



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

ST MARGARET'S HALL

7PM

8 SEPTEMBER 2014

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillors: Leigh Geddes (Deputy Mayor), Steve Stubbings, Stewart Blackmore, Brian Lucas, Tony Marvin, Harry Rees.

NO. SUBJECT

PUBLIC FORUM

- a) In the absence of the Mayor, the Deputy Major took the Chair for the meeting which she opened with 7 members of the public present.
- b) Maureen Cawley asked the Town Council to do everything possible to ensure that Flowersbrook continued to be properly maintained in spite of the Isle of Wight Council's decision to end its funding of Grounds Maintenance. The Clerk assured the meeting that detailed consideration was being given to the consequences of that decision and that the work Ventnor Enhancement Fund had done to reclaim the area would be protected.
- c) Maureen Cawley went on to say that she had been sorry to hear of the resignation of Terry Gibbs and hoped that another representative of St Lawrence would be in place soon, The Clerk commented that the notice about the action needed to call a by-election had been posted.
- d) Richard Downing said that there was real value in leaving some areas of grassland uncut for the benefit of wildlife and that each should be assessed individually.

120/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ken Knapman, Ed Gouge, Jim Toogood and Jason Mack.

121/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Steve Stubbings declared an interest as a County Councillor in items 9,10 and 11 and said that he would not have any involvement in decisions about them.

Councillor Harry Rees declared an interest as Chair of Ventnor Social Club.

122/14 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) The Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 11 August 2014, having been previously circulated to Members, were taken as read.
- b) The Minutes of the Town Council's Planning Committee meeting of 12 August and 1 September 2014 were received.

123/14 FINANCE REPORT

- a) The Finance report for this meeting (67/14) had been previously circulated to Members and included information on Bank Balances at 31 August 2014. a list of payments made during August 2014 and a Bank Summary sheet.
- b) An accompanying paper set out expenditure in relation to the Budget lines for the 2014/15 financial year to date with variances from year-to-date budget provision showing an underspend over the first five months of 2014/15 of £2,134 against Budget.
- c) It was noted that the increased level of spend in August, £74,908, reflected the payment of the third invoice from D N Associates Ltd for their work on Salisbury Gardens in a total of £56,575 including £9,429 reclaimable VAT.

-
- d) It was also 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.

124/14 ANNUAL RETURN

- a) The Annual Return for the financial year 2013/14, signed off without qualification by the Town Council's External Auditor BDO LLP, had been previously circulated to Members.
- b) The Auditor identified two minor issues and asked that they be reported to the Town Council and they were identified in Report 68/14 for this meeting together with responses to them.

It was unanimously resolved that:
the signing off of the Annual Return be noted and that sections 1-3 be displayed on the main Noticeboard as required by statute.

125/14 SALISBURY GARDENS

- a) Report 69/14 summarised developments since the last meeting in respect of the refurbishment programme.
- b) In the absence of Councillor Jim Toogood the Clerk reported that the building works programme is progressing with the roof fascia boards having been repaired and repainted, the roof checked and gutters cleared enabling the scaffolding to be removed in the coming week.
- c) He also reported that the internal decoration is now well underway.
- d) The Report also included references to the previously circulated latest draft of the lease for the building from the Isle of Wight Council and an Underlease for use with the Town Council's tenants prepared by its Solicitor.
- e) The Chair said that she was delighted at the progress and the already high level of tenancies agreed for the building.

It was unanimously resolved that the Town Council:

- i) authorises the Mayor to sign the Lease for Salisbury Gardens from the Isle of Wight Council subject to the Public Buildings Working Group being satisfied with the resolution of the matters identified in the letter on the subject from its Solicitor dated 5 September 2015; and
- ii) adopts the Underlease for its relationships with its tenants as circulated to Members on 5 September 2015.
-

126/14 YOUTH CENTRE

- a) Report 70/14 for this meeting summarised the discussions with the Isle of Wight Council about the future of the Youth Centre following its closure on 30 September.
- b) The draft Tenancy at Will, as the basis for the Town Council taking responsibility for the building's future management on or before that date, had been previously circulated to Members.
- c) Councillor Brian Lucas said that Public Buildings Working Group members had visited the building recently and judged it to be a tremendous resource offering massive opportunities for the town.
- d) Councillor Steve Stubbings said that he endorsed Councillor Brian Lucas's comments and noted how well its management by the Town Council would dovetail with Youth Offer project.
- e) The question of whether business rates should apply to the building in view of the nature of its function was raised and the Clerk said that would be properly investigated.
-
-

It was unanimously resolved that the Town Council:

authorises the signature of the Tenancy at Will and accepts responsibility for the future management of the Ventnor Youth Centre within its terms.

127/14 OUR PLACE! PROGRAMME

- a) The developments with the Our Place programme since the August Town Council meeting were summarised in Report 71/14 for this meeting.
 - b) Councillor Brian Lucas commented on the invaluable contribution to this work of our Economic Development Officer Nicky Cox's expertise: it was very obvious and much appreciated. His comments were endorsed by the Chair.
 - c) Councillor Steve Stubbings commented on the high level of Agency staff that had committed to contributing to the programme's Seminars that was very welcome indeed.
-

128/14 BEACH CLEANING

- a) Report 72/14 summarised the choices set out in a letter from the Isle of Wight Council's Recreation, Leisure and Public Spaces Service for the future funding of beach cleaning from 1 April 2015 when the Isle of Wight Council's funding for it will cease.
- b) Councillor Harry Rees referred to the involvement in seeking a resolution to this issue of the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (IWALC).
- c) Councillor Stewart Blackmore said that he understood that both Newport and Brading had already agreed to contribute to the Island wide solution.
- d) Councillor Tony Marvin said that to be sure of achieving the standards the town needed it might be necessary to make our own arrangements, though he recognised there would be a value in an effective Island-wide contract.

It was unanimously resolved that the Town Council:

recognising that the Isle of Wight Council has requested decisions by the end of October, it asks its Public Buildings Working Group to consider the matter in more detail and report to its meeting of 13 October.

129/14 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

- a) Report 73/14 summarised the choices set out in a letter from the Isle of Wight Council's Recreation, Leisure and Public Spaces Service for the future funding of grounds maintenance from 1 April 2015 when the Isle of Wight Council's funding for it will cease.
- b) Councillor Brian Lucas suggested that the possibility of securing sponsorship by hotels and others for some areas could be explored.

It was unanimously resolved that:

recognising that the Isle of Wight Council has requested decisions by the end of October, it asks its Public Buildings Working Group to consider the matter in more detail and report to its meeting of 13 October.

130/14 ENVIRONMENT OFFICERS

- a) The options for funding an additional Environmental Officer Post beyond the 3.5 to which the budgets cuts would reduce the service to from its current 7.5 level were set out in the letter from Isle of Wight Council's Recreation, Leisure and Public Spaces Service.
 - b) Councillor Harry Rees said that although the Town Council is committed to working with the Isle of Wight Council on the issues confronting them, this was confined to matters of infrastructure and not staff. He urged the Island's Member of Parliament to campaign actively within government about funding allocations in view of the unacknowledged fact that the Island's Council faces increased costs of 6% simply by being an Island.
 - c) The Chair commented that the services listed as being lost by the proposed cuts in the Environment Officer staffing levels will have serious impacts on the Island.
-

-
- d) It was agreed to await further information from Councillor Harry Rees following his attendance at the forthcoming discussion of it at the next meeting of the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils.
-

131/14 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

Following a review of the Town Council's Health and Safety Policy, a revised draft had been previously circulated for Members' consideration.

It was unanimously resolved that the Town Council:
adopts the circulated draft as its Health and Safety Policy.

132/14 STAFF APPOINTMENTS

Arrangements for the recruitment and selection to the three posts of Youth Opportunities Officer, Sessional Youth Worker and Apprenticeship in Business Administration previously approved by the Town Council were set out in Report 76/14.

133/14 TOWN CLERKS' REPORT

- a) The Town Clerks report – 77/14 – recorded recent activity which did not require Town Council decisions.
- b) It included the resignation of Terry Gibbs as a St Lawrence Town Councillor and the by-election arrangements, the letter to the Coastal Communities Minister, the first meeting of the partners in the Youth Offer project and the latest meetings of the Public Buildings and Community Development Working Groups.
- c) The Clerk confirmed that no response had yet been received to its letter to the Coastal Communities Minister in respect of the Undercliff landslip.
-

134/14 ISLE OF WIGHT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (IWALC)

- a) Councillor Harry Rees reported that IWALC had had a response from the Solent LEP in response to questions about limited Assisted Area Status and that it had not supported the full Island application.
- b) He said that the maximum grant available as a consequence to Island businesses would be 10-15% but could have been in the 50-60% range.
-

PUBLIC FORUM

The Chair re-opened the Public Forum.

- a) Wendy Marshall commented on the problems Environment Officers faced in enforcement in respect of dog fouling offences even when offenders are known.
- b) Maureen Cawley shared her concern that in the past the Youth Centre had not been open in school holidays.
-

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.15PM

SIGNED BY THE MAYOR	DATE
<hr/>	<hr/>
<hr/>	<hr/>
