



TOWN CLERKS' REPORT

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING

REPORT 43/13

20 MAY 2013

The purpose of this report is to provide Members with updates on some areas of the Town Council's ongoing work.

No. DETAIL

1) VENTNOR BUSINESS ASSOCIATION (VBA)

- a) Following the VBA's recent Special Meeting to revise its Constitution and appoint officers, the Chair, Bob Ventress, and Vice Chair, Ann Hutchins, met with the Town Clerk on 2 May to discuss a basis for future joint working.
- b) The meeting was very positive indeed and it was agreed to arrange for regular meetings between the VBA and Town Council to bring the respective strengths of each to bear on projects for the benefit of the town.

2) TRADERS' MEETING

- a) The town's traders were invited to a meeting at the Youth Centre on the evening of Wednesday 8 May to hear the results of our Economic Development Worker's research in the town centre, identifying challenges and opportunities.
- b) Over 20 took up the invitation together with Councillors Harry Rees, Jason Mack and Jim Toogood and the Town Clerks. Nicky Cox's presentation provided the basis for a genuine and positive discussion to which all the traders contributed.

3) PUBLIC BENCHES

- a) The Assistant Town Clerk ensured the completion of a request for the installation of a new Memorial Bench, near the large Ventnor coastal sign.
- b) The current responsibility for the town's more than 300 benches remains confused as it has not been possible yet to agree a Memorandum of Understanding about which are and which are not being transferred to Island Roads for care and maintenance.
- c) Discussions are ongoing.

4) PADDLING POOL

- a) The opening of the Paddling Pool on 1 May went according to plan and the two part-time staff we now employ for the daily servicing of it are doing an excellent job.
- b) We're grateful to Councillor Jim Toogood for ensuring that the warning sign required by our Insurers was produced and installed on time.

5) PUTTING GREEN

- a) The Decked area and the new tables and Chairs the Town Council agreed to fund are now fully installed and make a real difference to the site and its facilities.
- b) Following discussions with an Isle of Wight Council Officer from the Parks service and on the basis of Chris Cooper's offer to be responsible for the removal of the dying hedge backing the decked area, the Isle of Wight Council have offered to provide and plant 40 new shrubs to form a new hedge at no charge to the Town Council.

6) SEMINAR SESSIONS

- a) The first of a series of four weekly Seminars on major areas of the Town Council's work involving the four new Members along with some of their colleagues and the Town Clerks took place on Thursday 16 May.
- b) The subject was Public Buildings in the town and their future. The following sessions will focus

on Deprivation in Ventnor (2 May), Economic Development (30 May) and Community Development (5 June).

7) 9-5 PROJECT

- a) This new project through Timebank offers informal advice and support for residents looking for employment on Thursday mornings at Ventnor Library with Councillor Jason Mack taking the lead responsibility for the project.
 - b) A real demand for this kind of support is already evident from the numbers taking advantage of the offer.
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8) TWITTER FEED

- a) The recently launched Twitter feed - @ventnorclerk – enables the sharing of information about developments in the Town Council's work and information relevant to the town's present and future.
 - b) We're currently averaging two contributions a day and expect to increase that as we go along.
 - c) Members have yet to link up with (follow) the information stream it provides. It is of course open to anyone with a Twitter account to access it routinely.
 - d) It's potentially a very effective addition to the Town Council's commitment to transparency and engagement. We're grateful to the new editor of the South Wight Chronicle for extending the weekly column of Town Council news and information introduced by Anne Munt and encouraged by the fact that in each of the last two weeks the page views of our web site crept over the 1,000 mark.
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