and gates at Osborne House was now complete". This amendment was agreed, and the minutes were subsequently signed.

Resolved: To approve and sign the minutes of the **Full Council** held on **18th September 2025**

117/25 WATERFRONT REGENERATION UPDATE

4.1 The Clerk gave an update from Gino Wooldridge (GW):

- **Albany Green** – The application has been approved and is now out to tender.
- **Promenade Building** – The application is currently under consideration by the Planning Authority. Draft tenders are being prepared to enable prompt contract award following determination. Completion of works is anticipated by June 2026, and Heads of Terms are being drafted in readiness. Councillors noted that the planning application for the Prom building asked for community use and not commercial use. It was requested that this be brought to the attention of GW.

Resolved: The Clerk to contact Gino Wooldridge querying the usage on the planning application for the Prom building.

118/25 FLOATING BRIDGE

5.1 Councillors received the latest operating statistics from IW Council

5.2 The Clerk reported a response from the Cabinet Office regarding the issues and procurement of a new floating bridge. The letter proposed a meeting with Claire Chamberlain, Senior Category Lead for Construction at Crown Commercial Service, to discuss the request in more detail. Councillors agreed to accept the offer and to invite Isle of Wight Council members involved in the procurement process for the replacement floating bridge to attend.

Resolved: To accept the invitation from the Crown Commercial Services and to extend the meeting invitation to IW Council members involved in the procurement process

119/25 FINANCE & DONATIONS

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

6.2 The Council noted the bank reconciliation September and October 2025

6.3 The Council considered a request from IW Heritage Society for a donation to the Victoria Cross Trust to fund specialist equipment for restoration of private graves of Victoria Cross recipients and agreed to donate £500

6.4 The Council considered a request for a donation from IW Youth Trust to fund the Winter Wellbeing Project which provides support to young people to feel less isolated and better able to manage their mental health during the winter months and agreed to donate £1000.00 to be made in the week 2nd – 9th December to enable it to attract match funding from the Big Give platform.

Resolved: To approve and ratify the payments including by Direct Debit and BACS as presented for September and October 2025 and to note the bank reconciliation for September and October 2025. To aware a donation of £500 to Victoria Cross Trust, and £1000 to IW Youth Trust between 2nd – 9th December

120/25 COMMEMORATION & NAMING POLICY and MEMORIAL BENCHES

7.1/7.2 It was proposed that items 7.1 & 7.2 be deferred to the next meeting to enable all councillors to contribute

Resolved: To defer items 7.1 & 7.2 to the January meeting

121/25 MID YEAR AUDIT REPORT & APPOINTMENT OF AUDITOR

8.1 The Council received the mid-year internal audit report and noted the recommendations, which included:

- Adoption of an IT Policy.
- Review of GDPR policies prior to year-end.
- Assessment of personal data held and consideration of its use.
- Raising awareness of data protection principles among all Council members.
- Regular review of the Accessibility Statement.

8.2 The Council considered the appointment of Mrs. M. Warr as internal auditor for the 2025/26 Annual Governance & Accountability Return (AGAR). It was agreed that Mrs. Warr met the criteria of competence and independence, demonstrated extensive experience, and showed a thorough understanding of internal audit requirements as set by the external auditor. Her quotation was deemed acceptable.

Resolved: To implement the internal auditor's recommendations as outlined and appoint Mrs. M. Warr as the Council's internal auditor for the 2025/26 AGAR.

122/25 GDPR REQUIREMENTS

9.1/9.2 It was proposed that items 9.1 & 9.2 be deferred to the next meeting to enable all councillors to contribute

Resolved: To defer items 9.1 & 9.2 to the January meeting

123/25 MAYORS CHARITY EVENT & VOLUNTEERS THANK YOU

10.1 Councillors discussed potential dates and format for the Mayor's Charity Event and agreed that it would be more appropriate to confirm these after the May election.

10.2 Councillors also considered dates and format for the Volunteers' Thank You event and similarly agreed to defer decisions until after the May election.

Resolved: The Clerk to provide available dates following the May election for consideration at the next meeting.

124/25 RNLI CLOSURE

11.1 The Council discussed the proposed closure of the East Cowes RNLI station and considered how it might offer support. Members expressed disappointment at the decision to relocate operations from East Cowes, where the RNLI has been based since 1963, to Poole, noting that the move was understood to be financially driven. Councillors recognised the significant loss this represents to the town and agreed to demonstrate support. The Clerk was asked to contact the RNLI to clarify the relocation timetable and explore ways the Council could provide ongoing support to RNLI staff.

Resolved: The Clerk to write to the RNLI seeking confirmation of the relocation timescale and advice on how the Council can best offer continuing support.

125/25 LAMPOST BANNERS

The Council received a report outlining the costs associated with purchasing and installing lamppost banners. It was noted that a decision could not be made until confirmation was received from Island Roads regarding permission to install the banners. Councillors agreed that the matter should be deferred and brought back to a future meeting for consideration.

Resolved: To await Island Roads' response and revisit this item at a future meeting for decision.

126/25 REPORTS

13.1 Clerks Report: The Clerk read a congratulatory email from Brenda Brooke-Webb commending the Council's work on rebuilding the skatepark and highlighting the many positive online comments, noting that the Council should be proud of this achievement. The Mayor reported that the skatepark opening was successful and well received by the community.

The Clerk sought approval for a library volunteer to manage a separate Facebook page for the community cinema to help increase attendance. Councillors agreed, provided a Council officer oversees the page. Concerns regarding sound quality were raised; it was confirmed that the system had been thoroughly checked and is operating at an optimum level.

The Facilities Officer presented a report on the feasibility of reinstating a drinking fountain at Shedden Fountain following an enquiry from Mr. Douse. After site visits and consultations with contractors, it was concluded that the risk of irreparable damage to the historic structure was very high, and replacement parts would be prohibitively expensive. The project was deemed financially unviable, particularly as two drinking water sources already exist on the Esplanade (toilet block and café).

The Clerk requested permission to advertise the Cowes Fringe presentation "*Quivers*" on the Council's Facebook page; this was agreed. The Clerk also reported on the cost of repairing and lengthening the Mayoral chain and will investigate whether the expense can be covered by insurance.

13.2 Mayor's Report: No report was given.

13.4 IWC Ward Councillor Reports: No reports were given.

13.4 Town Councillor Reports

Cllr Pragnell: Nothing to report.

Cllr Lake: Nothing to report.

Cllr Warleigh-Lack: Nothing to report.

Cllr Palin: Cllr Palin reported on the opening of the skatepark which had been well attended. He had attended the Remembrance service. He spoke about the tenders for the Floating Bridge coming out in March. He stated that he had been made aware of various residents' issues with neighbouring properties and would be meeting with the area manager of the Sovereign Housing Asso. to discuss. He had spoken to the IWC about flooding problems at Greenways. He also spoke on the SSEN outstanding issues at Saunders Way which would not be resolved until March 2026 at the earliest. He would be speaking to Island Roads regarding the traffic implications once this was opened.

He informed the meeting that the shop opening in Well Rd would be incorporating a post office and would be opening in the New Year.

127/25 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Councillors proposed and seconded to resolve 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