



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

GREEN ROOM, SALISBURY GARDENS

7PM

12 OCTOBER 2015

MEMBERS PRESENT

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

NO. SUBJECT

PUBLIC FORUM

- a) The Mayor opened the Public Forum with 3 members of the public present.
- b) There were no questions or comments at this stage.

123/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Stewart Blackmore.

124/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Steve Stubbings declared an interest as a Member of the Isle of Wight Council and, specifically, in respect of item 7 on the Agenda.

125/15 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) The Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 14 September 2015, having been previously circulated to Members, were taken as read.
- b) The Minutes of the Town Council's Planning Committee meeting of 30 September 2015 were noted.

126/15 FINANCE REPORT

- a) The Finance report for this meeting (83/15) had been previously circulated to Members and included information on Bank Balances at 30 September 2015 and a list of payments made during September 2015.
- b) An accompanying paper set out expenditure in relation to the Budget lines for the 2015/16 financial year to date with variances from year-to-date budget provision showing an underspend over the first six months of £2,023 against Budget.
- c) It was noted that the Town Council was holding a total of £18,050 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.
- d) Councillor Harry Rees asked about the payment of Business Rates for Ventnor Central.

It was unanimously resolved that:
the Finance Report be accepted.

127/15 ANNUAL RETURN

Report 84/15 included a copy of the Annual Return for the financial year 2014/15 signed off by the Town Council's External Auditor without qualification.

It was proposed by Councillor Harry Rees, seconded by Councillor Steve Stubbings and unanimously resolved that:
the Annual Return be accepted.

128/15 SALISBURY GARDENS YEAR 1 ACCOUNTS

- a) The first year Accounts for Salisbury Gardens for the period 1 October 2014 to 30 September 2015 was the subject of Report 85/15 for this meeting and a copy of the Accounts was attached to it.
- b) The Accounts recorded a surplus of income over expenditure of £13,258 as the net of income of £56,254 and expenditure totalling £42,726.
- c) Councillor Steve Stubbings said he was delighted with the outcome particularly given the concerns that were expressed by many at the planning stages of the project.
- d) Councillor Brian Lucas asked that the Accounts be published widely.

It was unanimously resolved that the Town Council:
accepts the Accounts for the first year of Salisbury Gardens.

129/15 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

- a) The Mayor introduced the item in his role as Chair of the Work Group appointed by the September meeting of the Town Council to consider a response to the Isle of Wight Council's current consultation on options for making savings in its Local Council Tax Scheme and whose recommendations were recorded in Report 86/15.
- b) Councillor Ed Gouge shared the Group's concerns about the impact on low income families of all the proposed options in the consultation.
- c) Councillor Ken Knapman added that as a member of the Group he could not be part of supporting any of the options given the inevitable impact on many people already struggling to maintain a reasonable standard of living.
- d) Councillor Tony Marvin said that he agreed with what had been said but asked if any possible positive proposals could be made to assist the Isle of Wight Council to close its Budget gap by other means.
- e) Councillor Harry Rees asked that the Town Council's view be shared with both the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils and the Island's MP.
- f) Councillor Steve Stubbings said he wanted to thank the Town Council for giving such serious consideration to the consultation and that he was anticipating with concern the government's Annual Statement of 25 November.

It was resolved, with Steve Councillor Stubbings abstaining, but otherwise unanimously that the Town Council:

- i) agrees that none of the options set out in the consultation are supported;
 - ii) informs the Isle of Wight Council that notwithstanding the seriousness of the its predicted Budget deficit for 2016/17, savings that affect only residents on low incomes are unacceptable;
 - iii) the Town Council's response be set out in a Report, in the form adopted for previous consultations, drafted by the Clerk to reflect the concerns expressed and submitted in advance of the consultation closure deadline of 7 November; and
 - iv) the decision be shared with the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils and the Island's MP and to ask him for his own views on the proposals.
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130/15 PLANNING ENFORCEMENT PROPOSAL

- a) Report 87/15 included a copy of a draft proposal from the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (IWALC) setting out options for strengthening the Isle of Wight Council's Planning Enforcement together with a recommendation from the Town Council's Planning Committee.
 - b) It was noted that this is at a very early stage.
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- c) Councillor Jim Toogood said that although the Planning Committee supported option c) of the proposal much more needs to be known about costs and how they would be shared.
 - d) Councillor Harry Rees said it was too early to make any decision and questioned whether Enforcement is or is not a statutory responsibility.

It was unanimously resolved that:
the Report be noted.

H INDEX OF MULTIPLE DEPRIVATION 2015

- a) Report 88/15 summarised the situation of the town's four Lower Super Output Areas as revealed in the new Index of Multiple Deprivation 2015 published on 30 September.
 - b) Councillor Ken Knapman said that the figures are shocking.
 - c) Councillor Ed Gouge expressed concern about the extent of the downward movement over a period of just eight years.
 - d) Councillor Steve Stubbings echoed the concerns of colleagues.
 - e) Councillor Brian Lucas said he was surprised and concerned about the decline in Bonchurch.
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132/15 DEVOLUTION PROPOSALS

- a) Further to the resolution of the Town Council meeting of 14 September that this matter be returned to at this meeting, the recently published guidance from the Department for Communities and Local Government on the potential for engagement by Town and Parish Councils with the development of Devolution proposals was discussed.
 - b) Councillor Harry Rees asked that the Town Council seeks involvement with the discussions through the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (IWALC).
 - c) Councillor Leigh Geddes commented that the track record of IWALC being able to take joint action did not engender confidence; Councillor Tony Marvin said he agreed and felt it was important to make our own recommendations while supporting the Isle of Wight Council.
 - d) Councillor Ed Gouge said he felt major changes were going to occur in the organisation of local authorities.
 - e) Councillor Steve Stubbings advised that a further paper on the developing proposals would be on the Agenda of the Isle of Wight Council in November when more detail would be available.
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133/15 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE

- a) Report 90/15 asked the Town Council to consider recommendations from the Public Buildings Working in respect of both the future development of the Cascade Gardens and reshaping of the hedge in Hambrough Road.
- b) Councillor Jim Toogood referred to the encouraging willingness of everyone to work together.
- c) Councillor Delian Backhouse-Fry said she was thrilled by the proposals and congratulated the Working Group on their development.

It was unanimously resolved that the Town Council:

- i) agrees the proposals for the future development of the Cascade Gardens under the guidance of the Public Buildings Working Group; and
- ii) authorises additional spending of up to £1,700 on the 2016 spring planting of the Cascade Gardens to fund the first stage of that development.

It was unanimously resolved that the Town Council:

- i) accepts the quotation from John O'Conner for the work required to restore the hedge to
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- routine maintenance; and
- ii) thanks the residents' group for their contribution to the cost of that work.
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134/15 PIGEON NUISANCE

- a) Councillor Harry Rees introduced this item following the complaints that had come to him about the damage Pigeons were inflicting on the High Street with expensive awnings being destroyed by their droppings.
- b) The seriousness of the problem was acknowledged and it was agreed to return to the matter following further research into possible remedial action.
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135/15 ISLE OF WIGHT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS (IWALC)

- a) Councillor Harry Rees said there was nothing further to report at this time as the last meeting had been the Annual General Meeting.
- b) Councillor Ken Knapman said he had circulated notes on his attendance at the recent Destination Management meeting.
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136/15 TOWN CLERKS' REPORT

- a) The Town Clerks report – 91/15 – recorded recent activity which did not require Town Council decisions.
- b) It included sections on the HSBC Bank closure, Beach Cleaning, Paddling Pool, the Apprenticeship Grant and the Library's AGM.
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PUBLIC FORUM

- a) The Chair re-opened the Public Forum.
- b) Evelyn Knowles said she wanted to congratulate Councillors for their achievement in securing the engagement of Chris Kidd with the future development of the Cascade Gardens.
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THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.36PM

SIGNED BY THE MAYOR	DATE
