



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

WINTER GARDENS

7PM

12 APRIL 2010

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillors: Chris Welsford (Mayor), Debby Robinson, Buster Bartlett, Chris Bonney, David George, Brian Lucas, Robin Mew, Graham Perks, Susan Scoccia, Steve Stubbings.

ITEM SUBJECT

60/10 APPOINTMENT OF CLERK

The Mayor reported the outcome of the decision in Minute 59/10 of the meeting of 26 March 2010 to employ a locum Town Clerk

It was resolved unanimously

that David Bartlett be appointed Town Clerk on a locum basis with immediate effect until the successful outcome of a recruitment and selection process for a substantive appointment; and that our Town Clerk be appointed as Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) on a locum basis with immediate effect until the successful outcome of a recruitment and selection process for a substantive appointment; and that the RFO has delegated authority to contract for the provision of payroll services.

PUBLIC FORUM

- a) The Mayor opened the Public Forum with an invitation to the 88 residents present to contribute to it.
- b) A member stated that the Meeting had not been properly convened in that the notice period included the weekend days. The Mayor responded that he had been assured that the notice period was acceptable.
- c) There were a number of comments on the Precept, one of which drew attention to the fact that National Insurance charges appeared to have increased at a much greater rate than the basic wage costs.

The business of the meeting recommenced at 7.15pm.

61/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

62/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillors Susan Scoccia and Chris Welsford declared an interest as County Councillors. There were no declarations of interest at this point.

63/10 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the meetings of 8 March and 26 March 2010 were considered

- a) In view of the disputed nature of the available drafts of the minutes of the meeting of 8 March 2010:

it was resolved that:

the Minutes be held over until the next meeting of the Town Council, with Councillors Buster Bartlett, Susan Scoccia, Brian Lucas and Robin Mew abstaining.

- a) The Minutes of the meeting of 26 March were considered and amendments agreed.

It was resolved that:

- b) The Minutes of the meeting of 26 March 2010 as amended be agreed as an accurate record of the business of that meeting and be signed accordingly by the Mayor.
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64/10 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

- a) The Mayor introduced the item with a statement that the Minutes of the Town Meeting had been received and recognised as identifying significant issues that will be given serious consideration by the Town Council.
- b) As an appropriate response required more time than had been available since the Town Meeting, the Mayor proposed that the issues be considered by the Town Councillors in time for a response to them to be made at the Town Council meeting of 10 May 2010.

It was resolved by seven votes to three that:

the Town Council respond to the minutes of the Town Meeting at the Town Council meeting of 10 May.

65/10 ANNUAL TOWN MEETING

The Mayor introduced the item with a proposal that Annual Town Meeting date be moved to 24 May 2010.

It was resolved unanimously that:

the Annual Town Meeting be convened for Monday 24 May 2010.

66/10 BUTTERFLY TOWN

- a) Rob Wilson addressed the meeting with a proposal for establishing Ventnor as Butterfly Town in the context of the 2010 International Year of Biodiversity.
 - b) He said that Ventnor is home for some very special species and butterflies are recognised as having an important role as indicators of change in the environment and changes of environmental management practice in, for example, the length of grass cutting in open areas, would assist their development.
 - c) A new Butterfly Group has been formed on the Island and is being launched on 22 April in Ventnor and all are welcome. The Group is part of the national organisation Butterfly Conservation.
 - d) A Councillor asked if it would be possible to incorporate Bees into the environment planning and commended the development as described.
 - e) The Mayor indicated that he and Councillor Susan Scoccia would raise the matter of the grass cutting on cliff edges with the Isle of Wight Council.
 - f) Rob Wilson was thanked by the meeting for his presentation.
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67/10 ACCOUNT SIGNATORIES

- a) Following the resignation of Councillor Joan Garlick and the previous Town Clerk, the Mayor asked that the meeting amend Bank Mandate signatories accordingly.
- b) It was noted that Councillors Robin Mew, Graham Perks and Chris Welsford are the current authorised signatories and the Financial Regulations require that payment instruments require the signatures of three Councillors and either the Town Clerk or the Responsible Finance Officer.

It was resolved unanimously that:

Councillor Debby Robinson and the Town Clerk be added to the list of authorised signatories.

68/10 ESPLANADE FACILITIES

- a) The Mayor read a letter received from Tides Cafe expressing concern about changes to the seating on the Esplanade in front on the Cafe.
 - b) Councillor Susan Scoccia reported that she had spoken to the proprietors and indicated that if there were additional seats to be added in the future they could be placed in front of the Cafe.
 - c) Councillor Robin Mew reported on the placement of an additional seat and Councillor Brian Lucas commented that he missed the Planters that used to be on the Esplanade and hoped they could be restored.
 - d) Councillor Susan Scoccia said that she would refer the matter back to the Isle of Wight Council.
 - e) The Town Clerk was asked to respond to the letter from Tides Cafe.
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69/10 SUB COMMITTEE APPOINTMENTS

Following the resignation of Councillor Joan Garlick, replacements were considered for her on the Employment, Risk Assessment and Grants Committees.

It was resolved that:

- a) Councillor David George be appointed to the Employment Committee.
 - b) Councillor David George be appointed to the Risk Assessment Committee.
 - c) Councillor Chris Bonney be appointed to the Grants Committee.
 - d) Brian Lucas be appointed Chair of the Plans Committee.
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70/10 WEB SITE

- a) The Mayor introduced the discussion on the advantages of improving the functionality of the Town Council's web site.
- b) Councillor Brian Lucas explained the background to the existing facility and proposed that a group of councillors discuss the alternatives.

It was resolved that:

Councillors Chris Welsford, Brian Lucas, Graham Perks, Debby Robinson, Steve Stubbings and Chris Bonney be appointed as a working party to progress the development of a new web site with enhanced functionality.

71/10 SCHEDULE OF MEETINGS 2010/11

A draft schedule for the routine meetings of the Town Council had been previously circulated to Councillors.

It was resolved unanimously that:
the draft schedule be adopted.

72/10 COUNCILLORS' QUESTIONS

- a) Councillor Robin Mew asked the Mayor on whose authority he had approached the Isle of Wight Council to request an Audit of the Winter Gardens operations. The Mayor responded.
 - b) Councillor Brian Lucas questioned the continuing lack Cash Machines in the Town and the limitations of being restricted to only one, particularly in the season.
 - c) Councillor Susan Scoccia commented that this matter was being progressed by the Ventnor Partnership and the Mayor added that he had been in conversation with HSBC about the most suitable resolution.
 - d) It is hoped that the Mayor and Councillor Susan Scoccia will continue to discuss additional access to cash with the Partnership.
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- e) Councillor Perks asked if there were proposals to replace Councillor Joan Garlick and if there is to be an election will it involve the use of Poll Cards. The Mayor responded that if an election is called, the Town Council will decide on the issue of the use of Poll Cards.
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PUBLIC FORUM

- a) The Mayor re-opened the Public Forum
 - b) A question was asked about the exclusion of the press and public and the Mayor explained the reason for it.
 - c) A member of the public urged the strongest possible action to secure additional cash machine facilities.
 - d) Another member of the public asked about the appointment of an Internal Auditor and what the end of year balances were. The Mayor stated that an Internal Auditor appointment had been made at the meeting of 26 March and that full year accounts are in preparation.
 - e) The matter of the impact of the Winter Gardens on the precept was raised and a question asked about the Town Council's plans for the future of the facility. The Mayor informed the meeting that the Town Councillors had met prior to this meeting with an officer of the Isle of Wight Council to explore the options for the Winter Gardens and that a full consultation would be held.
 - f) A member of the public commented that she felt that a special meeting should be held to discuss the minutes from the Town Meeting and went on to ask why the Mayor had placed a personal commentary in the Chronicle. The Mayor said that the Chronicle insertion was a personal statement from him.
 - g) Concern was expressed about the lack of events being held at the Winter Gardens. The Mayor responded that he agreed that the limited number and range of events was a matter that needed to be addressed but that it had to be done in ways that would not expose public funds to risk.
 - h) The limitation of the existing audio facilities for Town Council meetings was highlighted.
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72/10 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

In view of the confidential nature of the following item:

It was resolved under the Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings (1960) Act:
to exclude the Public and Press from the meeting due to the confidential nature of the following business.

73/10 WINTER GARDENS BOOKINGS

- a) Councillors Robin Mew and Buster Bartlett left the meeting at this point.
- b) The Winter Gardens' Manager, David Gray, joined the meeting to outline the recently presented problems over pricing for bookings.
- c) He reported on an offer for a specific act subject to a guarantee of £3,500 plus expenses.

It was resolved by a majority:

not to proceed with the offer.

- d) A member raised the matter of the possibility of hiring rooms to Jack Whitewood's Fringe Festival.

It was unanimously resolved:

that the Winter Gardens Manager be authorised to hire the Balmoral and Chancellor rooms at a charge of £200 for four days over the duration of Ventnor Carnival, 11-14 August inclusive, with a provision that a bar (and bar staff) is available at normal charges to justify the nominal hire charge.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.

SIGNED	DATED