



TOWN CLERKS' REPORT

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 67/20

10 AUGUST 2020

The purpose of this Report is to record developments since the last meeting not requiring an Agenda item at this meeting.

No. DETAILS

1) WORKING FROM HOME

- a) In a virtual meeting of our office-based staff on 28 July we agreed that there is no need at this time to re-open the office as our home-working arrangements fully enable all of us to progress the areas of work we're responsible for.
- b) Daily contact by email and phone, augmented by informal use of gotomeeting as required and regular staff meetings ensure our work is fully co-ordinated.
- c) Regular visits to the office by Morgan Williams include the collection and distribution by scanning and email of mailed correspondence.
- d) We will review the arrangements at the staff meeting in the last week of this month.

2) COUNTY COUNCILLORS' MEETING

- a) Following the decision of the July Town Council meeting to ask the town's County Councillors to assist with our Major Projects programme both were asked to meet with the Mayor and me at the office
- b) Although Councillor Graham Perks did not respond to our email request to join us in a meeting to go through the Project list, Councillor Gary Peace did and joined us on Monday 27 July for a very constructive discussion of each of the Projects and offered to meet with us on a monthly basis.

3) ADDITIONAL FUNDING

- a) *Natural England* previously funded us to develop an area at Wheelers' Bay as a natural habitat for the rare Glanville Fritillary Butterfly; it has now confirmed that it will make a further £1,000 available this year for the maintenance of the area.
- b) *Violence Reduction Fund*: the Isle of Wight Community Safety Partnership has agreed a contribution to our youth work of £2,880 based on an application by our Community Development Officer Tony McCarthy.

4) BUSINESS RATES ON PUBLIC TOILETS

- a) On 16 July an eight-year campaign to remove the cost of Business Rates from public toilets came very close to success with the successful passing in Parliament of the second reading of the *Non-Domestic Rating (Public Lavatories) Bill*.
- b) The Bill is expected to complete its path into law in the first week of September and to be backdated to 1 April 2020; that will save the Town Council £7,900 this year.

5) SHORE ROAD CAR PARK HIRE

Two thirds of our Shore Road Car Park has been hired for a day by TMBD Productions acting for the BBC/ITV Streaming Company BritBox making a new film of the Cecil Day-Lewis story *The Beast Must Die* with some scenes being filmed in Bonchurch later this month.

6) BOB SEELY MP MEETING

- a) I joined the virtual meeting the Island's MP holds for Town & Parish Councils fortnightly on Wednesday 22 July and again on Thursday 6 August.
- b) Some 15 representatives of Town and Parish Council attended the first of them and

Hovertravel's CEO Keith Chapman was also present for questions.

- c) We also learned from Bob Seely that the Island Plan is postponed to after next May's elections.
- d) I also joined the meeting held on 6 August with 16 other representatives of Town & Parish Councils where questions to him ranged from the possibility of cyclists having to wear helmets, the proposed changes to Planning law and practice, the possibility of next May's elections being mail only and UCOG's plans for drilling on the Island.

7) CLERK'S COLUMN

- a) The Residents' Forum email list now sends the weekly Clerks' column directly to 490 residents.
- b) It is also included as page 4 of every weekly edition of the South Wight Chronicle – with thanks its Editor Andy Porter.

8) WORKING GROUPS

- a) The Assets & Services Working Group met on 21 July and 4 August with its next meeting planned for 20 August.
 - b) The Community Development Working Group met on 16 July and will meet next on 13 August.
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