



## East Cowes Annual Town Meeting 2025

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held at East Side Curve on Thursday 29th May 2025 at 6.00pm

Present: Town Mayor: Cllr T Reardon Town Councillors: Cllr K Love Town Clerk: S Chilton

Also present: Sarah and David Burdett, East Cowes Heritage: Angie Mathews, East Cowes Community Library: Rebecca Blachford, Youth Service and 2 members of the public

### **Agenda:**

#### **1 Welcome from the Mayor and Mayors Report**

The Mayor, Cllr Tracy Reardon, welcomed everyone to the meeting. and gave her annual report in the form of a video presentation. She thanked everyone for their support throughout the past year and said how honoured she was to be Mayor again. She said that the Council had achieved much over the last year, and she was looking forward to an exciting year ahead with new projects including the Albany Green regeneration.

#### **2 Apologies**

Apologies were received from Cllr Stephen Hendry

#### **3 Minutes**

The minutes from the Annual Town Meeting of 30<sup>th</sup> May 2024 were presented and signed.

#### **4. Ward Councillor Reports**

##### **Cllr Stephen Hendry:**

The Clerk read the report submitted by Cllr Stephen Hendry which set out his congratulations to the newly elected councillors and his disappointment that the IW Council elections had been postponed for a year. Cllr Hendry explained the new governance arrangements for the IW Council and is optimistic that the Cabinet system will be more effective. He is sitting on the Adult Social Care, Public Health and Housing Needs Committee and the Children's Services, Education and Skills Committee. He gave an update on the completion of the Saunders Way link road and the Kingston Marine Park sale, which will bring employment. Crossway's development is still included on the Island Draft Planning Strategy, and he will keep the community informed if this becomes a matter of interest. He ended by saying he was humbled and grateful to serve the Osborne Ward and will continue to do his best to serve the town. (A detailed report from Cllr Hendry is annexed to these minutes).

##### **Cllr Karl Love:**

Cllr Love thanked the people of the island and the community for their support over the last 12 months in his role as Town Councillor and Chairman of IW Council. He is also privileged to have been elected Deputy Mayor for the Town Council. He spoke about how East Cowes is being transformed through the efforts of the Town Council and the IW Council. He reiterated that Albany Green is the next major project to be tackled and how it will add to the resources available to the community.

He spoke about the Floating Bridge issues that remain unresolved and his efforts to get a resolution as quickly as possible. He stated that funding for the Food Pantry had been at risk and that through his and other IW Councillors efforts he had managed to secure the funding, which is a lifeline to so many families who are in need. He too said it had been unfortunate that the IW Council elections had been cancelled and went on to say that he did not support the Hampshire an IW Mayoral proposal. He stated that the Island had diverse needs to the mainland and its needs would not be served by adopting this governance model. He explained about the financial pressures the IW Council were facing and that the falling birthrate on the island which creates all kinds of complex

issues. He spoke briefly about the recent school closures, the Norris Castle development progress and the Red Funnel planning application which is pending. He spoke about gaining the views of the east coves community through the town Council's consultations and how that enabled the Town Council to collaborate with the community. (A detailed report from Cllr Love is annexed to these minutes).

## **5. Community Reports**

### **5.1 East Coves Community Library – Angie Mathews**

Angie Mathews gave a report on the community Library located at the East Side Curve. She explained the background to how community libraries came about and how many people in East Coves fought hard against the closure of the local library during the austerity cuts in 2010, which were unsuccessful. Following this the Town Council made an agreement with the Isle of Wight library service to take responsibility for the running costs and staffing provision for the space that was occupied in Lower York Avenue, with the Island library service providing the IT, staffing advisory service and the book stock and East Coves Community Library was established. The Community Library has moved twice to reduce costs and has had to limit its book stock but with monthly circulation the book stock is kept relevant and changing. The community library has a library coordinator, Di Palmer, and 12 volunteers staffing the library, working closely with Town Council Reception staff, who are also all library trained. The Town Council's Assistant Facilities and Events officer, Denise Adams, has worked hard at gaining grants, networking and establishing and supporting an ever-widening range of groups and activities which take place in the East Side Curve alongside the library function. Angie went on to discuss the Summer Reading Challenge and Rhyme Time which she leads on in the Curve. She highlighted the benefits that these bring to both the children and their parents and carers. (A detailed report from Angie Mathews is annexed to these minutes)

### **5.2 Youth Service – Rebecca Blanchford**

Becca Blanchford gave a brief report on the youth club which has now relocated to the Town Hall, and they are enjoying having so much more space. The club has just had its 2<sup>nd</sup> session. They have purchased a giant blow up sofa which is providing lots of fun for the members and are purchasing a small pool table and badminton set. They have secured a community capacity grant for more specialist activities to expand the offer. 2 sessions on jewellery making have taken place so far which were successful. Some grants Others are planned to include jewellery making, cartoon drawing and pottery. They are looking forward to using the beach hut for sessions in the summer. 59 young people attended last year which was down on 23/24 but some regular attendees have now gone on to High school. They had 257 visits and 43 sessions were delivered. The club always welcome visits from councillors and are always looking for more volunteers. Sarah Burdett offered some opportunities in the Heritage centre to youngsters and said she could provide some shows about East Coves heritage.

### **5.3 East Coves Heritage – Sarah Burdett**

Sarah Burdett began by thanking East Coves Town Council for their support and for the use the Town Hall for the recent 3 day exhibition which allowed them to show a multitude of artefacts they rarely have space to exhibit, and for local people to handle the artefacts and look through the special books. Films produced using local oral history were shown, and the film of building ships at JS Whites in the early 1950s. These films will show around the Island to extoll the heritage of East Coves. East Coves Heritage Centre is open every morning, except Sundays, and attracts both general visitors and researchers. Entrance is free. Window displays are changed regularly to different topics. They are working with the IW Council on the Albany Green Regeneration Project. Numerous walks and talks have been given, including a series of talks to the volunteer stewards at Osborne House, which several paid staff managed to attend as well. Local schools have received talks, and they plan to extend their liaison in this direction. New material relevant to East Coves arrives weekly and they would welcome more volunteers to assist with tasks such as cataloguing new material. The Face Book Page – East Coves Heritage – is rapidly gaining members and is updated daily. A new leaflet was produced for the 90th Anniversary of the Columbine shed. The next hard back book produced by the Isle of Wight Society is entitled Brick Making on the Isle of Wight and includes information about East Coves Park and the Osborne brickyards. They plan to have this on sale in the Autumn which ties in with the Brick Display at Whippingham church hall. They continue to have a page about East Coves Heritage about forthcoming activities in the Island magazine.

**6.0 Public Forum**

The mayor asked for any questions from the public and the Red Funnel planning application and Castle St exit was raised. The Mayor noted this was not on the agenda and that the question should be raised with Cllr Love outside of the meeting.

Meeting closed at 19.25pm

Signed ..... , Mayor of East Cowes

Date