



# MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

ST MARGARET'S HALL

7PM

13 OCTOBER 2014

## MEMBERS PRESENT

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

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## NO. SUBJECT

### PUBLIC FORUM

A member of the public asked whether the option to allow some of the grounds maintenance areas to grow free was still under consideration. The Mayor said this would be addressed during the Agenda item.

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### 135/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stewart Blackmore.

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### 136/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Steve Stubbings declared an interest as a County Councillor in Agenda 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.

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### 137/14 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) The Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 8 September 2014, having been previously circulated to Members, were taken as read.
- b) The Minutes of the Town Council's Planning Committee meeting of 22 September were received.

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### 138/14 FINANCE REPORT

- a) The Finance report for this meeting (78/14) had been previously circulated to Members and included information on Bank Balances at 30 September 2014 and a list of payments made during September 2014.
- 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 six months of 2014/15 of £2,417 against Budget.
- c) It was noted that the increased level of spend in September of £88,622, reflected the payment of the fourth invoice from D N Associates Ltd for their work on Salisbury Gardens in a total of £62,497 including £10,416 reclaimable VAT and the 50% stage payment to Navigate IT of £9,197 including £1,533 of 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.

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### 139/14 CO-OPTION TO VACANCY

- a) The recent resignation of a Member for the St Lawrence ward had triggered a by-election notice by the Isle of Wight Council that failed to attract the necessary requests for one to be

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held. Consequently, the Town Council has an obligation to seek to fill the vacancy by co-option.

- b) Councillor Ed Gouge expressed disappointment that a by-election had not been requested.

**It was unanimously resolved that:**

- i) the Town Council's process for co-option be implemented as outlined in Report 79/14 for this meeting; and
  - ii) the Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Councillors Toogood, Rees, Knapman and Lucas be appointed as the group to interview those expressing an interest in taking up the vacancy.
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**140/14 SALISBURY GARDENS**

- a) It was noted and welcomed that the lease of the building from the Isle of Wight Council had been signed by both parties with an effective date of 1 October 2014 and an initial term of 26 years with an option to renew for a further 25 years.
- b) Report 80/14 summarised developments since the last meeting in respect of the refurbishment programme. Councillor Jim Toogood reported that the building works were progressing well.
- c) Councillor Rees said that the whole project was already an unqualified success and he hoped the request for additional rent free years would be progressed and Councillor Steve Stubbings said that he would take it forward and report back to the next meeting.

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

- i) authorises the Town Clerk, Community Development Officer and the Community Development Working Group to proceed with preparations for a celebration event for the return of the building to the town on 17 January 2015 with a budget of £500.
  - ii) agrees to brand the community area of the Lower Ground Floor as *The Green Room*.
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**141/14 YOUTH SERVICE**

- a) The Mayor introduced this item by outlining the grant application to the Youth Offer programme and the appointment of staff involved in the proposals for extending youth opportunities in the town by working with three partner agencies.
- b) Report 81/14 for this meeting recorded that the Tenancy at Will for the Town Council to take on the management of the Youth Centre had been signed in time for that to be effective from 1 October following its closure by the Isle of Wight Council on 30 September.
- c) The Community Development Working Group has started discussions on its development.
- d) The appointments of Charlotte Denness to the post of Sessional Youth Worker and Laura Reid as Youth Opportunities Officer within the Youth Offer funding provided by the Isle of Wight Council were welcomed.

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

accepts the recommendation of its Community Development Working Group to re-designate the building as Ventnor Central.

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**142/14 OUR PLACE! PROGRAMME**

- a) The developments with the Our Place programme since the September Town Council meeting were summarised in Report 82/14 for this meeting.
  - b) The news that the Town Council's proposals for *Breaking New Ground* had been accepted and came with an additional £13,000 funding allocation to progress them was particularly welcomed.
  - c) Councillor Rees said he couldn't stress enough how important the proposal to develop a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Ventnor was and that was endorsed by Councillor Ken Knapman pointing out its importance for the Town Council's present and future development.
  - d) The Mayor commented on the encouraging tangible outcomes from the work of the Vision
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Groups involved with the project.

- e) Councillor Steve Stubbings asked that the Town Council's thanks be recorded to the Clerk and Economic Development Officer in achieving inclusion among the 20 areas nationally that had been accepted for the Breaking New Ground stage of the programme.
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#### 143/14 BEACH CLEANING

- a) The Mayor introduced this item, referring to Report 83/14 that summarised the work done by the Public Buildings Working Group as requested by the Town Council Meeting of 8 September to examine the options 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 Brian Lucas said that although it had been hoped that an Island-wide solution would be supported by all Town and Parish Council he nevertheless welcomed the control Option D would give us over standards.
- c) Councillor Ken Knapman expressed disappointment that too few Town and Parish Councils were prepared to support an Island wide response but said that it was clear that Ventnor residents would not accept their beaches would not be cleaned.
- d) Councillor Harry Rees referred to the information supplied by IWALC from its consultation with its Members and said he would report further as other Councils made their decisions.
- e) Councillor Leigh Geddes said that she supported the Public Buildings Working Group's recommendation.
- f) The Options as set out by the Isle of Wight Council with their request to return the Town Council's choice by the end of October were attached to the Report.

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

accepts the unanimous recommendation of its Public Buildings Working Group to choose Option D and that a request be made to the Isle of Wight Council for a contribution to the cost reflecting its statutory responsibility for keeping the beaches clear of litter.

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#### 144/14 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

- a) Report 83/14 summarised the work done by the Public Buildings Working Group as requested by the Town Council Meeting of 8 September to examine the options 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) The Options as set out by the Isle of Wight Council with their request to return the Town Council's choice by the end of October were attached to the Report.
- c) Also attached were the current contract costs of maintaining the 18 identified areas the Isle of Wight Council will no longer fund after 31 March 2015.
- d) Councillor Brian Lucas responded to the question asked in the Public Forum by describing the inspection process of the areas by three Members and outlining the approach they were recommending at this stage.
- e) Councillor Tony Marvin asked Councillor Steve Stubbings about the relevance of the decision of last week's Executive to put some larger areas out to contract. Councillor Steve Stubbings said that this would have no significance for the areas for which the Town Council would become responsible for grounds maintenance.
- f) Councillor Rees reminded the meeting that there would be a management cost for both the Beach Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance to be funded by the Town Council if the services are taken on by it.

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

- i) accepts the unanimous recommendation of its Public Buildings Working Group to choose Option D and to authorise the Group to continue discussions with Ventnor Botanic Garden
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- about the future management of the Cascades; and
- ii) asks its Clerk to bring more detailed costings for both Beach Cleaning and Grounds Maintenance to a future meeting.
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#### 145/14 ENVIRONMENT OFFICERS

- a) The options for funding an additional Environmental Officer Post beyond the 3.5 to which the budget 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 drew attention to the possible benefit to local businesses of these services and the significance of contributions from them for maintaining important services.
- c) Councillor Tony Marvin pointed to academic studies showing the direct relationship between environmental decline and crime.

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

accepts the unanimous recommendation of its Public Buildings Working Group not to support the proposal to part fund an additional Environment Officer post.

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#### 146/14 NAVITUS BAY

- a) Councillor Ed Gouge reported on the latest developments with the Planning Application for this project that will be dealt with directly by an Inspector who will arrange for a consultation process for which the Town Council has reserved its position in respect of the opportunity to submit written comments.
- b) Councillor Ken Knapman said that Trade Unions were concerned that the Island was not being currently considered for the operations and management port.
- c) Councillor Steve Stubbings thanked Councillor Ed Gouge for his thorough and balanced report and informed the meeting that the Isle of Wight Council were broadly supportive of the project and stressed the importance of keeping an open mind in view of the economic challenges facing the Island.

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

- i) supports the project in principal subject to the matters identified sections 3-6 of Councillor Ed Gouge's report to this meeting being fully explored and assessed; and
  - ii) encourages the development of an Island site for the operations and management port.
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#### 147/14 ISLE OF WIGHT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (IWALC)

- a) Councillor Harry Rees reported that the response from the Solent Local Economic Partnership to IWALC's concerns about how it had represented the Island during the Assisted Area Status consultation had included a meeting to discuss the issues involved.
  - b) He said that he is now preparing a report for IWALC to present to the Isle of Wight Council on the issue.
  - c) He added that IWALC are to receive a visit on 20 November from the Isle of Wight Council's Managing Director Dave Burbage to discuss the Budget.
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#### 148/14 TOWN CLERKS' REPORT

- a) The Town Clerks report – 86/14 – recorded recent activity which did not require Town Council decisions.
  - b) It included the appointment of Florence Barrett to the new post of Apprentice in Business Administration, the visit from the Department of Communities and Local Government's James Kingston, the move of the Town Council's offices to the south side of the ground floor of Salisbury Gardens, the latest meeting with the Committee of the Upper Ventnor Community Association and the visit from IWALC Secretary Gill Jolliff.
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#### • PUBLIC FORUM

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- a) The Chair re-opened the Public Forum
  - b) Wendy Marshall thanked the Council for making direct contact with the actual beach cleaners in preparing their response to the changes in funding.
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**149/14 EXCLUSION OF PRESS & PUBLIC**

In view of the confidential nature of the following items:

**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.

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**THE MEETING CLOSED AT 9.15PM**

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SIGNED BY THE MAYOR	DATE