



# MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

WINTER GARDENS

7PM

13 DECEMBER 2010

## MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillors: Debby Robinson (Mayor), David George, Steve Stubbings, Gillian Jenner, Harry Rees, Jason Mack, James Toogood, Chris Welsford.

## ITEM SUBJECT

### PUBLIC FORUM

The Mayor opened the Public Forum with 27 members of the public present

- a) A member of the public commented on the absence of a Christmas tree and the failure of a repair to the Bus Shelter. The Mayor responded that changes had been made this year because of the excessive charges for supplying lighting to the usual site.
- b) Another member asked about the absence from tonight's agenda of closed footpaths. Councillor Welsford responded that he had initiated discussions with the Isle of Wight Council and more details would follow.
- c) Concern was expressed about neglect of the fabric of the Town reflected in the lack of spend on essential items. Councillor Welsford pointed out that there was no statutory obligation on Town Councils to spend precept funding on the specific items identified in the budget.
- d) Worries about the threatened withdrawal of services previously provided by the Isle of Wight Council were expressed and the Mayor responded that this would be addressed on the Agenda.
- e) The meeting began at 7.15pm.

### 213/10 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Chris Bonney.

### 214/10 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

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

Councillor Gillian Jenner declared a personal interest in item 16.

Councillor Chris Welsford declared an interest as a County Councillor and a member of the Coastguard Service.

### 215/10 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes of the Town Council meeting of 13 November 2010 were considered. Item 204/10 was agreed to be amended by withdrawing the named Councillor.

**It was unanimously resolved by those present at the meeting:**

that the Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 13 November, with this adjustment, be agreed as an accurate record of the business of that meeting and be signed accordingly by the Mayor.

### 216/10 PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING MINUTES

The draft minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting of 8 December were received.

### 217/10 FINANCE

- a) The Finance report for this meeting had been previously circulated to Members and included information on Bank Balances at 30 November 2010 and a list of payments made during November 2010.

- b) An accompanying paper set out the Precept related expenditure in the first six months of the current financial year.
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#### 218/10 WINTER GARDENS

- a) The Mayor provided a statement to clarify the present situation that is attached to these minutes.
  - b) The statement committed to full disclosure no later than the January Council meeting.
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#### 219/10 V-BAY FESTIVAL

- a) The Mayor read a statement of appreciation for the work of the V-Bay committee and supporters in delivering an excellent event that drew many visitors to the Town.

**It was unanimously resolved:**

that a vote of thanks be expressed to the V-Bay committee members.

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#### 220/10 REMEMBRANCE DAY

- a) The Mayor said that she had been approached by an elector who had commented that for anyone in the Town at the time of two minutes silence there was no signal of its beginning and end.
  - b) The Town Clerk was asked to approach Mr Gibbs to ask if the firing of his canon could be employed to mark the beginning and end of Remembrance Day's two minutes' silence.
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#### 221/10 TOWN COUNCIL WEB SITE

- a) Councillor David George introduced the Special resolution that had been circulated to Members with the papers for the meeting.
- b) Councillor Gillian Jenner expressed concerns about the failure to implement corporate decisions and the quality of the draft site.
- c) Councillors David George and Harry Rees explained why they felt it had been necessary to return to the originally appointed supplier

**It was resolved:**

The Town Council rescinds the Resolution of Minute 204/10 of its meeting of 8 November 2010, asks parishcouncil.net to progress to delivery, as a matter of urgency, the web site it has developed for Ventnor Town Council and delegates authority to its Town Clerk to take all necessary steps to facilitate that outcome

Councillors David George, Harry Rees, Jim Toogood and Debby Robinson voted in favour; Councillors Steve Stubbings and Gillian Jenner voted against and Councillor Chris Welsford abstained.

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#### 222/10 ISLAND PLAN

- a) Councillor Harry Rees introduced this item, reporting on the discussions that had taken place to date in progressing this project.
  - b) He drew attention to the fact that there is no reference in the new document to the fact that the Island was not economically self-sufficient and had a population ageing faster than the regional average.
  - c) He went on to identify the significant numbers of people with long term disabilities as another absent element.
  - d) He argued that Ventnor should not be classified simply as a small regeneration area or omitted from the Bay Area regeneration area given its particular issues. Although the Plan assures the protection of A1 retail areas but offers none for Ventnor's.
  - e) The SWAT analysis identified Ventnor's peripheral location and weak transport links but provides no response to them.
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- f) He paid tribute to the work of the Ventnor Community Partnership that was now to be closed having completed its work.

**It was unanimously resolved:**

To adopt the response that Councillor Rees had circulated for this meeting and submit it as the Town Council's input to the consultation on the revised Core Strategy.

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**223/10 CARDBOARD RECYCLING**

Councillor Gillian Jenner introduced this item, reminding members of the cost of recycling to local businesses and the offer from Foss to place a skip at the Winter Gardens as a test of likely demand.

**It was resolved:**

That the Co-op be pressed for a response to the Town Council's earlier letter.

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**224/10 BUDGET CONSULTATION**

- a) The Mayor reported on the Budget Consultation meeting organised by IWALC on the 22 November with Isle of Wight Council Chief Executive and Council Leader.
- b) The meeting was very well attended and featured wide-ranging questions from Town and Parish Councillors and their Clerks.
- c) Councillor Robinson said that she questioned the value of retaining *One Island* and was told that the decision had already been made to retain it on a quarterly basis. She added that she had also questioned the future use of Consultants by the Isle of Wight Council and had been told that continued use of them would be necessary due to 'skills losses'.
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**225/10 BUDGET CUTS**

- a) Councillor Chris Welsford introduced this item stating that once the full impact of the announcement of Government funding of local authorities was known, there was no doubt that Town and Parish Councils would be asked to take on service delivery in such areas as toilets and coastguards.
- b) He proposed that the Town Council adopt the resolution he had circulated to members.
- c) Councillor David George said that he had attended a meeting on Saturday in support of the retention of Ventnor's library that had been a feature of the Town for 150 years. He argued that the loss of such an important facility was absolutely unacceptable. He asked that as a Town Council everything possible should be done to support its retention.
- d) Councillor Harry Rees reminded the meeting that the new Consultation protocol was a fundamentally weakened framework that made effective response difficult.
- e) Councillor Chris Welsford rounded off the discussion by noting that while it would not be possible to secure all the services we would want to, steps could be taken to ensure the Town Council's full engagement with the decision-making. He stressed the importance of a pragmatic approach that would have to include the possibility of a substantial precept increase.
- f) Councillor Debby Robinson said that she was concerned about the further demands being made on Town & Parish Councillors who were unpaid volunteers.

**It was unanimously resolved that:**

The Town Council enters into formal discussions with the Isle of Wight Council on taking over the provision of services that are earmarked for closure under the plans agreed by Cabinet on the 7th December and that Councillors Harry Rees and Jim Tooogood, with the Mayor's involvement as appropriate, be established as a working party to investigate the costs of taking on local services and report back to the precept meeting.

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**226/10 APPOINTMENT OF REPRESENTATIVE TO IWALC**

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**It was resolved:**

Councillor Harry Rees be appointed as the Town Council's representative to the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils.

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**PUBLIC FORUM**

The Mayor re-opened the Public Forum

- a) A member of the public commented that early indications were that the cuts for the Isle of Wight Council would be less than anticipated.
  - b) Mark Compton-Hall said that he and Councillor Susan Scoccia would support Ventnor's retention of its Blue Flag kite mark by ensuring the continuation of the Lifeguard service.
  - c) Thanks were expressed for the Town Council's support for maintaining the library. Councillor Steve Stubbings said that all Members were fully committed to maintaining local services but facts had to be faced about limited resources and the demands on local residents that would increasingly be the only source of securing those resources.
  - d) Concern was expressed about the absence of the Mayor at the recent British Legion ceremony. She explained her reasons for not attending.
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**227/10 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC**

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 item 15 is under discussion as it is of a confidential nature.

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The Meeting closed at 9.25pm

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SIGNED BY THE MAYOR	DATE

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