



# MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

VENTNOR YOUTH CENTRE

7PM

8 AUGUST 2011

## MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillors: Steve Stubbings (Mayor), David George, Debby Robinson, Harry Rees, Carol Jones, Jim Morgan, Jim Toogood, Mark Robertson-Walker, Simon Haytack

## NO. SUBJECT

### PUBLIC FORUM

The Mayor opened the Public Forum with 12 members of the public present. County Councillors Susan Scoccia and Chris Welsford were also present.

- a) A member of the public expressed concerns about the graffiti and litter in Salisbury Gardens and the children's playground. Councillor Carol Jones responded commenting that she had been told that the area is being cleaned three times a week.
- b) A question was asked about the provision of disabled access to community transport.
- c) A suggestion that the subject of any confidential meetings of the Town Council be publicised was welcomed by the Mayor.
- d) The matter of the provision of allotments was raised and Councillor Debby Robinson said she was asking for it to be included on the Agenda of the next meeting.
- e) Dangerous traffic situations in Park Avenue were described and County Councillor Susan Scoccia said that the matter would be included in the review being conducted this autumn by the Isle of Wight Council.

The meeting commenced at 7.10 pm

### 127/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Russell Hall.

### 128/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Harry Rees declared a personal interest as Chair of the Ventnor Social Club.

### 129/11 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Town Council meetings of 11 July and 19 July 2011, having been previously circulated to Members, were taken as read.

The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting of 27 June 2011 were received.

### 130/11 MANDY BROWN, SERVICE MANAGER OF CRANSTON DRUG AGENCY

- a) The Mayor welcomed Mandy Brown to the meeting and invited her to discuss the work of the Agency with Members.
- b) Mandy stressed that the emphasis of the team's work was on drug users, not on the drugs themselves and that clients reached them through referral processes.
- c) She stated that anyone with an interest in the Agency's work would be welcome to visit the Centre. In response to a question from Councillor Debby Robinson she outlined the basis of the Agency's funding which came primarily from central government.
- d) Councillor Mark Robertson-Walker asked about hot spots of use on the Island and Mandy responded that Ventnor was no different from the Island's other urban areas and is also very

similar to those on the mainland.

- e) Councillor David George asked about the impact of the concept of a 'war on drugs' on a local drug agency such as Cranstoun. She said that heroin and cocaine usage is now declining with the rise of alternative substances that were more readily attainable.
  - f) She went on to say that decriminalisation in Portugal had apparently proved successful.
  - g) In response to Councillor Jim Toogood's question about success rates she said that Cranstoun's was currently around 60%, though it had to be borne in mind that as clients were on a referral basis they already had at least some level of commitment to be drug free.
  - h) She pointed out that satellite centres were run in major areas, including Ventnor, and a cocaine helpline is also available.
  - i) The Mayor thanked Mandy Brown for making her time available to provide an insight into the Agency's work.
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#### 131/11 FINANCE

- a) The Finance report for this meeting had been previously circulated to Members and included information on Bank Balances at 31 July 2011 and a list of payments made during July 2011.
  - b) An accompanying paper set out the related expenditure in relation to the Budget lines for the year to 31 July 2011 with variances from year to date budget provision.
  - c) Councillor Harry Rees pointed out that the overspend was more than covered by the allocations for contingency and reserves.
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#### 132/11 REVISED FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

Revised Financial Regulations based on the Model provided by the Society of Local Council Clerks (SLCC) and the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) had been previously circulated to Members

**It was unanimously resolved:**

That the revised Financial Regulations be adopted.

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#### 133/11 WAR MEMORIAL

- a) Councillor Harry Rees said he had been approached by the vice-Chair of the British Legion about the lack of a clear line of responsibility for the Town's War Memorial.
  - b) He asked that the issue be referred to the Agenda for the next meeting with further information being gathered meanwhile.
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#### 134/12 ISLE OF WIGHT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (IWALC)

- a) Councillor Harry Rees reported on his attendance at the latest IWALC meeting.
  - b) He explained IWALC's role and referred to recent Agenda items and said that he had been asked to lead on the changes to the Business Rate distribution and the risk that the Isle of Wight Council could lose a significant element of its current core funding as a consequence.
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#### 135/11 PUTTING GREEN

- a) The Town Clerk introduced a tabled paper reporting on the latest information available about the future of the Putting Green in Ventnor Park following the formal letter from the current operators stating their decision to end their role as operators of the Putting Green with effect from 2 October 2011 when it would close for the season.
  - b) He went on to explain that although there had been no detailed formal agreement from the Isle of Wight Council as the owner of the land since the 2005 season for the Town Council to operate the site, an email of 2009 from a senior Isle of Wight Council officer confirmed the
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continuation of existing arrangements for a further five years with a likelihood of extension ad infinitum.

- c) With the permission of the Mayor, County Councillor Susan Scoccia reminded the meeting of the importance of the current operators' development of the use of the Bandstand.

**It was unanimously resolved that:**

- i) Sue and Chris Cooper be formally thanked by the Town Council for their stewardship and enhancement of the Putting Green and surrounding facilities now much valued by both residents and visitors;
  - ii) the Town Clerk be authorised under delegated powers, working with Councillors Jim Toogood and Mark Robertson-Walker, to develop and deliver a recruitment process for new operators of the Putting Green, including its refreshment services and the use of the Bandstand; and
  - iii) the Town Clerk be asked to draft an appropriate agreement for the operation of the area for consideration at the 12 September 2011 meeting of the Town Council.
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**136/11 FIRST AID PROJECT**

- a) Councillor Jim Toogood reported on the Project's progress with praise for staff member Dave Gray and a team of eight volunteers.
  - b) He further reported that Dave Gray and seven others involved in the project had recently successfully completed a course in Beach Safety delivered by the Royal Life Saving Society (RLSS).
  - c) The Town Clerk reported that a draft lease had just been received from the Isle of Wight Council for the Town Council's use of the First Aid Hut and that in view of its complexity he had forwarded it to the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) legal service for comment.
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**137/11 WINTER GARDENS**

- a) The Mayor reported that following a full and helpful presentation from the Isle of Wight Council's Strategic Manager Assets, Barry Cooke, to a special meeting of the Town Council on 19 July 2011, Members had focused on the issue on which the current negotiations between the Isle of Wight Council and its preferred bidder had stalled.
- b) Specifically, he said, this had been over the length of time for which community use and access to the auditorium would be guaranteed, with the Hambrough Group drawing the line of legal commitment at 10 years and the Isle of Wight Council arguing for 20 years.
- c) He ended by reading the concluding Minute from the Town Council Meeting of 19 July 2011:

**It was resolved:**

following discussion based on the presentation from Barry Cooke, the Isle of Wight Council's Strategic Manager Assets, this Council does not view the 10 year limitation on guaranteed continuing community use or on 10 years provision of the auditorium as grounds for breaking off negotiations with the Hambrough Group.

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**138/11 VENTNOR CARNIVAL**

- a) The Mayor reported on the meeting he and the Town Clerk had with Carnival Committee officers in which a stronger working relationship was established.
- b) Councillor Harry Rees welcomed that and stressed how important the Carnival is to the Town.
- c) Councillor Debby Rees suggested that the Town Council engage in bucket collections identified through printed 'T' shirts.

**It was unanimously resolved:**

that the Town Council engage fully with the Carnival, adopt Councillor Debby Robinson's suggestion and allocate funding accordingly.

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Councillor Harry Rees left the meeting at this point.

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#### 139/11 MEMORIAL BENCHES

- a) The report on the number, location, condition and ownership of Ventnor's 130 benches, based on a survey conducted by the Assistant Town Clerk with support from Councillor Jason Mack, had been previously circulated to Members.
- b) Councillor David George stressed that these benches were obviously important to those who had arranged for their placement and should not simply be regarded as items of furniture.
- a) Councillor Jim Morgan questioned the responsibility for the 57 benches in the Ventnor Botanic Gardens.

**It was unanimously resolved:**

that further information and a planned maintenance programme be made available as soon as possible to a future meeting of the Town Council.

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#### 140/11 DOGS

- b) The Mayor reported on the recent Working Group meeting held recently on issues related to dogs and some of their owners.
  - c) He asked that, in the absence of a leading member of the Working Group, recommendations be presented to the next meeting of the Town Council.
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#### 141/11 SEAWEED

- a) The Mayor reported that five Town Council Members, the Town Clerk and both County Councillors met at County Hall last week with Director of Economy and Environment Stuart Love and Strategic Manager Highways and Transport Peter Hayward to discuss the threat to the Town posed by the rotting seaweed in the Haven.
- b) He reported on the development with the recent trial pumping operation and its actual and anticipated effectiveness.
- c) Councillor Jim Morgan said that he had been invited to meet again with Peter Hayward and would report back after that.
- d) The Mayor invited the County Councillors to comment on the present position.

**It was unanimously resolved:**

that the Isle of Wight Council be asked to provide information for visitors on the beach through appropriate signage.

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#### 142/11 COMMUNITY TRANSPORT

- a) Councillor Jim Morgan reported on progress with the scheme to provide a substitute for the No. 31 bus route following Wightbus's closure of it on 2 September.
- b) County Councillor Susan Scoccia's report on the situation of the scheme to replace the No. 6 Bus route had been previously circulated to Members with the papers for the meeting.
- c) Councillor Jim Morgan explained that of the 11 schemes being developed on the Island, five wanted to employ a Co-ordinator for the volunteer drivers with a proposal for funding the post be shared between the Town and Parish Councils for areas benefitting from the schemes.
- d) County Councillor Susan Scoccia explained that the Portfolio Holder was still being asked to agree that funding for the post be provided by the Isle of Wight Council but, if not the Town and Parish Councils contribution would do so.
- e) Councillor Jim Morgan outlined the proposals for the No 31 scheme that now had relevant approvals to run in three loops including Bonchurch, the Esplanade and the Botanic Gardens.

**It was resolved that the Town Council:**

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- i) provide banking support for the No. 6 scheme;
- ii) grant £250 towards the Co-ordinator post subject to agreement from the other three town and parish councils to do the same.
- iii) grant £200 to the support of the No 31 scheme.

**143/11 ISLAND WASTE COMMUNITY ADVISORY GROUP**

- a) Councillor Debby Robinson reported on her attendance at the latest meeting of the Island Waste Community Advisory Committee and plans for future collection of waste.
- b) From February 2012 the new arrangements will be in place. Wheelie bins will be issued to every household that can handle one; for those who can't clear bags will be supplied on request to take the same content. Both will be collected on a Week 1 basis.
- c) A black bag will also be issued to all households for residual items that will be collected on a week 2 basis.
- d) All kitchen waste will be collected weekly using larger green bins.

**144/11 TRAINING PROGRAMME**

The Town Clerk reminded Members that a 3-session training programme covering areas including the powers and responsibilities of Town and Parish Councils, the structures and processes of local government and the Code of Conduct had been arranged for the 10, 18 and 31 August from 7-9pm on each occasion. The Mayor stressed the importance of the programme to the Town Council's future work.

**PUBLIC FORUM**

The Mayor re-opened the Public Forum

- a) He began by responding to a request for clarification of the Town Council's decision in respect of the negotiations about the future the Winter Gardens.
- b) A member of the public commented on the unsatisfactory acoustics of this venue for Town Council meetings.

**145/11 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 whilst the next item is under discussion as it is of a confidential nature.

**146/11 FUTURE STAFFING**

- a) The Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk left the meeting at this point.
- e) The Mayor introduced the recommendations of the Staffing Committee as set out in the Minutes of its meeting of 2 August 2011.

**It was unanimously resolved that:**

- i) the Town Clerk and Assistant Town Clerk be offered further temporary contracts from 1 October 2011 to 31 May 2012 on existing terms and conditions; and
- ii) the staffing budget be increased by £4,250 as a consequence.

The Meeting closed at 9.30 pm

SIGNED BY THE MAYOR	DATE

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