



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

GREEN ROOM, SALISBURY GARDENS

7PM

8 JUNE 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillors: Jason Mack (Mayor), Leigh Geddes, Steve Stubbings, Brian Lucas, Tony Marvin, Ken Knapman, Ed Gouge, Stewart Blackmore, Jim Toogood, Delian Backhouse-Fry, Harry Rees.

NO. SUBJECT

PUBLIC FORUM

- a) The Mayor opened the Public Forum with 6 members of the public present.
- b) A member of the public asked why there had been no progress in reopening the Longdown Steps. Councillor Ed Gouge said he had raised the matter with Island Roads and been told that an Insurance claim was delaying reopening. The Mayor said he would raise the issue with the Island Roads' Steward who was attending the Public Buildings Working Group this week.
- c) Wendy Marshall said that the Ventnor sign on the Wroxall Road has been broken and asked if any progress was likely with the Gateway project. Councillor Leigh Geddes explained the difficulties of the Wroxall and Whitwell entrances.
- d) Reference was made to the problems with bunting this year and the Mayor said that the matter would be discussed at this week's meeting with the Ventnor Business Association.

72/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence as all Members were present.

73/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Steve Stubbings declared an interest as a Member of the Isle of Wight Council specifically in relation to Agenda item 8.

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) The Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 18 May 2015, having been previously circulated to Members, were taken as read.
- b) The Minutes of the Town Council's Planning Committee meeting of 27 May 2015 were noted.

75/15 FINANCE REPORT

- a) The Finance report for this meeting (50/15) had been previously circulated to Members and included information on Bank Balances at 31 May 2015 and a list of payments made during May 2015.
- b) An accompanying paper set out expenditure in relation to the Budget lines for the 2015/16 financial year to date with variances from year-to-date budget provision showing an overspend over the first two months of £3,829.
- c) It was noted that the Town Council was holding a total of £68,050 on behalf of the group working to retain the Methodist Church as a venue for the Boxing Club that is not included in the bank account totals above.

It was unanimously resolved that:
the Finance Report be accepted.

ANNUAL ACCOUNTS 2014/15

The Annual Accounts for 2014/15 on the new Income & Expenditure basis with Balance Sheet required by Town and Parish Councils whose revenue or receipts exceed £200,000 had been previously circulated to Members with Report 51/15 for this meeting.

It was unanimously resolved that:

The Annual Accounts for 2014/15 as presented be formally adopted.

77/15 ANNUAL RETURN 2014/15

- a) The Annual Return for 2014/15 the Town Council, required to be submitted by 6 July 2015, had been previously circulated to Members with report 52/15 for this meeting.
- b) The Clerk was asked to thank Gareth Hughes for his assistance with the Annual Return.

It was proposed by Councillor Steve Stubbings and Seconded by Councillor Leigh Geddes and unanimously resolved that:

the Annual Return for the financial year 2014/15 be accepted as presented and the Mayor be authorised to sign Sections 1 and 2 accordingly.

78/15 SALISBURY GARDENS

- a) Report 53/15 summarised developments in the Town Council's Salisbury Gardens project since the last meeting in regard to: receipts & payments since 1 October 2014, the relocation of the Shanklin and Ventnor Safer Neighbourhoods Team, changes in car parking arrangements, new signage, Green Room use and an IT Upgrade.
 - b) Councillor Harry Rees commented that both the Town Council and the Town could be proud of the achievement in developing a sustainable future for the building.
 - c) Councillor Stewart Blackmore asked if the upgraded IT facility could incorporate a network for Town Councillors and the Clerk said that he would report further on that soon.
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79/15 HEALTH & WELLBEING: LOCALITY WORKING

- a) The outcome of the Town Council's contribution to the consultation on the Isle of Wight Council's draft Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2015/18 and the case presented to the Deputy Director of Public Health for direct Town Council engagement with the South Locality Team were recorded in Report 53/15.
 - b) Councillor Harry Rees said that it was important for the Local Economic Partnership (LEP) to be aware of the Strategy and that the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (IWALC) should be involved in the discussion around the engagement of Town and Parish Councils with the emerging Locality Working.
 - c) Councillor Steve Stubbings said the Town Council's initiative in this area was a demonstration of how committed it is in accepting responsibilities of this nature and that it should continue on this path.
 - d) Councillor Leigh Geddes reminded the meeting that the Town Council had resolved to continue this engagement on its own if necessary and Councillor Tony Marvin stressed the importance of the Town Council being in a position to respond and react on an ongoing basis to the developments in the professional delivery of health and wellbeing services.
 - e) The Mayor stated that a Ventnor Town Council representative within the Locality Team would of course report routinely to the other 12 Town and Parish Councils in the South Wight Locality.
 - f) It was agreed that the Clerk would write to the Chair of IWALC with a copy of the case that the Town Council had submitted to the Deputy Director of Public Health and a request that IWALC take an appropriate role in the ongoing discussions.
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80/15 VENTNOR CENTRAL

- a) Report 55/15 for this meeting included information on the receipts and expenditure involved in the Town Council's management of the building since 1 October 2014 and the numbers of bookings that had resulted.
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- b) Councillor Harry Rees said that the costs of making the building fit for future purposes were too great for the Town Council to carry and that he thought other options should be considered.
 - c) Councillor Leigh Geddes referred to the need of the Library to find a new home that was nearer town and summarised the very real concerns about the falling numbers using this essential facility driven in part by the appalling state of the current building and the absence of parking.
 - d) Councillor Stewart Blackmore said he agreed with Councillor Leigh Geddes and that it was important to preserve another iconic building with potential for significant contribution to local community life.
 - e) Councillor Steve Stubbings said that there is still a long way to go in negotiations with the Isle of Wight Council about both the Library and Ventnor Central and that he was confident the Town Council's approach would be received sympathetically.
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81/15 CAR PARKS

- a) The Town Clerk reported that a start date of 1 August 2015 for the Town Council's management of the Dudley Road, Market Street, Pound Lane and Shore Road car parks had been agreed with the Isle of Wight Council's Alex Minns and Sean Newton at a meeting on 3 June.
- b) The Clerk drew attention to the rent arrangements for the car parks and the officer agreement to an annual settlement and related payments.
- c) Discussion centred on the potential for the creative use of permits for residents and businesses.

It was unanimously resolved that:

- i) the Public Buildings Working Group be asked to bring forward recommendations about the use of permits to the 13 July meeting of the Town Council;
 - ii) responsibility for the operational management of the four car parks be delegated to the Town Clerk advised by the Public Buildings Working Group; and
 - iii) the Town Clerk be requested to report to the Town Council on a quarterly basis on developments.
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82/15 CHILDREN IN POVERTY

- a) Councillor Stewart Blackmore introduced this item stating that Town and Parish Councils need to be very aware of the findings behind the recent publicity on this matter as poverty affects every aspect of children's lives including restricted opportunities to break out of the deprivation spiral.
 - b) He went on to point out that existing and proposed changes in the benefits system are bound to exacerbate this situation.
 - c) Councillor Tony Marvin responded that Councillor Stewart Blackmore had highlighted the importance of some of the things the Town Council is already doing such as the Youth Offer and improving the appearance of the town.
 - d) Councillor Delian Backhouse-Fry said that Ventnor has always had people in poverty with poor private sector provided housing a significant contributory factor.
 - e) Councillor Steve Stubbings, commenting that he now Chairs the Health and Wellbeing Board, said that there will be a rigorous study of private landlord provision in the near future. He added that Child poverty to the extent it exists on the Island is abhorrent and that the current administration will work with anyone to address it.
 - f) Councillor Stewart Blackmore drew attention to the proposed introduction of the right to buy to Housing Association properties and the increased pressure that will put on principal authorities for housing their populations with the waiting list for social housing on the Island already in excess of 6,000.
 - g) Councillor Ken Knapman KN said that the Isle of Wight Council does not have the resources to deal with the challenges precipitated by the austerity programme and while the Town
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Council can only alleviate some of aspects of issues it essential to continue doing whatever it can.

- h) Councillor Brian Lucas commented that as education and employment were two of the major routes out of poverty he hoped that the Town Council would be able to develop a closer working relationship with the town's two schools and do whatever it could to support local business development.

83/15 ISLE OF WIGHT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (IWALC)

- a) Councillor Harry Rees reported on the latest developments within IWALC and his contribution to them as the Town Council's representative.
- b) He said he was pleased that the Isle of Wight Council had responded positively to IWALC's request for more effective communication in its appointment of a dedicated officer to liaise with Town and Parish Councils.
- c) It was also good to know that Island Businesses had now received a total of £781k in external funding, creating 162 additional jobs. but also disappointing that the Leader funding the Island had benefitted from over several years had now been withdrawn.
- d) He welcomed the presentation the Isle of Wight Council's Managing Director had made to the recent IWALC meeting and that the slides from it would be available for circulation soon.

84/15 TOWN CLERKS' REPORT

- a) The Town Clerks report – 57/15 – recorded recent activity which did not require Town Council decisions.
- b) It included sections on Memorial Benches, the Town Centre troughs and baskets, the First Aid Course, the meeting with the Upper Ventnor Community Association and the Youth Offer.

PUBLIC FORUM

- a) The Chair re-opened the Public Forum.
- b) Stuart George asked how the Town Council would comply with the limitation on the use of income from car park operations.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.45PM

SIGNED BY THE MAYOR	DATE