



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

WINTER GARDENS

7PM

14 JUNE 2010

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillors: Debby Robinson (Mayor), Chris Bonney, David George, Steve Stubbings, Chris Welsford

ITEM SUBJECT

PUBLIC FORUM

The Mayor opened the Public Forum with 34 members of the public present.

- a) She read a Town Council Press Release on the issues raised by recent reports on developments in the engagement of volunteers in the activity of the Winter Gardens and said that she hoped this would clarify the situation for all concerned.
- b) Two members of the public raised concerns about the Town Council's policy and the perceived rejection of previously provided support for the Winter Gardens.
- c) Another member of the public questioned the appropriateness of Town Councillors contributing to a local Blog.
- d) Concern about the continued closure of the popular Wheeler's Bay footpath was raised by a resident and it was noted that the issue would be taken in to a later Agenda item.

111/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

112/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Chris Welsford declared an interest as a County Councillor.

113/10 MINUTES PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the Town Council meetings of 10 May and 17 May 2010 and of the Annual Town Council meeting of 17 May were considered.

It was unanimously resolved that:

the Minutes of the Town Council meetings of 10 May and 17 May 2010 and of the Annual Town Council meeting of 17 May were agreed as an accurate record of the business of those meetings and signed accordingly by the Mayor.

114/10 FINANCE

- a) The Finance report for this meeting had been previously circulated to Members and included information on Bank Balances at 31 May 2010 and a list of payments made during May 2010.
- b) In response to the fact that recent changes in Town Council membership had reduced the number of Members authorised to sign cheques and other payment instruments:

it was resolved unanimously that:

Councillors Chris Bonney and Steve Stubbings be added to the list of Members authorised to sign cheques and any other payment instruments.

115/10 ANNUAL ACCOUNTS

- a) The draft Annual Accounts for the financial year 2009/10 had been previously circulated

to Members.

It was resolved unanimously that:

the Annual Accounts as presented be adopted subject to the addition of a note of the current outstanding principal balances on the two outstanding loans.

Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Return were tabled for Members and after discussion:

it was resolved unanimously that:

the Mayor be authorised to sign sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Return.

116/10 ENTERTAINMENTS MANAGER

A Report of the Recruitment and Selection process for appointment to this post had been previously circulated to Members.

it was resolved unanimously that:

Simon Wheeler be appointed as the Winter Gardens' Entertainments Manager with immediate effect and that appropriate media releases be made by the Town Clerk.

117/10 TOWN MEETING MINUTES

Councillor Steve Stubbings introduced this item noting that no substantive response had been received to the request for further evidence or information in support of the allegations made at the Town Meeting in March. He acknowledged that lessons had been learned from the Town Meeting and that the Town Council was now moving forward positively.

It was unanimously resolved:

that no further action be taken at this time.

118/10 ADMINISTRATIVE MATTERS

- a) A report highlighting the consequences of under-resourcing of the administrative infrastructure of the Town Council's work had been previously circulated to members.
- b) In particular, it highlighted the absence of a printing/copying/scanning facility, the fact that the available computers were all standalone with neither shared access nor independent backup, the lack of a networked telephone system and lack of the essential stationery.
- c) After discussion:

it was unanimously resolved that:

- i. the report's recommendation to contract with the Isle of Wight Council's preferred supplier of office equipment, Sandham Office Services, for the supply of a Ricoh MPC2800 on a leased basis over a four-year term be implemented;
 - ii. the Town Clerk be authorised to enhance the existing IT facilities within the discretionary limit of £2,000;
 - iii. the Town Clerk be asked to explore options for an upgraded telephone system and report back to a future Town Council meeting.
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119/10 APPOINTMENT OF TOWN COUNCIL SOLICITOR

It was unanimously resolved:

that the Town Clerk explores arrangements for the formal appointment of solicitor to the Town Council and report back.

120/10 TOWN COUNCIL VACANCIES

- a) A previously circulated report for this meeting set out the current situation in each of the six current vacancies for Town Council Members.
 - d) It was noted that as there had been fewer than the required 10 requests for an election to the second Ventnor East vacancy, co-option would be necessary in this instance, and:
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it was unanimously resolved that:

the attached process for the co-option of a member in these circumstances be adopted and implemented with immediate effect to fill the second vacancy for a Ventnor East Member.

- e) Town Councillors stressed their absolute commitment to doing everything possible to provide for appointments to the remaining vacancies to be through an election.

121/10 PLANNING MATTERS

- a) P/00676/10: WESTFIELD HOLIDAY PARK, SHORE ROAD

Councillor David George said that the application was in his ward and he had been to visit the site. He found that the current lodges are planned to be replaced by multi-storey buildings and while wild life issues arise also the overriding problem is that although the overall numbers remain the same, the upgrading from 2-star to 4-star carries the risk that they become permanent buildings. The presented traffic survey is nearly six years old and was carried out in out of season time.

He said the development looks more like the building of seven new houses than holiday chalets and Shore Road is simply not fit for that purpose.

The Mayor added that although termed lodges they are actually two story houses

it was unanimously resolved:

that the application be opposed on the grounds that it represents massive overdevelopment

- b) P/00746/10: CO-OP, 13 PIER STREET:

After brief discussion and the recognition that this involved only the removal of the existing extraction plant and its replacement with another

it was unanimously resolved:

that the Town Council sees no reason to oppose this application.

- c) P/00687/10: CARSPER GARAGE, NEWPORT ROAD

During a brief discussion agreement emerged that the proposal will improve the area around it and, consequently:

it was unanimously resolved:

there is no reason to oppose to oppose this application.

- d) P/02364/02: LE VENESS APPEAL

It was noted that this matter is now the subject of a formal Appeal process that will include a Public Enquiry.

- e) P/01455/09: TRUMARTIN, WOLVERTON ROAD, APPEAL

Given that this proposed development would not be visible from the road, its refusal by the County Council on delegated powers on grounds that it is a conservation area was felt to be somewhat odd and that the appeal should be supported.

122/10 SPEED LIMITS

- a) Councillor David George introduced what he referred to as a discussion among Councillors about the possibility of securing a 20mph limit for the Town's central areas, recognising that it's not an easy process and takes both time and commitment.
 - b) He stressed the danger to pedestrians of current practice among both residents and visitors and the high cost of accidents to all involved with them and therefore the importance of entering discussions with Highways on the matter.
 - c) He referred to research showing a 50% chance of death after being hit by a vehicle at 30mph fell to 10% at 20mph.
 - d) Councillor Chris Welsford supported this approach, drawing attention in particular to the number of lorries passing through the Town.
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- e) Support also came from Councillor Steve Stubbings who suggested that the area be extended. Councillor Chris Bonney added that he agreed with the importance of slowing traffic but that raised crossings could achieve a similar outcome.
 - f) It was resolved that the matter be explored in discussions with Highways.
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123/10 FOOTPATH CLOSURES

Councillor Debby Robinson declared an interest at this point.

- a) Councillor Chris Welsford introduced the item explaining that the Isle of Wight Council have written to the resident whose wall is considered dangerous and in need of repair before the Kings Bay footpath can be opened to the public again.
- b) This is a situation that has been ongoing for several years and Councillor Welsford said that in his capacity as County Councillor he was attempting to move the matter on through the Cabinet Member responsible for Highways, Councillor Giles.
- c) He also reported that he was trying to find a way to have other footpaths reopened including the path between Ocean View Road and Belle Vue Road which is also closed due to a dispute between the Isle of Wight Council and a resident as well as Whale and Luccombe Chine, although the County Council are currently unable to reinstate either of these paths due to financial constraints.

It was unanimously resolved:
that the Town Clerk write to protest the closures.

124/10 MILITARY ROAD

- a) Councillor Chris Bonney introduced this item by reminding the meeting of the reasons he had invited the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (IWALC) to meet at the Winter Gardens and described the alternative proposals for the preservation of this vital feature of our tourist option set out by the key speaker to the meeting.
- b) The IWALC Meeting passed a number of relevant resolutions empowering its officers to make representations to the Isle of Wight Council to discuss those proposals.

It was unanimously resolved:
that Ventnor Town Council supports IWALC's decisions taken at their meeting.

125/10 COUNTY COUNCILLORS' REPORTS

- a) The Mayor invited County Councillor Susan Scoccia to report. She said she fully supported the Town Council's opposition to footpath closures and asked the Town Council to be aware of recent damage to one of the seats near Ventnor Park.
 - b) County Councillor Chris Welsford said that in addition to his ongoing discussions at County Hall on Highways matters he wanted to report on his involvement in current issues with the Central Hotel.
 - c) He further reported on the difficulties in securing improvement of the Tesco site until its planned demolition. Councillors Chris Bonney and David George both stressed how unacceptable it is that a company of Tesco's profitability should leave such a prominent building in such poor state.
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PUBLIC FORUM

- a) The Mayor re-opened the Public Forum
 - b) A member of the public commented on the significance of the Mayoral chain and the importance of it being worn at future meetings.
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- c) Another member commented that it may be useful to contact the health and safety executive in respect of the state of the Tesco building
 - d) The importance of being able to hear clearly what was being said by Town Councillors was stressed and acknowledged by the Council.
 - e) In response to further concern about footpath closures, Councillor Chris Bonney said that he intended to walk all the footpaths in his ward in the very near future.
 - f) It was suggested that cafes be approached to take leaflets on council meetings.
 - g) Robert Chuter returned to the matter of the Town Meeting minutes saying that it was unfortunate that the Town Councillors had not attended the meeting. Councillor Steve Stubbings was asked to read out the letter received by the Town Clerk in response to his request on the Council's behalf for further evidence or information relating to the allegations made during the meeting. The letter was read.
 - h) The Mayor suggested that at future meetings a further Public Forum of up to 15 minutes might be introduced advance of the Agenda item on planning applications.
- The meeting closed at 9pm.
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SIGNED BY THE MAYOR

DATE