



TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

14 MARCH 2011

The purpose of this report is to provide members with information on a number of areas of the Town Council's work.

No. DETAIL

1) OFFICES

- a) Thanks to welcoming hospitality from the Coastal Team, the move and first month in the two first floor rooms at the Coastal Centre have gone well.
- b) While waiting for the installation of the two new phone lines necessary for efficient working, the offices have only been staffed for half a day Monday-Thursday with working from home for the remainder of work time allowing catch-up on email and internet access.
- c) The lines are due to be in place on 17 March and staffing hours will be lengthened accordingly.

2) STAFFING

- a) The new staffing arrangements put in place by the 14 February Town Council meeting come into operation from 1 April.
- b) On the basis of 6-month temporary contracts, I will be engaged for an average of 12 hours a week with Alison Killick taking up the Assistant Town Clerk role.
- c) This represents a reduction to 56% in Town Clerking hours compared with the last half of the current year as the Town Council adjusts to the immediate aftermath of its responsibility for the Winter Gardens.
- d) It is anticipated that the required hours will fall further to 40% of the level of the last six months from 1 October 2011.
- e) Over the full year, the staffing costs are budgeted at 55% of those of the current financial year.
- f) The rationale for the temporarily higher level of staffing for the first half of the coming year is to provide for the completion of a range of tasks critical for establishing strong foundations for the Town Council's future work. These include:
 - o identification of, negotiations for and removal into a permanent Town Council Office/Resource area;
 - o development of the full list of 19 policies the Town Council is required by statute to have and to publish;
 - o establishment of an Asset Register (Audit Commission requirement);
 - o cataloguing and filing the unsorted financial and administrative records currently randomly contained in 28 banker's boxes;
 - o recruitment and induction of five new Town Councillors;
 - o responses to County Council budget cuts; and
 - o formal documentation of the Town Council's management of the Winter Gardens.

3) VACANCIES

- a) The Town Council currently now has four vacancies; its work would benefit greatly from filling those vacancies with people who share with current Members a clear commitment to the best interests of the Town, its residents and its visitors.
 - b) Two of those vacancies – one in each of Ventnor East and St Lawrence – failed to attract the necessary 10 requests from electors for an election and the Town Council is in the process of fulfilling its requirement to seek to fill them by co-option.
 - c) In accordance with the relevant process, invitations have been published for anyone interested
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in being considered for co-option to the Town Council to write to the Town Clerk, either by letter or email, on or before Friday 25 March to express that interest.

- d) Those who have written will be invited to an informal meeting with members of the Town Council for further discussion. Formal appointments will be made at the meeting of the Town Council on 11 April 2011.
- e) The other two vacancies – one in each of Ventnor West and St Lawrence – have to be filled by election because 10 electors have asked for one last September. Several attempts to organise elections have failed due to the absence of any nominations for either.
- f) New elections for these have now been arranged by the Isle of Wight Council for Thursday 14 April. Nominations for them have to be with the Elections Officer at County Hall by mid-day on Friday 18 March.

4) WINTER GARDENS

- a) The closing date for Expressions of Interest in the future ownership/management of the Winter Gardens is Tuesday 22 March.
 - b) I have asked John Metcalfe for information about the process for assessing the bids and, in particular, of the Town Council's involvement in it. At the time of writing this report a response was still awaited.
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