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 17th September 2026 at the Town Hall, York Avenue, East Cowes.
Present: Councillors: Reardon, Pragnell, Warleigh-Lack, Brimble-Brennan, Lake
Clerk: S Chilton
Cllr Paul Williams, IW Ward Councillor
16 members of the public

Prior to the start of the meeting the Mayor presented a scroll of appreciation to local resident Wendy Farrow, for the voluntary work she undertakes for the East Cowes Community and thanked her on behalf of the Town Council.

PUBLIC FORUM

A member of the public passed on details of hazardous parking in Rosetta Drive given to her by a concerned resident who resides there. Cllr Williams said he would follow this up in his role of IW Councillor. She also thanked the council for the hard work put in by the Council's extended team in respect of the East Cowes Festival. She spoke about the motion given by Cllr Love on Wednesday on connection and belonging
A member of the public mentioned the poisonous weeds growing at Albany Green and was informed that a representative of the IW council had attended to remove them. She also asked when the damaged railings would be returned. She was informed that this was being dealt with by the IW Council but hoped they would be back soon. She asked about the progress of the esplanade shelter. Cllr Pragnell gave an update. Another member of the public thanked the council on the success of the festival and said it was a brilliant event. He went on to mention a FOI request he had made and to ask what the council was doing in respect of illegal migrants being located on the island. This was referred to Cllr Williams, the Ward Councillor. Cllr Williams explained what steps the IW Council were taking. Several members of the public expressed concern regarding the planning application for Old Road. They highlighted over development, out of keeping with surrounding properties, parking issues and that the address given was misleading as it was Oak Close and not Old Road. The Mayor stated that the application was on the agenda for consideration. Information was also given that residents should make their individual representations to the IW Planning Authority citing material considerations as the Council's comment only counted as one comment.

AGENDA

90/26 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Hendry, who had a meeting at the IW College and Cllr Love who was attending an Education meeting at County Hall

91/26 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. Cllr Pragnell declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of Cowes Harbour Advisory Group and East Cowes Sailing Club. Cllr Warleigh-Lack declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the East Cowes Sailing Club.
2.2 No written requests for dispensations were received.

92/26 MINUTES

3.1 The Council approved and signed the minutes of Full Council held on 16th July 2026
Resolved: To approve and sign the minutes of Full Council held on 16th July 2026

93/26 EXPERIENCE COWES – CHARLES EGERTON-WARBURTON

The Council received a presentation from Charles Egerton-Warburton, outlining the organisation's aims, governance arrangements and achievements to date. Councillors were advised that Experience Cowes is a not-for-profit company established to promote Cowes and East Cowes as a year-round visitor destination through coordinated marketing, events and community engagement initiatives. The presentation highlighted recent activities including support for the Cowes Week Youth Sailing and Family Zones, the visit of HRH to East Cowes, promotion of local businesses through the Experience Cowes website and social media platforms, and initiatives to increase participation in water sports on the East Cowes waterfront. Experience Cowes requested that the Town Council consider providing a contribution of £5,000 towards the initiative and invited the Council to play a greater role in supporting and promoting the project within the local community. Financial information was presented showing contributions already received from partner organisations and outlining projected income and expenditure for 2026 and 2027. The Mayor thanked Charles for his presentation.

94/26 VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE IN SOUTHERN WATER

5.1 The Council considered a request from Cllr Becca Cameron to support a Vote of No Confidence in Southern Water. Councillors discussed concerns relating to recent wastewater infrastructure failures, pollution incidents and sewage discharges affecting East Cowes, the Medina and surrounding waters. Having considered the information provided, the Council resolved to support Cllr Cameron's request and agreed the following motion: "East Cowes Town Council has no confidence in Southern Water's current management of wastewater and sewage infrastructure serving East Cowes and the surrounding Medina area, following repeated infrastructure failures, pollution incidents and sewage discharges affecting residents, local waters and the environment. The Council calls upon Southern Water to provide a clear, fully costed and time-bound programme of investment and remedial works for the infrastructure serving East Cowes, including measures necessary to improve network resilience and reduce the risk of further pollution incidents."

Resolved: East Cowes Town Council supports the motion of no confidence in Southern Water, as proposed by Cllr Becca Cameron, and will write to Southern Water requesting a clear, fully costed and time-bound programme of investment and remedial works for wastewater infrastructure serving East Cowes and the wider Medina area.

95/26 PLANNING MATTERS

6.1 The Council considered the following planning application:

Application No: 26/01099/FUL Parish(es): East Cowes Ward(s): East Cowes

Location: Land Rear Of 109 - 113 Old Road, East Cowes, Isle of Wight, PO32 6AU

Proposal: Two pairs of semi-detached chalet bungalows with parking and vehicular access off Oaks Close

Councillors raised concerns that the proposal represented an overdevelopment of the site, resulting in a cramped layout, inadequate outdoor amenity space, overlooking and poor outlook between properties, a street scene dominated by parking, and an incoherent design. Concerns were also expressed regarding the capacity of local drainage infrastructure to accommodate the development. Members of the public in attendance reiterated these concerns. The Council agreed to engage Martha James to undertake a further review of the application and prepare a letter of objection on the Council's behalf.

Resolved: To engage Martha James to review the application and prepare a letter of objection based on the concerns identified by the Council.

96/26 REGENERATION UPDATE

7.1 To determine the location of the Albany Green Plaque – this item was deferred till Gino Wooldridge gave his update

97/26 FINANCES

8.1 The Council approved and agreed payments as presented and ratified payments made by Direct Debit and BACS

8.2 The Council noted the bank reconciliation for July and August 2026

8.3 The Council ratified the decision to give £50 prize money for the youth consultation

8.4 The Clerk provided an update on the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) and reported that the External Auditor had identified no matters affecting their opinion of the Council's accounts for the financial year 2025/26.

Resolved: To approve and ratify payments, including Direct Debit and BACS, for July and August 2026; to note bank reconciliations for July and August 2026; ratify the £50 prize money and note the 2025/26 Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR).

98/26 GRANTS

9.1 The Council considered the following grant applications:

- Community Action Youth Grant - £14,000 (annual budgeted grant)
- East Cowes Crafters - £750 towards craft materials for displays around the town
- Home-Start IOW - £4,456 towards the cost of providing a weekly Family Group session in East Cowes
- Short Mat Bowls Group - contribution towards the running costs of twice-weekly group sessions
- Lemon Jelly Press CIC - £750 for Isle of Wight Poet Laureate East Cowes School Engagement Programme
- Footprint Trust - £1,000 towards the running costs of the Warmer East Cowes programme

Councillors noted that the available grants budget would not support all the amounts requested.
Resolved: Grants be awarded as follows: Community Action Youth Grant - £14,000, East Cowes Crafters - £750, Home-Start IOW - waiver of Town Hall hire charges, Short Mat Bowls Group - £200, Lemon Jelly Press CIC - £250, Footprint Trust - £1,000

99/26 GDPR POLICIES FOR REVIEW

10.1 Councillors reviewed the following policies:

- CCTV Policy
- Disposal of Documents Policy
- Accessibility Statement
- Information Data Protection Policy
- Publication Scheme
- Removable Media Policy
- Retention of Documents Policy
- Transparency Code Compliance Policy
- Forms: Email Contact Privacy Notice, Consent to hold contact information,
- Dispensation Policy
- Grants Policy
- Health & Safety Policy

Cllr Warleigh-Lack proposed some minor amendments to the Disposal of Documents Policy and the Secure Data Transfer and Removable Media Policy which were agreed. It was proposed that the policies be adopted with the agreed amendments
Resolved: To adopt the revised policies

100/26 EVENTS & THEATRE COMMITTEE

11.1 The Council considered a report regarding the merger of the Theatre Committee and Events Committee. Councillors noted the significant overlap between the responsibilities of the two committees, particularly in relation to event planning, budgeting, marketing, volunteer coordination and community engagement. It was further noted that the scheduled meeting of the Theatre Committee on 17 September 2026 had been cancelled due to insufficient attendance to achieve a quorum, highlighting the practical difficulties of maintaining separate committees. Councillors considered that a merger would improve efficiency, reduce administrative duplication and the number of meetings required, streamline decision-making, and provide a more coordinated approach to the planning and delivery of events and theatre productions. It was proposed that the Theatre Committee and Events Committee be merged into a single Committee comprising all Town Councillors together with four non-voting Councillors drawn from the existing Theatre and Events Committees. Responsibility for theatre productions, including the annual pantomime and activities at the Amy White Theatre, would transfer to the merged Committee.
Resolved: To merge the two committees and amend the Terms of Reference

101/26 PUBLIC CONSULTATION

12.1 The Council considered the findings of the East Cowes youth questionnaire 2026 undertaken at the East Cowes Festival. Councillors noted that many young people are proud of East Cowes but would like more activities, events and places to meet. Concerns were also raised about bullying, transport, safety and opportunities for education, training and employment. Councillors welcomed the report and considered it a useful guide for future youth projects and activities. Councillors were particularly encouraged by the number of young people who expressed an interest in getting involved in local events, volunteering and helping shape the future of the town. Councillors agreed that young people should be actively involved in the Council's annual public consultation and community engagement event to ensure their views are reflected in future Council priorities and spending decisions.

12.2 The Council considered the Consultation Options Paper. Councillors discussed the different consultation options and highlighted the importance of gathering residents' views to help shape the Council's budget and future priorities. Whilst supportive of a Community Engagement and Planning Event, Councillors felt that consultation should not be limited to a single venue and that more effort should be made to engage with people in the places they already visit. Suggestions included holding outreach sessions in King's Square, outside Waitrose, at local community events, and at locations used by young people such as the skatepark. Councillors agreed that combining a public engagement event with outreach activities and online consultation would encourage wider participation and ensure that a broader range of views were considered when setting the Council's priorities. Councillors also considered the proposed timing of the consultation and agreed that the event should be held over two days to maximise public participation and accessibility, with October 23rd and 24th being the favoured option.

Resolved: To note the Youth Consultation report. To approve Option 3 of the Consultation paper, comprising a Community Engagement and Planning Event supported by online consultation and targeted outreach activities, and to hold the main event on 23rd and 24th October

102/26 REPORTS

13.1 Clerk's report - The Clerk reported that the Council had been invited to attend an engagement event with the Isle of Wight Council on 14 October 2026 at Westridge, Ryde. The event aims to bring together the Isle of Wight Council and Town and Parish Councils to discuss how they can work more closely together and support local communities. The invitation requested that each Council nominate a representative to attend on its behalf. Cllr Reardon, agreed to represent the council at the event. The Floating Bridge statistics were noted. The Clerk also reported on the response received from the Isle of Wight Council following the Council's Freedom of Information request regarding utility company street works and reinstatements in East Cowes. 587 inspections had been undertaken over the previous three financial years, resulting in 58 defects being identified and 58 remedial actions being required. There is no dedicated Street Works Inspector for East Cowes and that inspections are carried out by available District Stewards or Street Works Inspectors. No fines, penalty notices or other enforcement actions had been issued in relation to defective reinstatement works, with the IW Council instead requiring utility companies to carry out remedial works to rectify any defects identified.

13.2 Mayors Report`- The Mayor reported that it had been a busy period, particularly during Cowes Week, and she hoped that she had represented East Cowes well throughout the various events and engagements. She had thoroughly enjoyed the experience and advised that a full report would be included in the next Council newsletter. Councillors noted that there had also been significant coverage of East Cowes activities in the local press.

She was pleased to report that the East Cowes Festival had been a great success and expressed her hope that the wider community had enjoyed the event. She thanked the East Cowes Crafters for their hard work in producing and maintaining the displays around the town, which had contributed greatly to the appearance of East Cowes.

Finally, the Mayor reported on the visit of HRH The Princess Royal to officially open Albany Green. She had the opportunity to accompany The Princess Royal and her husband during the visit and show them around the site, which she described as a memorable occasion for the town.

13.3 IWC Ward Councillor reports – Cllr Williams outlined several issues raised by residents within the ward and the actions being taken to address them. He reported on the prompt removal of graffiti following vandalism on Cadets Walk, a request for dropped kerbs on Vectis Road to improve accessibility for mobility scooter users, and concerns regarding wheelchair access at the Victoria Avenue bus stop, which is to be assessed against Department for Transport accessibility guidance. He also provided an update on caravans located between Marina Close and Clarence Road, noting that one abandoned caravan had been removed and that investigations were continuing in relation to a second caravan. Cllr Williams reported on the development of 17 new homes at St Wilfred Drive/Saunders Way, including residents' concerns regarding contractor parking. These concerns have been raised with the developer and are being monitored by Parking Enforcement. In response to ongoing parking issues at

Hawthorn Meadows, he has requested increased enforcement. The report concluded that the majority of issues raised by residents are either being actively addressed or remain under review by the relevant authorities, with particular attention being given to accessibility improvements, parking enforcement and minimising disruption arising from development works. The Mayor thanked Cllr Williams for his report.

13.4 Town Councillor reports – Cllr Pragnell reported that he had recently attended a productive Design and Build meeting with GKN apprentices and the company that the Council hopes will construct the new shelter. A small number of minor design issues were identified and are being addressed. He was hopeful that it would not be long before the builders could prepare an estimate for the materials required. He advised that he intends to break up the concrete base at the site of the former shelter. However, he has so far been unable to source, free of charge, the necessary hammer tool and generator required for the work; which may result in a small cost to the project. He added that he would continue to seek assistance and endeavour to have the resulting rubble removed free of charge. He went on to say that he had attended a very positive meeting of the Cowes Harbour Advisory Committee. He advised that dredging works associated with the new marina are progressing well and that the necessary dredging licence has been in place for approximately 18 months; however, permission for piling works is still awaiting final processing. Cllr Pragnell raised the issue of cruise ship passengers arriving at Cowes and whether there may be opportunities to attract some of this visitor traffic to East Cowes. He was advised that smaller cruise ships could potentially berth at the new pontoon in East Cowes, which could help encourage additional visitors into the town and support local businesses.

Cllr Lake reported that the Norris Castle Preservation Trust had now been approved and that its long-term aim is to acquire Norris Castle for the benefit of the public. Councillors were advised that the Trust's objectives include improving public access to the site, supporting the conservation and preservation of the castle and its heritage, and creating educational and employment opportunities. Cllr Lake explained that the Trust's detailed strategic plans remain confidential at this stage while discussions continue with the current owners. However, the overall aspiration is for the Trust to acquire the castle and secure its future as a heritage asset for the wider community.

103/26 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

Councillors 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

Legal matters were discussed