



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

VIRTUAL MEETING

7PM

12 APRIL 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillors: Stewart Blackmore (Chair), Stephen Cockett, Brian Lucas, Dave Logan, Steve Milford, James Toogood, Ian Bond, and Delian Fry

MINUTE SUBJECT

PUBLIC FORUM

The arrangements for the meeting providing for public access for the Public Forum were on the web site. There were no members of the public present.

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest at this time.

32/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no Apologies for Absence.

33/21 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

The Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 8 March 2021, having been previously circulated to Members, were taken as read.

34/21 FINANCE REPORT

- a) The Finance Report for this meeting 28/21 had been previously circulated to Members and included information on Bank Balances at 31 March 2021 and a list of all payments made during March 2021.
- b) Also included was a listing of budget variances during the financial year.

It was proposed by Councillor Stephen Cockett, seconded by Councillor James Toogood and unanimously resolved that:
the Finance Report be accepted.

35/21 RECEIPTS AND PAYMENTS ACCOUNTS 2020/21

- a) The Receipts and Payments Accounts for the 2020/21 Financial Year were attached to Report 29/21 for this meeting.
- b) The Report confirmed that as the Town Council's turnover exceeded £200,000 the Accounts will need to be finalised in an Income and Expenditure format once the relevant post-year-end receipts and payments can be recorded.

36/21 INSURANCE VALUATIONS

- a) The Town Council's Insurance Brokers, WPS Hallam, have requested a Pre-Renewal Review in advance of our annual Insurance Renewal date of 21 April.
- b) The lengthy document has been considered by the Assets and Services Working Group and following any assessment of the current valuations of several of the insured assets by Councillors Brian Lucas and James Toogood it is felt that a professional valuation of some of them is necessary to ensure sufficient cover is in place.
- c) Councillor James Toogood told Members that after considering the document in detail he felt that several of the Assets are currently undervalued.
- d) Councillor Brian Lucas agreed and said that this among other related matters had been discussed in a virtual meeting with the Insurers earlier in the day.

It was proposed by Councillor James Toogood, seconded by Councillor Brian Lucas and unanimously resolved that:

a professional valuation of the relevant assets be commissioned at an anticipated cost of £850.

37/21 VENTNOR PARK STRATEGIC DOCUMENT

- a) Attached to Report 31/21 for this meeting was the current draft of a Strategic Document for the Town Council's management of Ventnor Park.
 - b) The document was based on the consensus of the Informal Meeting of Members of 15 February following which Nick Cox was asked to develop an initial draft for a high level document that was then discussed at a core staff meeting on 15 March that led to two redrafts of the document.
 - c) Further considerations of the new draft took place at the Community Development Working Group meeting of 25 March and the Assets and Services Working Group of 30 March where it was agreed to be ready for this Town Council meeting
 - d) Councillor Ian Bond identified a number of areas in which he felt the document could be improved.
 - e) It was agreed to defer adoption of the document to a future meeting to provide more time for its development.
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38/21 VENTNOR HAVEN GROUP

- a) Report 32/21 for this meeting summarises the issues posed by the threat to the town of rotting seaweed in the Haven and the ending on 31 March 2020 of the current contract for removing it in the context of recent Isle of Wight Council decisions about the Haven's future.
- b) The proposal that has emerged from discussions with Cheetah Marine and Ventnor Haven Fisheries is for the formation of a Ventnor Haven Group based on a draft Agreement that is attached to Report 32/21.
- c) The Mayor introduced the item, reminding Members of the serious threat to the town of the rotting seaweed in the Haven and the absence of any recent engagement by the Isle of Wight Council with the Town Council on the issue.
- d) Councillor Steve Milford said he was fully supportive of the proposed agreement with one amendment that was accepted by the Clerk and the document amended accordingly.
- e) Councillor Brian Lucas expressed concerns about the potential cost to the Town Council that might arise from any involvement in the future ownership arrangements and the Clerk assured him that the proposed agreement explicitly stated that there was no commitment to any financial involvement by any of the partners to it.

It was proposed by the Mayor, seconded by Councillor James toogood and unanimously resolved:

to endorse the agreement and support its implementation with immediate effect.

39/21 MEETINGS AFTER 7 MAY 2021

- a) The questions about the holding of Council Meetings virtually after the current Regulations expire on 7 May were identified in Report 33/21.
- b) The Clerk informed Members that a legal challenge to the refusal to extend powers to hold virtual meetings by Hertfordshire County Council, supported by both the National Association of Local Councils and the Society of Local Council Clerks would be heard on 21 April.
- c) The Assistant Clerk told the meeting that she had contacted both St Margaret's Hall and St Lawrence Village Hall about the possibility of holding socially distanced Town Council meetings in those venues but had been told that current regulations limited numbers in attendance to six.

It was proposed by Councillor Stephen Cockett, seconded by Councillor Steve Milford and unanimously resolved:

to continue to hold Town Council Meetings virtually at least until 21 June.

40/21 ANNUAL PARISH MEETING

The Town Council's statutory responsibility to organise an Annual Parish Meeting by 1 June is more complex to implement than usual in the context of the pandemic.

It was unanimously resolved to:

- i) set the date for the Annual Parish Meeting of 2021 as 6pm on Monday 24 May 2021;
 - ii) agree the meeting should be held virtually; and
 - iii) ask the Community Development Working Group meeting of 22 April to make the detailed arrangements for in line with established practice.
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41/21 POST-ELECTION ARRANGEMENTS

Report 35/21 set out proposals for the initial arrangements for the new Town Council that emerges from the local elections of 6 May.

It was proposed by Councillor Dave Logan, seconded by the Mayor and unanimously resolved to:

agree the arrangements as set out in Report 35/21.

42/21 TOWN CLERKS' REPORT

- a) The Town Clerks' Report – 36/21 – recorded recent activity which did not require Town Council decisions at this time.
 - b) It included information on support for vulnerable residents, opening up, office management, a new kitchen, meeting with the Island's MP, the latest meeting of the South Wight Parishes Health and Wellbeing Forum and the meetings of the Working Groups.
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The meeting closed at 8.32 pm.

SIGNED BY THE MAYOR

DATE
