



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

ST FRANCIS SCHOOL, LOWER SITE

7PM

9 JANUARY 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

NO. SUBJECT

PUBLIC FORUM

- a) The Mayor opened the Public Forum with 12 members of the public present. County Councillor Chris Welsford had sent his apologies.
- b) A member of the public expressed concerns about the inaccessibility of the public slipway at the Haven since the developments on the esplanade had made access to it with a vehicle and trailer. The Mayor assured him that the Town Council was supportive of public access and would pursue the matter with the Isle of Wight Council.
- c) Another member of the public commented on the use of an information bus in Shanklin and wondered how it was funded. It was agreed that enquiries would be made and the Mayor said that the Town Council intended to make more use of the First Aid hut in future as an information point.
- d) A question was asked about progress with the Hawk flying in response to the unacceptably high level of pigeon presence. The Mayor confirmed that the activity would begin in the next few days spread over a six week period while discussions about longer term solutions continued, drawing on helpful information provided by specialists.

The meeting commenced at 7.07 pm

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Simon Haytack.

1/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

2/12 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) The minutes of the Town Council meeting of 12 December 2011, having been previously circulated to Members, were taken as read.
- b) The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting of 19 December 2011 were received.

3/12 FINANCE REPORT

- a) The Finance report for this meeting had been previously circulated to Members and included information on Bank Balances at 31 December 2011 and a list of payments made during December 2011.
- b) An accompanying paper set out the related expenditure in relation to the Budget lines for the year to 30 December 2011 with variances from year-to-date budget provision.

4/12 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

- a) The Town Clerks' report for this meeting had been previously circulated to Members.
- b) The detail referred to the Outfit Project launch ceremony, the Putting Green, the War

5/12 REFUSE COLLECTION

- a) Councillor Debby Robinson introduced this item reporting the very visible problem of uncollected rubbish during the seasonal break. She noted that the Isle of Wight Council's Emergency Service was unable to offer any response and following discussion with the Town Clerk a private contractor was engaged to clear it which was successfully completed.
 - b) She asked that budget provision be made for potential refuse collection needs during the February change over of Island wide refuse collection practices.
 - c) Councillor David George commended Councillor Robinson for taking the necessary action while making the point that this was the consequence of the failure of the Isle of Wight Council's service and proposed that the cost be reclaimed.
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6/12 SIGNAGE

- a) Councillor David George introduced this item drawing attention to the lack of effective signage in the town and quoted from Communities Secretary Eric Pickles as well as a recent report from the Campaign for the Rural Environment both stressing the importance of effective signage.
 - b) He suggested that many of the existing ones needed to be removed and others introduced and referred to those which had already been identified by Councillor Mark Robertson-Walker. He went on to ask what other signs are needed and identified some of them specifically
 - c) The Mayor reported that County Councillor Chris Welsford had already taken up the matter of route signs with the Isle of Wight Council and Councillor Harry Rees said that signage was to be included in the PFI scheme.
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7/12 THE HIGH STREET

- a) Councillor Debby Robinson provided a summary of the government commissioned and recently published report by Mary Portas on the future of High Streets.
 - b) She emphasised in particular the points made in the study that High Streets actually functioned as Civic Space and needed a holistic approach to their development as well as the importance of the area remaining attractive, offering committed service through specialist traders.
 - c) She went on to assert that Ventnor had a unique offer available that needed more attention drawing to it and argued that the free parking offer needed to be better advertised and everything possible be done to enhance the attraction of the High Street.
 - d) Councillor Mark Robertson-Walker referred to the absence of sufficient cash machines as a current serious threat to customer spending and reported that having exterior placement of café tables cost the trader £300 a year.
 - e) Councillor Harry Rees drew attention to the concerns he had about the future development of High Streets in the Island Plan and said he would provide a paper on the matter very soon.
 - f) Councillor Debby Robinson highlighted the importance of detailed market research into visitor levels and patterns.
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9/12 CO-OPTION OF TOWN COUNCILLOR

The Mayor introduced the previously circulated draft for a revised co-option process that it was proposed should be used to fill the current vacancy for St Lawrence.

It was unanimously resolved that:

- i) the revised process document be adopted and used as the basis for filling the current vacancy; and
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- ii) the process be reviewed at a later meeting of the Town Council.
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8/12 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- a) The Town Clerk's report on the arrangements for the four meetings agreed last month to form the first stage of a new Community Engagement strategy had been previously circulated to Members.
- b) The report was received.
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PUBLIC FORUM

The Mayor re-opened the Public Forum

- a) A member of the public commented that Ventnor not only has a unique offer in its range of shops but also a matching variation in audiences.
- b) Another member of the public commented that HSBC had asked for a second cash machine and the Post Office had also offered but both had been refused by the Isle of Wight Council and asked if the Town Council could ask that the matter be revisited. It was agreed by the Mayor that the item be listed on a forthcoming Agenda.
- c) Another member of the public asked if anything could be done to improve the appearance of empty shops.
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10/12 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

exclude the Public and Press whilst the next item is under discussion as it is of a confidential nature.

The Meeting closed at 8.25 pm

| SIGNED BY THE MAYOR | DATE |
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