



# PUBLIC TOILETS

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 45/16

11 JULY 2016

The purpose of this paper is to report to Members on the first quarter of the Town Council's responsibility for the management of the Eastern Esplanade, Marlborough Road and Ventnor Park public toilets.

**No. DETAIL**

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**1) BACKGROUND**

- a) The Town Council took on responsibility for the management of the Eastern Esplanade, Marlborough Road and Ventnor Park public toilets on 1 April 2016 adding to the already existing management responsibility for the Shore Road toilets.
  - b) The sections of this Report provide information on Cleaning, Costs, Business Rates and Freehold Transfer.
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**2) CLEANING**

- a) Thanks to local residents Mr and Mrs Scovell's continuing willingness to clean the Shore Road toilets on a voluntary basis and Jackie Tiller having taken on responsibility for the Ventnor Park Toilets, the Town Council cleaning staff – two part-time workers – are responsible for the Eastern Esplanade and Marlborough Road facilities.
  - b) All four toilets have been maintained to a high standard throughout the period.
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**3) COSTS**

- a) The first quarter costs of £10,644 is £1,339 higher than Budget, £750 of which is due to one outstanding repayment in respect of the Wallgates' contract.
  - b) The major items within the adjusted real cost total of £9,574 are staff salaries of £2,817, maintenance at £2,875 and Business Rates totalling £2,341.
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**4) BUSINESS RATES**

- a) There is considerable confusion Island-wide about the consistency and practice of Public Toilet valuation for Business Rates.
  - b) Several Clerks have raised concerns about the fact that some of the Island's Toilets in car parks, parks and esplanades are rated as due for Business Rates while others are not: in one case one that was Business Rate free under Isle of Wight Council valuation has now been issued a rate demand.
  - c) The immediate impact for the Town Council is that it had been expected that the £6,237 Business Rate charge for the Eastern Esplanade could be successfully challenged as other esplanade serving toilets on the Island were not charged in this way.
  - d) However, our initial challenge against the valuation has been unsuccessful and, accordingly, until the conclusion of these discussions the payment demands are being made although unbudgeted for.
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**5) FREEHOLD TRANSFER**

- a) The three toilets transferred to the Town Council on 1 April were intended to be on a Freehold basis but turned out to be only on a Tenancy at Will.
  - b) In a letter to IWALC of 10 May 2016, portfolio holder Councillor Paul Fuller apologised for the delay and provided an assurance that work was continuing to achieve the full freehold transfer; no further contact has to date been made in this respect.
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