



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

GREEN ROOM, SALISBURY GARDENS

7PM

14 MARCH 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillors: Jason Mack (Mayor), Leigh Geddes, Brian Lucas, Jim Toogood, Tony Marvin, Ken Knapman, Ed Gouge, Stewart Blackmore.

NO. SUBJECT

PUBLIC FORUM

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

21/16 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Delian Backhouse-Fry, Harry Rees and Steve Stubbings.

22/16 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Ken Knapman declared an interest in item 10 of the Agenda.

23/16 POLICE REPORT

Kevin Cook told the meeting that the investigation into the High Street incident on New Year's Eve is going well and a positive outcome is expected. He said that Sergeant Rachel Roscoe may be moving to lead the Ryde team at the end of the month with Sergeant Kevin Parry taking local responsibility.

24/16 JOHN ALLEN, WINTER GARDENS DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

- a) The Mayor welcomed John Allen to the meeting to talk about the ongoing development of the Winter Gardens
- b) He introduced himself by reminding Members that he had been involved in the Community Bid for the Winter Gardens in 2011 as evidence of his concern for the facility.
- c) He said that he had made contact with the owner, Kevin Sussmilch, and in August took on responsibility for its development adding that given what he now knew he was glad he was relieved not to have the sleepless nights that would have resulted from the original bid being successful.
- d) He told the meeting that Kevin Sussmilch has spent £1.5M on the Winter Gardens to date on the fabric of the building and professional fees although it is acknowledged that it is still not in the condition it should be: future planned investment includes the replacement of the railings round the first floor balcony and new railings round the roof area to enable it to be used as a venue.
- e) The Christmas Pantomime had been a steep learning curve in respect of what is needed in the auditorium for it to function effectively as a theatre and he was delighted that a new Head Chef had been appointed to start soon following periods of a weak food offering.
- f) He acknowledged that they had had mixed success with promotions to date and were promoting a Bank Holiday event in their own right; he regretted that the Isle of Arts will not return this year.
- g) He praised Ventnor Theatre Company's Pantomime as being of the highest quality and was pleased that they have booked another for this year plus a show in July.

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- h) Rooms are being made available to community groups at no charge and extending connections with the community is recognised as a priority.
 - i) Wendy Marshall said that there was no possibility of the Isle of Arts returning either this year or next and went on to express concern about the amount of fly-posting of Winter Gardens events. John Allen said that if it was reported to him he would take steps to restrict it.
 - j) Councillor Stewart Blackmore thanked John Allen for coming and said he was very pleased to hear of the development of the food offer.
 - k) Councillor Brian Lucas also thanked John Allen for being refreshingly honest about the challenges still faced by the facility and wished him well in addressing them.
 - l) John Allen asked for the Town Council's assistance in dealing with the reputational issues that were still affecting the Winter Gardens restoration.
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25/16 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) The Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 8 February 2016, having been previously circulated to Members, were taken as read.
 - b) The Minutes of the Town Council's Planning Committee meetings of 17 February and 10 March 2016 were noted.
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26/16 FINANCE REPORT

- a) The Finance report for this meeting (7/16) had been previously circulated to Members and included information on Bank Balances at 29 February 2016 and a list of payments made during February 2016.
- 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 eleven months of £1,020 against Budget.
- c) It was noted that the Town Council was holding a total of £11,050 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.

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

27/16 CAR PARKS INCOME

Report 8/16 for this meeting included the income from the four car parks managed by the Town Council for the six month period of 1 August 2015 – 31 January 2016.

28/16 DEFBRILLATOR

Councillor Jim Tooogood introduced this item with a proposal for the Town Council to purchase and install a Defibrillator in the central area of the Town on the basis of the information set out in Report 9/16.

It was proposed by Councillor Leigh Geddes, seconded by Councillor Ken Knapman and unanimously resolved to:
purchase and install a Defibrillator on the basis set out in Report 9/16 for this meeting.

29/16 PUBLIC TOILETS

- a) It was noted that the legal work on freehold transfers was far from complete and the Isle of Wight Council proposed an initial arrangement for the 1 April date for the transfer of responsibility of a Tenancy at Will, a copy of which was attached to Report 10/16.
 - b) Also attached was an initial cleaning schedule.
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It was proposed by Councillor Ken Knapman, seconded by Councillor Leigh Geddes and unanimously resolved that the Town Council:

- i) accepts the circulated draft Tenancy at Will as the temporary basis of the transfer to the Town Council on 1 April of the Eastern Esplanade, Marlborough Road and Ventnor Park toilets until the completion of the freehold transfer of these three and the Shore Road toilets;
 - ii) agrees the cleaning schedule and seasonal frequency variations identified in section 4 of Report 10/16; and
 - iii) confirms the decision of the Public Buildings Working Group to commit the sum of £400 from the current year's contingency provision to fund the restoration and replanting by Ventnor Botanic Gardens of the beds in the vicinity of the Eastern Esplanade toilets.
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30/16 VENTNOR LIBRARY

- a) An initial draft for the Partnership Agreement under which Ventnor Library will operate from 1 April had been previously circulated to Members and a copy was attached to Report 11/16 for this meeting.
- b) The Report also included information on the agreed arrangements for staffing and financial contributions from the Town Council.

It was proposed by Councillor Stewart Blackmore, seconded by Councillor Tony Marvin and unanimously resolved to:

- i) authorise the Town Clerk, advised by the Public Buildings Working Group and in consultation with the Isle of Wight Council's Officers, to agree a customised and clarified version of the initial draft for consideration by the Town Council meeting of 11 April 2016; and
 - ii) agree the financial arrangements identified in section 3) of Report 11/16 for this meeting.
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31/16 IWALC SPRING SEMINAR

- a) In preparation for the Isle of Wight Association of Local Council's Spring Seminar to be held on 18 March the Clerk identified in Report 12/16 three major developments – the Isle of Wight Council's 2016/17, Devolution and the My Life a Full Life Programme – from which Town and Parish Councils had been effectively excluded and IWALC had neither been offered nor sought a role on their behalf.
 - b) Councillor Stewart Blackmore congratulated the Clerk on the report and stated his agreement with each of the points made in it.
 - c) Councillor Tony Marvin asked if things would be better or worse if IWALC ceased to exist and wondered if it were ever possible for it to be resourced to the level it would need to take an active and effective representative role.
 - d) Councillor Brian Lucas said that he had never been a fan of IWALC and felt in particular that it lacked an acknowledged and respected negotiating team.
 - e) The Mayor commented that he had attended the recent Winchester meeting with 130 Town and Parish councillors to discuss Devolution.
 - f) Councillor Ed Gouge reported that when he attended the recent Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) Conference he was encouraged to hear that its officers talked directly to Ministers.
 - g) Councillor Ken Knapman said that as the Town Council's Deputy representative to IWALC's meetings he felt that the organisation needed to be clearer about its objectives and more effectively organised to achieve them.
 - h) Councillor Geddes said that while the Spring Seminar could be a valuable opportunity to stimulate development she wouldn't want to see resources wasted on an organisation that couldn't deliver.
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It was agreed that the Clerk be encouraged to present the concerns identified in Report 12/16 at the Spring Seminar on behalf of the Town Council.

32/16 CASCADE FLOODLIGHTING

- a) Councillor Brian Lucas introduced this item informing the Town Council that Ventnor Enhancement Fund had paid for the floodlighting of the Cascade Gardens and continued to meet the electricity costs of their operation at an average of £300 a year.
- b) He proposed that as the Town Council now had direct responsibility for the Cascade Gardens it consider taking over the floodlighting and its operating costs.
- c) Councillor Leigh Geddes congratulated Ventnor Enhancement Fund for their initiative and agreed it is time for the Town Council to take over responsibility for the floodlighting and its costs.

It was proposed by Councillor Leigh Geddes, seconded by Councillor Stewart Blackmore and, apart from Councillor Brian Lucas's abstention, unanimously resolved to:

take over responsibility for the floodlighting and its operational costs with effect from this meeting.

33/16 LAND TRANSFERS

Report 14/16 listed six areas of land that the Town Council had previously identified as of interest to it and relevant to its future plans.

It was proposed by Councillor Jason Mack, seconded by Councillor Tony Marvin and unanimously resolved to:

authorise the Town Clerk, advised by the Public Buildings Working Group, to continue discussions with the Isle of Wight Council with the aim of securing the freehold transfer of these areas of land.

34/16 TOWN CLERKS' REPORT

- a) The Town Clerks' report – 15/16 – recorded recent activity which did not require Town Council decisions.
 - b) It included sections on seasonal start-ups, Local Area Co-ordinator appointment, Upper Ventnor Community Association meeting Working Group meetings, the draft Strategic Plan and the Youth Offer Forum.
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PUBLIC FORUM

- a) The Mayor Chair re-opened the Public Forum.
 - b) There were no comments or questions at this time.
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THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.45PM

SIGNED BY THE MAYOR

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