



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

ST MARGARET'S HALL

7PM

8 DECEMBER 2014

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

NO. SUBJECT

The Mayor welcomed Councillor Delian Backhouse-Fry to her first Town Council Meeting as a representative of the St Lawrence Ward.

PUBLIC FORUM

- a) The Mayor opened the Public Forum with 5 members of the public present.
- b) A member of the public asked about the best contact with Island Road for her neighbour to ask for assistance and she was advised to refer her neighbour to the Assistant Town Clerk.

164/14 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Stewart Blackmore and Jim Toogood.

165/14 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Steve Stubbings declared an interest as a County Councillor and specifically in relation to items 9 and 10.

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

166/14 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) The Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 10 November 2014, having been previously circulated to Members, were taken as read.
- b) The Minutes of the Town Council's Planning Committee meeting of 11 November were received.

167/14 FINANCE REPORT

- a) The Finance report for this meeting (99/14) had been previously circulated to Members and included information on Bank Balances at 30 November 2014 and a list of payments made during November 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 eight months of 2014/15 of £14,261 against Budget.
- c) It was noted that the payments in November of £40,896 included the payment of the fifth invoice from D N Associates Ltd for their work on Salisbury Gardens in a total of £16,633 including £2,772 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.
- e) A proposal from Councillor Brian Lucas to commit the sum of £420 for repairs to the electrics in the Putting Green Kiosk to ensure their safety was discussed.
- f) Councillor Harry Rees asked if that would secure the issue of a safety certificate and Councillor Brian Lucas assured him that it would.

It was unanimously resolved that:

- i) the Finance Report be accepted; and
 - ii) an amount of £420 be paid from the Budget's Contingency line to cover necessary changes to the electrical arrangements at the Putting Green's refreshment kiosk
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168/14 OUR PLACE

- a) The developments with the Our Place programme since the October Town Council meeting were summarised in Report 100/14 for this meeting.
 - b) The draft of the town's Operational Plan had been submitted as required by the programme on 21 November and was used as one of the Case Studies at the Peer Review Challenge meeting in London on Thursday 4 December.
 - c) The Mayor reported on his and Nicky Cox's attendance at that meeting. He commented on the variety of the programmes presented and was pleased to report that Ventnor's was seen as one of the more ambitious and best thought through.
 - d) It was noted that the Town Council had received on 1 December the £6,000 funding for the Going Further stage of the programme and £12,000 for its Breaking New Ground stage.
 - e) The visit of Professor Steve Fothergill of Sheffield Hallam University to share his knowledge of the challenges facing Coastal Towns as one of our programme consultants on 5 February was welcomed by Councillor Harry Rees.
 - f) Councillor Steve Stubbings said how much he appreciated the work the Mayor had put into this programme in bringing it into such a strong position on behalf of the town.
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169/14 SALISBURY GARDENS

- a) Report 101/14 for this meeting provided an update on developments with the refurbishment programme.
 - b) The building works were completed on Friday 5 December leaving the decorating and carpeting of the lower ground floor as the only significant works left to complete.
 - c) It was noted that another tenant had moved in and that two more are due to do so in the first week of January, leaving only two of the building's 18 offices untenanted.
 - d) Arrangements for the event planned for Saturday 17 January to celebrate the building's return to the town were welcomed.
 - e) Thanks were expressed to Councillor Jim Toogood and team for the work involved in the development.
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170/14 VENTNOR CENTRAL

- a) The current level of bookings for the building's use together with progress with the necessary Fire Risk Assessment were covered in Report 102/14.
 - b) Discussions with the Isle of Wight Council about the future development of the building were reported as being due to re-start in the following week.
 - c) Councillor Harry Rees asked whether there was a Plan B if the currently proposed development of the building did not proceed; the Mayor said the future of the building would be considered at next week's meeting of the Public Buildings Working Group.
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171/14 CAR PARKS

- a) The Mayor reported on the latest meeting with IoWC's Strategic Manager for Recreation, Leisure and Public Spaces Alex Minns, his deputy Sean Newton, Head of Economy John Metcalfe and Sonia Cooper and Jennie Harris from the IoWC's Legal team on 18 November.
 - b) The meeting was highly positive with agreement that draft Heads of Terms would be drawn up for discussion by the Town Council with a view to progressing to the signing of four leases in time for the transfer of management responsibility for them by 1 March 2015.
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- c) Details of the agreement reached at the meeting are set out in Report 103/14.
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172/14 ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL 2015/16 BUDGET

- a) The current consultation by the Isle of Wight Council about its need to secure £13.5M of savings in its 2015/16 Budget was discussed in detail assisted by Town Clerk's introduction of Report 104/14 and the slides from the Managing Director's presentation to the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (IWALC).
- b) Councillor Brian Lucas thanked the Clerk for a detailed analysis of serious issues and said that the reason few people turned up to the consultation events was because they saw no option. He went on to express his fear that there would be a transfer of the Isle of Wight Council's responsibilities to Hampshire County Council.
- c) Councillor Rees referred to the potential seriousness of the end of the interim Managing Director's contract in April next year and questioned what the situation would be. He went on to say that it had been demonstrated by an earlier Cooper & Lybrand's study that the Island incurred 6% extra costs by virtue of being an Island.
- d) Councillor Ed Gouge said that the numbers no longer add up and the writing was on the wall for a move to a purely commissioning function.
- e) Councillor Ken Knapman referred to the role of the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (IWALC) in addressing these issues and the importance of developing mechanisms for engagement with the wider issues.
- f) Councillor Tony Marvin drew attention to paragraph 7(d) of the Clerk's report, stressing the value of more developed partnership working between the Isle of Wight Council and those Town and Parish Councils that have already engaged positively with service devolution.
- g) Councillor Steve Stubbings said that he believed that the contribution of Town and Parish Councils to the budget issues was significant. He said that as Deputy Leader of the Isle of Wight Council he would welcome closer involvement with those Town and Parish Council as a valuable contribution to its work.
- h) He said that succession planning in relation to the Managing Director's post was underway and that he was in no doubt that a balanced budget would be delivered for 2015/16.

It was resolved that the Town Council:

- i) will continue constructive discussions with the Isle of Wight Council to address the challenges it faces in achieving a balanced budget; and
 - ii) offers to engage more directly with the Isle of Wight Council to explore the wider issues raised in Report 104/14.
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173/14 WINTER GARDENS

- a) Report 105/14 summarised the basis for the Isle of Wight Council's decision that it was unable to exercise its option to buy the site back as set out in the report to its Property Disposals Sub-committee meeting of 9 December.
- b) It was noted that the option ceased to apply from 9 January 2015.

It was unanimously resolved that the Town Council:

acknowledges the Isle of Wight Council's situation in respect of the Winter Gardens and asks that all the conditions of the original agreement, specifically those relating to community use of the building, are strictly enforced.

174/14 COUNCIL MEETINGS IN 2015

Potential dates for meetings of the Town Council were listed in Report 106/14.

It was unanimously resolved that the Town Council:

adopts the dates in the report and agrees to meet at St Margaret's Hall for the first three meetings.

175/14 RADAR STATION PORTRAIT

- a) The Mayor proposed that the Radar Station Portrait currently displayed in the Ventnor
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British Legion during the office changes at Salisbury Gardens should be should be given to them on a permanent loan basis.

- b) He confirmed that the Legion would welcome such a move.

It was unanimously resolved that the Town Council:

agrees to donate the portrait to the Ventnor British Legion on a permanent loan basis.

176/14 BOXING CLUB

- a) As requested at the November meeting, Councillor Brian Lucas had submitted a short written report on the current situation in negotiations about the potential purchase of the Methodist Church to secure it as the venue for the town's Boxing Club.
- b) He introduced the Report, identifying significant hurdles in the way of completing the purchase, while noting that local Methodists were keen to see the building retained for community use.
- c) He identified the fact that 25 local people have contributed the funds for the purchase and that it would be necessary to achieve completion within the first few months of 2015.
- d) Councillor Ken Knapman led a unanimous statement of appreciation for Councillor Brian Lucas's work on this matter.

177/14 ISLE OF WIGHT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (IWALC)

- a) Councillor Harry Rees outlined the current arrangements for the 39 Local Economic Partnerships and focused on their lack of accountability. He said their structures did not allow them to qualify for receipt of European funding without accepting structural changes.
- b) He argued that the Solent LEP had misrepresented the Island in discussions about Assisted Area Status and pointed out that the Island only has two representatives on it.

TOWN CLERKS' REPORT

- 178/14** a) The Town Clerks report – 107/14 – recorded recent activity which did not require Town Council decisions.
- b) It included the appointment the Town Council's next Community Development Officer, Tony McCarthy, the Mayor's letter to the Coastal Communities Minister, the latest meetings of the two Working Groups and the change in office phone numbers.

PUBLIC FORUM

- a) The Chair re-opened the Public Forum.
- b) Evelyn Knowles asked if the Our Place Vision Group members would have the opportunity to meet with the consultants engaged to contribute to the Operational Plan when they came to Ventnor and the Clerk assured her that would be the case.

THE MEETING CLOSED AT 9.10 PM

SIGNED BY THE MAYOR	DATE