



EAST COWES TOWN COUNCIL

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

Minutes of the meeting of **East Cowes Town Council Meeting** held on 19th March 2026 at the Town Hall, York Avenue, East Cowes.

Present: Councillors: Reardon (Mayor), Love (Deputy Mayor), Pragnell, Warleigh-Lack, Hendry, Lake, Brimble-Brennan

Clerk: S Chilton

Deputy Clerk: C Jones

6 members of the public, PCSO Bradley Manning

PUBLIC FORUM

Mr Douse addressed the meeting regarding the Beach Clean scheduled for 29 March. The Mayor offered the use of the beach hut and refreshments for the event, which Mr Douse accepted.

A member of the public (DB) raised a question about the planning application for the Marina and whether the applicant was engaging with the Town Council. The Mayor confirmed that the Town Council was monitoring the situation closely. Cllr Love encouraged members of the public to view the application and submit comments individually. He also noted that Cowes Harbour Commissioners (CHC) were exploring alternative options, which may result in an amended application. DB further queried the involvement of CHC with UKSA. The Mayor advised that UKSA had leased the guard house to CHC. Cllr Love added that he had requested further details. Cllr Hendry commented that “permitted development” is not applicable within a Conservation Area, which this site falls under. PC Bradley Manning introduced himself to Councillors and members of the public as the newly assigned beat officer and provided his contact details.

AGENDA

25/26 EAST COWES ARMY CADETS

The Council received a video presentation from Major Zac Wake, Officer Commanding Gallipoli Company of the Army Cadets. Major Wake outlined the purpose of the Army Cadets, explaining how the organisation is a youth organisation, funded by the ministry of Defence and emphasising that it is not a military recruitment body.

He informed the Council that a new Army Cadet group will be starting in East Cowes, based at Holy Cross School, with sessions taking place on Thursday evenings from 30 April. Major Wake highlighted the excellent facilities at Holy Cross, describing it as an ideal location for the new unit. They are aiming to recruit between 15 and 20 young people.

Two cadets then spoke about their personal experiences in the organisation, describing the opportunities it has provided and the skills they have developed. Both commented on the significant improvements they had made in confidence, teamwork, and public speaking since joining.

Major Wake requested the Council’s support in publicising the new group by displaying posters online and on noticeboards, as well as placing banners in key areas such as the skatepark and the recreation grounds. He also noted that the Cadets would be happy to attend any East Cowes Town Council events such as the scheduled Beach Cleans. They have started a recruitment campaign in East Cowes with a Facebook presence, postal campaigns, school visits, radio interviews, floating bridge advertising, open days in local locations such as Kings Square. He asked councillors to tag them in so that the word spreads. They are looking for a non-uniform volunteer for their admin tasks. He issued an invitation to the grand opening on the 11th July. Councillors asked questions regarding live firing, the name Gallipoli, the difference between ACF and CCF, and age limits, all of which Major Wake addressed. The Mayor thanked Major Wake and the cadets for their presentation.

26/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Palin

27/26 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

3.1 Cllr Reardon declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the East Cowes Community Partnership and East Cowes Business Association. Cllr Love declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the East Cowes Community Partnership and East Cowes Business Association and IWC Ward Councillor, Cllr Hendry declared a non-pecuniary interest as a IWC Ward Councillor.

3.2 No written requests for dispensations were received.

28/26 MINUTES

4.1 The Council approved and signed the minutes of the Full Council held on 19th February 2026.

Resolved: To approve the minutes of the Full Council for the 19th February 2026

29/26 WATERFRONT REGENERATION UPDATE

5.1 The Council received an update on the planning application for the Waterfront Regeneration project. The Clerk reported that work had now commenced on the public realm improvements at Albany Green, with completion expected within 12 weeks.

Cllr Lake asked about the type of surfacing to be used and was informed that it would be suitable for wheelchair and buggy access. The Mayor noted that the Town Council had enquired about the possibility of using paving briquettes but had been advised that, due to the project's tight budget, this was not feasible. She added that the Council would need to monitor the situation closely. The Clerk further explained that Gino Wooldridge (GW) had confirmed that diverting funds towards alternative surfacing would reduce the budget available for other key elements of the scheme, including the prom building. Cllr Love clarified that current works were limited to the green area, the arch, and the seating areas, and that it was important to preserve sufficient funding to complete the prom building.

Cllr Lake sought clarification regarding the lease arrangements. The Clerk advised that GW would be preparing a joint report including both Albany Green and the prom building for consideration by the Isle of Wight Council's Asset Disposal Committee. It was not yet known when the matter would be considered, particularly with local elections taking place in May. Cllr Lake expressed disappointment that the issue had not been addressed sooner by IW council officers. Cllr Hendry noted that the composition of the Council could change following the election, so there could be no guarantee. Cllr Love mentioned that the Heritage grant linked to the project had still not been submitted by the IW Council.

A member of the public asked whether the Town Council intended to take responsibility for the area once the works were complete. It was confirmed that this remained the intention. Cllr Love stated that he would be pressing for a long lease.

Resolved: Councillors to continue monitoring

30/26 FLOATING BRIDGE

Councillors received monthly statistics together with the same period for the preceding year for comparison. Cllrs Reardon and Love spoke about the progress of the Floating Bridge Working Group, which they will both be attending on the 15th.

31/26 FINANCE

7.1 Councillors considered payments as presented made by Direct Debit and BACS.

7.2 Councillors noted the bank reconciliation for February 2026

Resolved: To approve and ratify the payments including by Direct Debit and BACS, as presented for February 2026, to note the bank reconciliation for February 2026.

32/26 NATIONAL SPRING CLEAN

8.1 Councillors considered a date to take part in the National Spring Clean which must be undertaken between the dates of 13th – 29th March. Cllr Hendry suggested that as the beach clean was taking place at the weekend, the council should not take part at this time and consider including the cadets when they are set up. Cllr Love suggested toing a local one later in the year. This was agreed

Resolved: Not to take part in the National Spring Clean this year but look at undertaking a local one later in the year.

33/26 REPORTS

9.1 No report from the Clerk

9.2 No report from the Mayor

9.3 IWC Ward Councillor reports:

Cllr Love reported that he has been working with the Army Cadets to support the establishment of a new unit in East Cowes. He advised that he is exploring the possibility of bringing the Army Cadets' assault course to the Esplanade as part of the Cowes Week festivities. He also noted that New Barn Road has now reopened. Finally, he informed the Council that he has stepped down as a governor at St George's School due to time constraints.

Cllr Hendry noted that there was still nothing to report on Saunders Way

9.4 Town Councillor reports:

Cllr Lake reported that the recent production by the Amy White Theatre was a great success. She congratulated all involved and noted their recent awards for Best Panto, Best Actor, and Best Supporting Actor.

Cllr Pragnell provided an update on the Esplanade shelter currently being designed and constructed by GKN apprentices. He has suggested several adjustments to the interior and roof, and the final design is expected shortly. Councillors expressed their thanks for the work completed so far and thanked Cllr Pragnell for his commitment to the project. It was agreed to invite Kevin Downer and the apprentices to the April meeting so they can be formally thanked.

34/26 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

The council agreed 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