



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

GREEN ROOM, SALISBURY GARDENS

7PM

10 FEBRUARY 2020

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillors: Stewart Blackmore (Chair), Stephen Cockett, Jason Mack, Jamie Macaulay, Delian Fry, Brian Lucas, Colm Watling, Ian Bond, Dave Logan, Steve Milford, James Toogood

No. SUBJECT

PUBLIC FORUM

There was one member of the public present and he raised questions about the No 31 Bus after discussions with both those who use it and those who might use it, drawing attention in particular to its lack of clear identification.

Councillor Brian Lucas said that he also used the Bus and agreed that although efforts had been made to ensure the signage was clear, they had not proved successful.

11/20 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no Apologies for Absence as all Members were present.

12/20 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest at this time.

13/20 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) The Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 13 January 2020, having been previously circulated to Members, were taken as read.
- b) The Minutes of the Town Council's Planning Committee meeting of 27 January 2020 were noted.

14/20 FINANCE REPORT

- a) The Finance Report for this meeting (8/20) had been previously circulated to Members and included information on Bank Balances at 31 January 2020 and a list of all payments made during January 2020.
- b) Also included was a listing of budget variances during the first ten months of the 2019/20 financial year.

It was proposed by Councillor Colm Watling, seconded by Councillor Jason Mack and unanimously resolved that:
the Finance Report be accepted.

15/20 31 Bus

- a) Councillor Stephen Cockett opened the discussion with the background to the present position of it and the Clerks reported on discussions with the operator since the decision of the January meeting
- b) Councillors Delian Fry and Dave Logan both asked if an alternative provider might be available and Councillor Jason Mack responded that previous explorations of that possibility had been unproductive.
- c) Councillor Colm Watling suggested that criteria for the review in April be determined earlier.

It was unanimously resolved to:

- i) commit to continuing the service on the basis of two days a week for six months with a review after three months;

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- ii) include a provision of £2,800 in the Town Council's 2020/21 Budget for that purpose; and
 - iii) ensure the signage was improved.
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16/20 NEW PUBLIC TOILET

- a) Report 10/20 for this meeting updated Members on progress with the Planning Application, discussions with the Isle of Wight Council about the toilet's proposed location in the Central Car Park and identified the Tender process agreed by the Assets and Services Working Group.
- b) Councillor James Toogood confirmed that the Planning Application had been submitted and that Building Control submission would follow in two weeks.
- c) There was general agreement that the proposed charge by the Isle of Wight Council for the loss of the required four parking bays did not reflect either its commitment to partnership working or its Regeneration Strategy.

It was proposed by Councillor Stephen Cockett seconded by Councillor Jason Mack and unanimously agreed to:

- i) formally agree the Tender Process as set out in section 3) of this Report
 - ii) authorise the Mayor and Clerk to negotiate a more appropriate rent for the land area agreed for the installation of the new public toilet.
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17/20 MARLBOROUGH ROAD TOILET

- a) Report 11/20 explored the issue of whether the Town Council would wish to retain the Marlborough Street toilet once the new one was available in the Central Car Park.
- b) In the following discussion the historic nature and value of the Marlborough Road facility was acknowledged but its complete unsuitability as a provision for people with disabilities was obvious.

It was proposed by Councillor Jason Mack, seconded by Councillor Ian Bond and unanimously resolved to:

- i) agree the return of the Marlborough Street Public Toilets to the Isle of Wight Council under the terms of the Lease's Break Clause at a date to be confirmed; and
 - ii) maintain the 2020/21 Budget provision for the town's remaining public toilets at £40,000.
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18/20 BUDGET 2020/21

- a) Councillor Ian Bond argued the case for dropping Budget line 38 as the project it referred to had only very recently been introduced, suggesting that it and the still undeveloped Family Voice Project could be funded instead from the contingency provision if and when they were ready to be taken forward.
- b) He added that the provision for town centre improvements could be reduced by £2,000.
- c) The Mayor reminded Members that inclusion in the Budget and the decision to commit the funds in due course are separate processes.
- d) Councillor Stephen Cockett apologised for the lateness of the project in line 38 and committed to providing a detailed proposal for it in due course.
- e) Councillor Colm Watling commented that the need to increase the Budget by nearly 6% was primarily a consequence of the need to take on the maintenance of Ventnor Park.
- f) Councillor Ian Bond said that he felt the proposed Precept level was too high.
- g) Councillor Steve Milford declared an interest in the discussion of the Family Voice project and abstained from the vote accordingly.
- h) Councillor Ian Bond asked that his abstention on the following resolution be recorded.

It was proposed by Councillor Stephen Cockett, seconded by Councillor Jason Mack and resolved with two abstentions to:

- i) adopt the Draft Budget as presented with this Report;
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- ii) confirm its Precept-related Budget for 2020/21 to be £489,391;
 - iii) set the Precept income to fund it at £360,589 together with the Local Council Tax Support grant of £2,587 from the Isle of Wight Council; and
 - iv) authorise the Town Clerk to inform the Isle of Wight Council accordingly.
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19/20 SAFE PLACES PROJECT

- a) Report 13/20 made the case for the Town Council to support formally the Safe Places Project and to include provision within its Green Room activities.
- b) Councillor Jason Mack said that this project had been discussed between some of the town's businesses and it was likely to be welcomed.

It was unanimously resolved to:

formally support the Project and ask its Community Development Officer to progress it.

20/20 DRAFT ISLE OF WIGHT HOUSING STRATEGY

- a) The Draft Isle of Wight Housing Strategy 2020-25 had been previously circulated to Members.
- b) Councillor Colm Watling started the discussion with reference to the impact of second homes on communities, noting that attempts to mitigate them had illustrated the difficulties of arriving at a consensus..
- c) Councillor Stephen Cockett said he found it disappointing that it contained only one reference to that issue and equally limited consideration of the impact of Holiday accommodation, adding that currently only two houses to rent were advertised on Right Move and evidence suggests there are about 300 holiday units in Ventnor .
- d) The Mayor added that people are buying houses in Ventnor unseen for holiday homes.
- e) Councillor Jason Mack referred to the issues presented by unlicensed Houses in Multiple Occupation.
- f) Councillor Colm Watling said there was an important distinction to be made between holiday homes and holiday lets as the latter made a more significant contribution to the local economy.
- g) Councillor Ian Bond suggested that the Town Council's response should be based on outline provided in Report 14/20 for this meeting.

It was unanimously resolved to:

ask the Clerk to submit a response based on the outline in Report 14/20 and reflecting this discussion.

21/20 TOWN CLERKS' REPORT

- a) The Town Clerks' Report – 15/20 – recorded recent activity which did not require Town Council decisions at this time.
 - b) It included information on a meeting with the Hampshire Association of Local Councils, an increase in funding available for the Town Council's Youth service, a meeting of the local Society of Local Council Clerks, Victoria Corner, South Wight Parishes Health and Wellbeing Forum, the latest meeting with the Upper Ventnor Community Association Committee, the Allotments and the meetings of the two Working Groups.
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PUBLIC FORUM

There was one member of the public present. He asked how other Islands responded to the problems of second homes and holiday homes

The Meeting closed at 8.28pm

SIGNED BY THE MAYOR

DATE
