



# MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

WINTER GARDENS

7PM

10 MAY 2010

## MEMBERS PRESENT

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

## ITEM SUBJECT

### PUBLIC FORUM

- a) The Mayor opened the Public Forum with an invitation to the 45 residents present to contribute to it.
- b) A member asked how the Town Council intended to respond to the allegation that its meeting of 12 April 2010 had not been lawfully convened and referred to advice from the National Association of Local Councils to that effect.
- c) The Town Clerk stated that in view of the evident confusion among the reference books on the matter of whether or not weekend days could be included in the required three days notice of meetings, advice had been sought from the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) who had advised that Sundays could not be included and that, therefore, the meeting of 12 April had been unlawful on procedural grounds. The Town Council would now follow that advice through an extraordinary meeting on 17 May 2010 at which the business conducted at the 12 April meeting would be revisited.
- d) The Town Clerk reminded members of the public with clerking experience that he welcomed advice from colleagues but, as he had indicated at the earlier meeting, he hoped that would be given in advance of meetings and not initially through the Public Forums at them.
- e) A member of the public asked why the Town Council was making a payment of £12,000 this year for use of the Winter Garden's facilities.

The business of the meeting commenced at 7.15pm.

### 74/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Robin Mew

### 75/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

### 76/10 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) Councillor Susan Scoccia introduced the Minutes of the Meeting of 8 March 2010.

#### **It was resolved that:**

The Minutes as presented be agreed as an accurate record of the business of that meeting to be signed by the Mayor accordingly.

In view of the Town Council's intention to revisit the business of the meeting of 12 April 2010, the draft minutes of that meeting were not considered.

### 77/10 FINANCE

- a) A Finance Report for this meeting had been previously circulated. It recorded that the bank balance at the end of the first month of the financial year stood at £177,770.

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- b) Fuller financial information would be available to future Town Council meetings once the transfer of documentations and responsibility across the financial year end had been completed.
  - c) The Town Clerk advised that work was underway to establish an effective system of financial controls and address those recommendations of the recent Audit that had yet to be implemented.
  - d) He reported that the Winter Gardens sales figures for the six months of November to April inclusive had met the budget target of £122,785 with actual sale of £122,064, a variance of only 0.6%.
  - e) He went on to say that although Financial Regulations provided for a Credit Card facility, one did not appear to be in place at present and that it is planned to provide one through an HSBC Debit Card with monthly activity through it being reported to Members.
  - f) Among the current debtors was the annual subscription of £700 to the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (IWALC) and the Town Clerk requested a specific commitment to renew membership.

**It was unanimously resolved that:**

Ventnor Town Council's membership of IWALC be renewed for 2010/11.

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**78/10 STAFFING**

- a) A report on staffing matters had been previously circulated.
  - b) A meeting to progress the arrangements for the already approved appointment of a General Manager for the Winter Gardens would now take place after a postponement following a proposal from the Isle of Wight Council to second one of its members of staff to the role.
  - c) The Town Clerk had circulated a staffing structure diagram with the names and posts of the present 18 members of staff and reported that he was now meeting regularly with the managers.
  - d) It was noted that pay dates for weekly paid staff had now been rationalised to be based on a working week of Monday – Sunday inclusive.
  - e) Finally, the Town Clerk reported on new arrangements for the administrative work of the Town Council and Winter Gardens. The Town Clerk's office would now be routinely staffed from 9am to 4pm Monday – Thursday inclusive and from 9am to 1pm on Friday.
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**79/10 TOWN MEETING MINUTES**

- a) The Mayor introduced this item, reminding the meeting that it referred to the request from the signatories to the calling notice for the Town Meeting held on 24 March for a response to its Minutes and the resolutions set out in them.
- b) He said that the issues raised were clearly important and a considered response was appropriate.
- a) Councillor Steve Stubbings said that he did not feel it possible to provide an appropriate response without further information about the allegations made in the Minutes. In particular, he felt it essential that the signatories specify which Town Councillors are referred to in resolutions 1, 2 and 6 and, in each case what the evidence was to support the allegations made against them; he also wanted to have a detailed explanation of the justification for the reference to 'grave concerns' referred to in resolution 4 of the Minutes.

**It was resolved that:**

The Town Clerk be asked to write to the signatories to the calling notice to request the information identified by Councillor Steve Stubbings.

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**80/10 NEW WEB SITE**

- a) A report on this item had been previously circulated and Members had earlier received the
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report of the Working Group meeting on the matter.

- b) It was noted that the Working Group had considered three possible providers for a new web site and had recommended that a contract for the work be placed with parishcouncil.net.

**It was resolved that:**

Parishcouncil.net be contracted with for the development and support of a new Ventnor Town Council website.

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**81/10 AUDIO RECORDING POLICY**

- a) A draft for an Audio Recording Policy, prepared by Councillor Chris Bonney, had been previously circulated.
- b) The draft was welcomed by members and,

**It was resolved that:**

The draft Audio Recording Policy as presented by formally adopted.

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**82/10 PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

- a) Councillor Debby Robinson introduced two current planning applications, P/00563/10 for retention of extended vehicular access and parking area at Hadley, Whitwell Road and P/00497 for replacement of planning permission for outline permission for two houses with vehicular access and parking.
- b) Although she felt there were no issues in connection with the former, there were significant safety concerns about the latter given the nature of the nearby road junction, the limited visibility on approach and the width of the proposed access.
- c) Councillor Debby Robinson also commented on remaining serious concerns about the proposal for development on the Esplanade and County Councillors Susan Scoccia and Chris Welsford agreed to take those up with the Isle of Wight Council's Planning Service.
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**83/10 APPOINTMENT OF BIO-DIVERSITY MEMBER**

Following the presentation to the 12 April 2010 meeting of a Butterfly Walk Project, Councillor Chris Bonney proposed the appointment of a Ventnor Town Council Lead Member for Bio-diversity

**It was resolved that:**

Councillor Chris Bonney be appointed Ventnor Town Council's Lead Member for Bio-diversity.

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**84/10 VOLUNTEERS' AGREEMENT**

- a) A draft for an agreement between Ventnor Town Council and individual volunteers working with it had been previously circulated with a final version being presented by Councillor Susan Scoccia.
- b) It was noted that this was not connected with any previous arrangements for the provision of voluntary work within the Winter Gardens.

**It was resolved unanimously that:**

the draft Volunteer Agreement as presented be formally adopted.

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**85/10 MAYOR'S REPORT**

- a) The Mayor thanks Evelyn Knowles and her colleagues from the Enhancement Fund for their excellent work in raising the funds that made possible the development of Sea Breeze Park and for their successful management of the project.
- b) He said it had been a privilege to share in the opening ceremony for it and how much he lamented the failure of the Isle of Wight Council to recognise the Enhancement Fund on the sign at the park as the main force behind the project.
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**86/10 COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORT**

- a) Councillor Chris Welsford reported on the progress he had been able to promote in the possible installation of an additional ATM in the Town.
  - b) Councillor Susan Scoccia reported on the continuing work of the Partnership.
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**PUBLIC FORUM**

- a) The Mayor re-opened the Public Forum.
- b) There were no further questions.

The meeting closed at 9.10pm.

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SIGNED BY THE MAYOR

DATE

DRAFT