



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

GREEN ROOM, SALISBURY GARDENS

7PM

22 MAY 2023

Members present

Councillors: Steve Cooper (Chair), Brian Lucas, Dave Logan, Phil Warren, Mark Jefferies, John Watkins, Ian Bond, Julie Hutchison.

MINUTE SUBJECT

PUBLIC FORUM

There were no members of the public present.

36/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest at this time.

37/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for Absence were received from Councillor Steph Toogood.

38/23 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 17 April 2023 having been previously circulated to Members were taken as read.

The Minutes of the Planning Committee Meeting of 25 April and 16 May 2023 were noted.

Councillor Ian Bond raised two matters in connection with Town Council Minutes following which it was agreed that:

- a) the Minutes of all Meetings of the Town Council and its Committees be circulated to all Members; and
- b) the Minutes of meetings of the Town Council will not be added to the web site until they have been approved.

39/23 FINANCE REPORT

The Finance Report for this meeting, 26/23, had been previously circulated to Members and included information on Bank Balances at 30 April 2023 and a list of all payments made during April 2023.

Councillor Julie Hutchison asked about the reason for a significant number of expenses payments and the Assistant Town Clerk said she would provide the information by email.

It was proposed by Councillor Brian Lucas , seconded by Councillor Phil Warren and unanimously resolved to:

accept the Finance Report.

40/23 INTERNAL AUDITOR'S REPORT 2022/23

The Report of the Town Council's Internal Auditor Gareth Hughes was attached to Report 27/22 for this meeting.

It was proposed by Councillor Dave Logan, seconded by Councillor Ian Bond and unanimously resolved that:

- i) the Internal Auditor's Report be accepted and Gareth Hughes be thanked for his thorough preparation of it; and
- ii) Gareth Hughes be appointed as the Town Council's Internal Auditor for 2023/24.

41/23 HR COMMITTEE

- a) Following a meeting of the Town Council's HR Committee this morning its Chair, Councillor Steve Cooper, updated the meeting on its decisions.

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- b) He reported that only one application had been received in advance of the deadline and he had agreed two further late applications.
 - c) Of the three, one was agreed by the shortlisting panel to meet the criteria to be invited to interview but on the basis of the interview it was decided not to recommend appointment.
 - d) He added that the HR Committee planned to meet again on Friday to consider a range of options available.
 - e) Councillor Steve Cooper was thanked for his report that was duly noted.
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42/23 ASSETS AND SERVICES WORKING GROUP

- a) Report 29/23 for this meeting outlined the role of the Group to date, included a list of works currently in progressed and identified the concern about its membership following the resignation of James Toogood.
- b) The Mayor reported that the Council had met informally before the meeting and Members are aware of the challenge the Group faces.
- c) Councillor Brian Lucas said that the list was not as imposing as it looked at first sight and that it could be managed within Budget involving the use of external consultants where necessary and that he was withdrawing his stepping down from the Committee.
- d) The Mayor said that he proposed coming off the Sustainability and Biodiversity Working Group and moving to the Assets and Services Working Group that he expected to meet next on 30 May.

It was proposed by Councillor Phil Warren, seconded by Councillor Dave Logan and unanimously resolved to appoint:

Councillor Brian Lucas as Chair of the Assets and Services Working Group; and
Councillor Steve Cooper as at member of the Assets and Services Working Group.

43/23 TOWN CLERKS' REPORT

- a) The Town Clerk's Report – 30/23 – recorded recent activity which did not require Town Council decisions at this time.
 - b) It included the Bonchurch Celebration of the Coronation, the giving of Coronation Mugs to the town's children, the Ultra Challenge's use of Salisbury Gardens, the new vacancy for Ventnor West and dates of Working Group meetings.
 - c) Councillor Brian Lucas proposed moving on to a discussion of the Clerk's Column in response to which the Clerk advised the Mayor that as the matter was not on the Agenda it should not be discussed at this time.
 - d) The Mayor ruled that the matter could be considered and Councillor Brian Lucas proposed that all future editions of the Column should be approved by the Town Council prior to publication.
 - e) The Clerk said that the Column had been published weekly for 12 years without concern from Members and that he felt the suggested change would be a form of censorship and he could not publish the Column again under such a restriction.
 - f) The Mayor rejected the suggestion of censorship, asserting that it was simply important to ensure that communications from the Town Council should reflect a balanced view.
 - g) The Clerk confirmed that he would not produce any further editions of the Clerk's Column.
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The meeting closed at 7.32pm

SIGNED BY THE MAYOR

DATE
