



# MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

ST FRANCIS SCHOOL LOWER SITE

7PM

10 OCTOBER 2011

## MEMBERS PRESENT

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

## NO. SUBJECT

### PUBLIC FORUM

The Mayor opened the Public Forum with 10 members of the public present. County Councillor Susan Scoccia was also present; County Councillor Chris Welsford had sent his apologies.

A member of the public asked about the stability of the War Memorial and Councillor Jim Toogood assured everyone that although it was in need of restoration work, there was no risk of collapse.

The meeting commenced at 7.05 pm

### 163/11 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Carol Jones.

### 164/11 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

### 165/11 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) The minutes of the Town Council meeting of 12 September 2011, having been previously circulated to Members, were taken as read.
- b) The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting of 28 September 2011 were received.

### 166/11 MEMBERSHIP

- a) The resignation of Councillor Russell Hall was formally noted.
- b) **It was unanimously resolved that:**  
Councillor Mark Robertson-Walker be appointed as a member of the Planning Committee.
- c) **It was unanimously resolved that:**  
Councillor Jim Toogood be appointed as Deputy Representative to the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (IWALC).

### 167/11 FINANCE

- a) The Finance report for this meeting had been previously circulated to Members and included information on Bank Balances at 30 September 2011 and a list of payments made during September 2011.
- b) An accompanying paper set out the related expenditure in relation to the Budget lines for the year to 30 September 2011 with variances from year to date budget provision.
- c) It was formally noted that the Annual Return for the financial year 2010/11 had been signed off by the Audit Commission as External Auditor and the relevant pages together with the required notice would now be displayed on the Central Car Park Notice board for the statutory 14 day period.

---

**168/11 BEACH SAFETY PROJECT**

- a) The Town Clerk's previously circulated report summarised the very successful project and provided a breakdown of the 199 incidents recorded during it and the expenditure on it.
- b) He asked that appreciation be recorded for all involved and particularly for Councillor Jim Toogood's support for the project and Dave Gray's delivery of it as the staff member responsible for its operation.
- c) County Councillor Susan Scoccia, who had assisted with the availability of funding support for the work said that she was hopeful of funding being available for next year too.

**It was unanimously resolved that:**

- i. the Town Council formally records its appreciation of, and thanks, to all those who had made the project so effective; and
  - ii. the need for Lifeguards on the beach next year be considered at the November meeting of the Town Council once the findings of the RNLI's Risk Assessment had been analysed.
- 

**169/11 SEAWEED**

- a) The Town Clerk's report for this item together with an Appendix summarising the development of the Haven had been previously circulated.
  - b) The Mayor reminded Members that the specific decision before them was how the Town Council should respond to the request from the Isle of Wight Council for a contribution of £12,500 a year for two years towards the implementation of the mobile pumping solution.
  - c) Councillor Jim Morgan confirmed that little new had come from the follow up meeting with the Isle of Wight Council officers who had agreed that legal responsibility lay with them while pointing out that the Isle of Wight Council had already contributed very significant resources to the problem.
  - d) He went on to report that a potential risk existed of the Isle of Wight Council deciding not to make any further investment available if a contribution was not forthcoming from Ventnor Town Council.
  - e) Councillor Harry Rees said that it is a very sad story from promising beginnings that attracted two investors to the present serious threat to Ventnor's life that could only be addressed by continuous pumping out of the seaweed. He did not feel that their suggested resort to Best Practical Means was acceptable.
  - f) The Mayor said that those most involved in the August trialling of the pump have judged that the solution is likely to prove effective.
  - g) Councillor Mark Robertson-Walker commented that the Haven was intended to increase visitors to Ventnor by 10% whereas they are now leaving in large numbers. While no-one thinks that Ventnor should contribute, the issue is so serious that the proposed solution needs to be implemented.
  - h) The Mayor said that there was no reason to believe at this stage that the Isle of Wight Council would not fund the implementation of the pumping solution if Ventnor did not contribute.
  - i) Councillor Debby Robinson said that this was an opportunity to highlight the serious problem that the Haven actually is in its present construction while costing the Island's taxpayers some £350,000 to date in annual revenue losses.
  - j) Councillor David George drew attention to the fact that no-one knew for certain whether the solution would work or not and it was the Isle of Wight Council's responsibility to deal with that rather than asking Ventnor residents to pay twice for a proposed solution.
  - k) Councillor Simon Haytack said that he felt that although he felt it inappropriate that Ventnor people should pay to deal with a problem not of their making, the risks of not contributing were too great to be ignored.
-

- 
- l) The Mayor invited members of the public to comment on the proposal.
  - m) Councillor Harry Rees returned to the fact that the problem would remain for as long as the Haven remained unaltered.
  - n) Councillor Jim Morgan outlined some of the limitations of the current contract in its failure to include seaweed clearance given the characteristics of the Haven's construction.

**It was resolved by five votes to three with one abstention:**

that a £12,500 contribution would not be made towards the cost of implementing the pumping solution.

- o) Councillor Jim Morgan then proposed that a Ventnor Haven Working Party be set up including all major stakeholders with the objectives of removing the smell to the satisfaction of Ventnor residents and businesses, reducing the long term cost of the pumping solution and developing a long-term plan for the Haven along with a contribution of £6,000 a year for two years as a contribution of the Isle of Wight Council's costs.
- p) After being seconded by Councillor Jim Toogood, the motion was defeated by five votes to three with one abstention.

**It was then further and unanimously resolved that**

Ventnor Town Council is committed to remaining in collaborative discussions with the Isle of Wight Council over this matter and authorises its Town Clerk to work with the relevant Isle of Wight Council officers to progress it.

---

**170/11 ALLOTMENTS**

- a) Councillor Jason Mack confirmed that at this time Ventnor had only three Allotments available, all of which are currently allocated with a waiting list of 24 other interested parties.
  - b) Other possible sites were briefly considered and Councillor Jason Mack indicated that he would report further as other information became available.
- 

**171/11 WAR MEMORIAL**

- a) A report on the options available to the Town Council and access to grant funding for them in respect of the restoration of the War Memorial had been previously circulated to members by the Town Clerk.
- b) Councillor Harry Rees reminded the meeting of the approach from the British Legion and preliminary investigations made by both himself and Councillor Jim Toogood.

**It was unanimously resolved that:**

The Town Clerk be delegated to work with Councillors Harry Rees and Jim Toogood on clarifying and costing the available options in order to report back to the Town Council no later than the meeting of 12 December 2011.

---

**172/11 DOGS**

- a) The Mayor proposed the publication of a carefully written guidance on this matter which he offered to draft and circulate to members.
- b) Councillor Debby Robinson suggested that it be published as a press release.

**It was unanimously resolved:**

that the Town Council prepare and issue the guidance as a Press Release.

---

**173/11 GREEN PLANTERS**

- a) Councillor Debby Robinson reported that the supplier she had been in discussion with had failed to provide the required information.
  - b) She said she would report further at a future meeting.
-

---

**174/11 BANDSTAND**

- a) Councillor Debby Robinson drew the meeting's attention to the need for repair of the bandstand, evidencing it with pieces of detached wrought iron work she had collected, and commented on the serious degradation of the whole structure.
- b) It was agreed that this was an important local facility with frequent concerts much enjoyed by both residents and visitors.

**It was unanimously resolved:**

that the matter be brought to the attention of the Isle of Wight Council.

---

**175/11 COMMUNITY BUSES**

- a) Councillor Jim Morgan reported that the service had started as planned with 731 passengers during the first month, approximately 50% up on previous usage.
  - b) Councillors expressed their appreciation of Councillor Jim Morgan's role in making this service possible.
  - c) County Councillor Susan Scoccia reported that the No 6 was greatly appreciated by residents and was well used. She intended to have actual figures for future meetings.
- 

**PUBLIC FORUM**

The Mayor re-opened the Public Forum

- a) A member of the public said that the Ventnor allotments were not listed on the Isle of Wight Council's web site.
  - b) Susan Scoccia asked that the land opposite the Botanic Gardens be considered in this context.
- 

**176/11 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

In view of the confidential nature of the following item:

**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.

---

The Meeting closed at 8.55 pm

---

SIGNED BY THE MAYOR	DATE

---