



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

COASTAL CENTRE

7PM

10 DECEMBER 2012

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillors: David George (Deputy Mayor and Chair for this Meeting), Debby Robinson, Leigh Geddes, Jim Toogood, Jason Mack, Jim Morgan.

NO. SUBJECT

VENTNOR BOTANIC GARDENS: JOHN CURTIS

- a) The Deputy Mayor welcomed John Curtis to the meeting and invited him to introduce himself and his work to the meeting.
- b) He said that he and his team started work in July following the final signing off of the 125 year lease and needed to confront the important issue of an entrance fee given the ending of the previous subsidy from the Isle of Wight Council.
- c) The restaurant has been relocated to the upper level and car parking is now free and that had resulted in increased time being spent actually in the garden by visitors.
- d) A new 'drop tools' rule had been introduced for staff so that they were free to engage with visitors. New signage is being planned to make the gardens more accessible along with the introduction of trails within the gardens.
- e) A series of design walks had been held with ideas from them being implemented. There is interest in further development of the Coastal Path.
- f) The Deputy Mayor then opened the meeting, including to members of the public, for a question and answer session and he asked how it might be possible to develop a continuous green corridor from the botanic gardens to the town. In response John Curtis speculated about the possibility of extending it all the way to St Catherine's point.
- g) A member of the public congratulated the new arrangements for its inclusion of young children. John Curtis said they were looking to work with schools for the introduction of an annual pass for staff accompanied by children.
- h) In response to a question about an intention to build an education centre in the gardens, John Curtis said there was much restoration work required first on existing buildings, but although an education centre would have to await the completion of much of that work it was certainly something they were keen to have in place.
- i) Reference was made to the proposed heritage trail for the town and John Curtis said he would be very happy to co-operate with that as they are keen to build on the site's history and ensure that visitors' questions about its predecessor hospital facility could be readily answered.
- j) The possibility was also explored of developing activities within the gardens that would add another out-of-season visitor attraction.
- k) John Curtis said he felt the children's playground was not well placed and he would be interested in discussing the possibility of its relocation to a more central and accessible site.
- l) In closing, the Deputy Mayor asked if there was any possibility of incorporating allotments within the gardens. John Curtis said he was keen to see a substantial area developed by community use and he felt that designation as a market garden would facilitate the ongoing involvement of more people in a wide range of growing opportunities.
- m) The Deputy Mayor and Members thanked John Curtis for attending the meeting and demonstrating so clearly a commitment to partnership working.

PUBLIC FORUM

- a) The Deputy Mayor opened the Public Forum with 12 members of the public present.
 - b) Wendy Marshall said that Harveys Pet Shop had made a further donation of three boxes of bags for collection of dog waste.
 - c) A member of the public said she hoped that the Town Council would find the money to complete the fencing at Sea Breeze play area.
 - d) David Langford, Chair of the Island Committee responsible for assessing Quality Councils, introduced himself and the work of his Committee to the meeting as the foundation for the formal announcement that Ventnor Town Council's application for reaccreditation as a Quality Council had been confirmed by the Committee and he handed the Certificate to the Deputy Mayor accordingly.
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163/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Steve Stubbings, Mark Robertson-Walker, Harry Rees and Carol Jones.

164/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest at this stage.

165/12 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) The minutes of the Town Council meeting of 12 November 2012, having been previously circulated to Members, were taken as read.
 - b) The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting of 19 November 2012 were received.
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166/12 FINANCE REPORT

- a) The Finance report for this meeting had been previously circulated to Members and included information on Bank Balances at 30 November 2012 and a list of payments made during November 2012.
 - b) An accompanying paper set out expenditure in relation to the Budget lines for the year to 30 November 2012 with variances from year-to-date budget provision.
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167/12 GENERAL POWER OF COMPETENCE

The Town Clerk had informed Members by email of his revised understanding of the criteria for the Town Council to be able to exercise the new General Power of Competence and that he had submitted the required material for qualification in the use of the power.

It was unanimously resolved that:

the Town Council notes that the Town Clerk's submission for qualification under the new section 7 of the CiLCA qualification has yet to be processed and consequently resolves that no new action or activity requiring the use of the General Power of Competence will be undertaken until the relevant certificate is received.

168/12 COASTAL CENTRE

- a) Report 73/12 for this meeting summarised developments about the future of the Coastal Centre since the November meeting of the Town Council.
 - b) The report include a segment on discussions about the Isle of Wight Council's plans for the future of other buildings in the Town that appeared to be based on the concept of a Community Hub based in the St Boniface School premises and including the Library and parts of the Youth Centre as well as Ventnor Town Council.
 - c) After declaring an interest as Vice-Chair of Friends of Ventnor Library Councillor Jim Morgan said that it would be unlikely to be attractive to the Library as being further out of
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town.

- d) The Deputy Mayor commented that Ventnor residents had already paid for the building through Ventnor Urban District Council's purchase of the building in 1945.
 - e) Councillor Leigh Geddes asked why the disposal of the building had been brought forward from its listing for 2013/14 to an immediate sale.
 - f) It was noted that these discussions with the Isle of Wight Council were, and would remain, ongoing.
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169/12 COMMUNITY RIGHTS

- a) The notes of the meeting with members of the town's voluntary and community groups on Wednesday 5 December to discuss the significance of the new Community Rights were attached with report 74/12 for this meeting.
 - b) The Town Clerk commented that with an attendance of over 20 people involved on the town's community activity, the meeting had been positive in approach, productive in outcomes and supportive of the Town Council's role as outlined at the meeting.
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170/12 CONSULTATION EVENT FOR 2013/14

- a) The Deputy Mayor introduced this item by referring back to the very successful consultation meetings with representatives from the town's more than sixty voluntary and community organisations on 30 January and 6 February.
- b) He then said that the Town Council was keen to meet on an at least annual basis with the sector and was committed to begin with one by the end of January 2013.

It was unanimously resolved that:

the next annual meeting with representatives of the town's voluntary and community organisations be held on 30 January 2013.

171/12 TOWN COUNCIL MEETING DATES 2013

- a) A list of Town Council meeting dates for 2013, based on the existing pattern of the second Monday of each month, had been previously circulated to Members for consideration
- b) Councillor Jim Morgan suggested that the meeting day be changed from Monday to allow his attendance at another meeting and that was supported by Councillor Debby Robinson.
- c) After further discussion they proposed that meetings be moved to the third Monday of each month.

It was resolved that:

the list of Town Council Meetings for 2013 be adjusted to provide for these scheduled meetings to be held on the third Monday of each month.

172/12 HEALTH & WELLBEING STRATEGY CONSULTATION

- a) Minute 159/12 of the meeting of the Town Council on 12 November asked the Town Clerk to prepare a response to the published draft Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2013-16 for Members' consideration for its response to the current consultation by the closure date of 17 December.
- b) A draft response, report 76/12, was included in the papers for this meeting.

It was unanimously resolved that:

the draft response as circulated be submitted as the Town Council's contribution to the consultation by Monday 17 December.

160/12 TOWN CLERKS' REPORT

- a) The Town Clerks' report for this meeting had been previously circulated to Members.
 - b) The information covered proposals for routine contact with the Police, a report of the Access
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to Employment meeting, details of the Town Council's contribution to the Christmas in Ventnor event on 15 December, a report of the Social Enterprise and Timebank meeting, confirmation of the Assistant Town Clerk's achievement of the Certificate in Local Council Administration (CiLCA) qualification and acknowledgement of the extension of Small Business Rate Relief to 1 April 2014.

- c) The Town Clerk had previously circulated an email from the South Wight Safer Communities Team in which they had apologised for the problems in achieved a match between work rotas and attendance Town Council Meetings and offered instead a meeting every two months on listed dates with members of the team with a designated representative of the Town Council who could then report back to the following Town Council meeting.
- d) After discussion, it was agreed to take up the initial meetings offered while continuing to explore the possibility of attendance by Police at Town Council Meetings. Councillor Leigh Geddes agreed to attend the January meeting and Councillor Jason Mack the March one.

PUBLIC FORUM

The Deputy Mayor re-opened the Public Forum.

- a) A member of the public expressed concern about the risk to the deterioration of the St Boniface school buildings once they are closed. The Town Clerk responded that he had been in touch with Isle of Wight Council officers about that concern.
- b) Another member of the public asked what the value of the Quality Council kite mark was and the Town Clerk commented that the process, although of value, was itself being reviewed and Clerks had been invited to contribute to it.

The Meeting closed at 8.25pm

SIGNED BY THE MAYOR	DATE