



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

GREEN ROOM, SALISBURY GARDENS

7PM

10 FEBRUARY 2025

Members present:-

Councillors: Steve Cooper (Chair), Steph Toogood, James Toogood, John Watkins, Dave Logan, Mark Jefferies, Ian Bond, Linda Jefferies, Steve Milford, Sam Smith

Also present:- Katherine Burden (Clerk), Alison Killick (Assistant Town Clerk), Morgan Williams (Policy, Projects and Premises Officer), Catherine Hammond (Business and Voluntary Sector Officer)

MINUTE SUBJECT

01/24 PUBLIC FORUM

There were 32 members of the public present.

A member of the public raised the matter of beach safety and gave background on the blue flag. It was asked whether savings could be made through making cuts to the flower beds in Ventnor Park. It was asked how much the cost would be to have beach safety for certain periods of the year. It was asked what the people of Ventnor would cut instead of beach safety. It was asked if organisations would need to now provide their own first aid through St John's Ambulance or Red Cross for events.

It was asked where the negative opinions originated. A member of the public conducted a survey via social media and shared the results of 230 respondents with the Council.

A member of the public noted that there needs to be a duty of care.

A member of the public noted that there was an accident log that should be examined.

A member of the public noted that people would be willing to work for the beach safety team.

It was asked whether each household would give a donation or contribution to pay for the service.

The Chair noted that a decision had not yet been made and services had been taken over from the Isle of Wight Council. The Chair noted that there Ventnor Town Council does not provide lifeguards. Lifeguard training was offered by Ventnor Town Council but was not taken up this year. If volunteers are used, then they would be treated as employees as they have to be insured.

It was asked why the beach safety team was chosen to be cut.

A member of the public had a file on the number of rescues undertaken since 1907. A member of the public raised about the issues with the tides. It was noted that the space had been signed over to the Isle of Wight Council for the purpose of beach safety.

It was asked why there is a large amount put aside for Ventnor Park and the public toilets.

The Chair noted that the money for the beach safety provision could be retained with a consultation to follow.

A member of the public noted that Ventnor beach is a popular beach. It was noted that the beach safety team prevent accidents. It was suggested that assets in the town should be used to for generating income.

A member of the public had to assist with two people who were caught out in the tide by the pier.

A member of the public asked if a health and safety audit has been done of all areas. Would Ventnor Town Council be prepared to assist with crowdfunding.

A member of the public noted that he was nearly swept away. It was noted that there was no consultation with regard to cutting beach safety.

The Chair explained that consultation will take place next week and will be advertised on social media and on the boards. The Chair explained that there is possibly a solution. Cllr Ian Bond explained that the budget has to be legally set as this meeting to allow the Isle of Wight Council to make preparations.

It was asked whether staff cuts could be considered.

02/25 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies for absence from Cllr Julie Hutchison.

03/25 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest received at this time.

04/25 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes of the meeting of 9th December 2024 having been previously circulated were taken as read:

It was proposed by Councillor John Watkins, seconded by Councillor Linda Jefferies, and unanimously resolved to:

Accept Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 9th December 2024.

The Minutes of the: -

- Planning Committee 4 December 2024
- Business and Community Committee 5 December 2024
- Buildings Maintenance Committee 10 December 2024
- Policy and Resources Committee 18 December 2024
- Planning Committee 18 December 2024
- Environment and Transport Committee 6 January 2025
- Policy and Resources Committee 16 January 2025

are for information only.

05/25 TOWN CLERK'S REPORT

It was noted that the hard copies of the newsletter need to be distributed to Ventnor Library, Ventnor Surgery and the Post Office.

06/25 FINANCE REPORT

Cllr Bond noted an overspend this year and that this has been happening over a number of years. The reserves have depleted and this cannot continue as it could lead to bankruptcy. It is a legal requirement to have reserves. The budget needs to be balanced.

It was proposed by Councillor Steph Toogood, seconded by Councillor Sam Smith, and unanimously resolved to:

Accept the Finance Report.

07/25 BUDGET DECISIONS REPORT

Cllr Mark Jefferies noted that an email had been received that the Playgroup about the increase in attendance on a Thursday. Cllr Steph Toogood asked whether there are statistics on attendance. The Town Clerk confirmed that records are kept of attendance at the sessions.

Cllr Mark Jefferies asked about the small increase in the Shore Road car park charges. Cllr James Toogood noted that money was being lost on that particular car park. Cllr Mark Jefferies noted that the same could be said for the Town. Cllr Bond noted that the structure of the breakdown is correct, but an increase could be applied.

It was proposed by Councillor Ian Bond and unanimously resolved to:

Increase the charges at Shore Road Car Park as follows

Up to 1 hour £1.50

1 to 4 hours £3.00

4 to 10 hours £5.00

Beach Safety was discussed, and 3 suggestions were put forward:

1. To cut the service
2. To have lifeguards for 2 months in the peak of the summer season
3. To have first aid provision minus lifeguards for 4 months.

Cllr Steve Cooper suggested an extensive consultation next week to get a view on provision if the money is kept in the budget. Cllr Steve Milford and Cllr Mark Jefferies noted that they would support a consultation.

It was proposed by Councillor Steve Cooper, seconded by Councillor Steve Milford, and unanimously resolved to:

Retain an allocation for Beach Safety in the budget.

Cllr Ian Bond suggested that pros and cons on the options are put forward for the public to see as lifeguards were already assumed to be part of the provision up until now.

It was proposed by Councillor John Watkins, seconded by Councillor Sam Smith, and unanimously resolved to:

Retain an allocation for both Toddler Group sessions in the budget.

Cllr Mark Jefferies noted that there would be no provision if Wroxall School closes and therefore may be more demand. Cllr Steph Toogood noted that it should be supported but monitored with officers continuing to look for grants for the service.

08/25 BUDGET 2025/26

Cllr Bond noted that we do not have clarity on Town Council elections, so there is money currently set aside for this purpose. Polling Stations have been told to retain the bookings for this year. Cllr James Toogood asked whether the money could be set aside if the elections do not go ahead.

It was proposed by Councillor Steph Toogood, seconded by Councillor Mark Jefferies , and unanimously resolved to:

Accept the amended budget with a precept requirement of £599,033 to include beach safety and the full provision for the Toddler Group.

09/25 APPOINTMENT OF INTERNAL AUDITOR

The Town Clerk introduced the paper and explained that an Internal Auditor needed to be appointed for the 2025/26 financial year. The recommendation was to appoint Maxine Warr who had been the Internal and Interim Auditor of the 2024/25 financial year. The Town Clerk explained that Maxine Warr had previously been a Parish Clerk and County Officer for the Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils and is therefore familiar with Town and Parish Council requirements. The Town Clerk noted that Maxine Warr had conducted the Internal and Interim Audit for the 2024/25 with competency and independence. Cllr Steve Cooper noted that he was aware of Maxine Warr and supported her nomination.

It was proposed by Councillor JW, seconded by Councillor LJ , and unanimously resolved to:

Appoint Mrs Maxine Warr as Ventnor Town Council's Internal Auditor for the 2025/26 financial year having considered her competency and independence.

10/25 FREE PARKING 25 MAY AND 5/6 JULY 2025

The Town Clerk introduced the paper and Cllr Steve Cooper noted that this is something which would be beneficial for the community. The Town Clerk noted that this would be Ventnor Town Council leased car parks only.

It was proposed by Councillor Steph Toogood, seconded by Mark Jefferies and unanimously agreed to:

Instruct the Town Clerk to ask the Isle of Wight Council to match free car parking in their car parks on 25 May and 5 and 6 July 2025 between 10am – 6pm.

It was proposed by Councillor Sam Smith, seconded by Councillor Dave Logan, and unanimously resolved to:

a) Free parking in Shore Road Car Park on Sunday 25th May 2025 between 10am and 6pm;

b) Free parking in Shore Road, Dudley Road, Market Street, and Pound Lane Car Parks on Saturday 5th July and Sunday 6th July 2025 between 10am and 6pm.

11/25 COMMITTEE SUBSTITUTES

Cllr Bond noted the current Standing Orders follow the NALC model which requires Members to give 3 days' notice to the Proper Officer if they cannot attend a meeting. Cllr Bond noted that Standing Orders would need to be amended in April and he would support the recommendations of the report to amend Standing Orders to allow substitutes to be appointed at the start of a meeting. Cllr Bond noted that substitutes cannot be nominated now as the Standing Orders need to be amended and the Town Council in May would be more appropriate for nominating substitutes.

It was proposed by Councillor James Toogood, seconded by Councillor Ian Bond, and unanimously resolved to:

Agree to the wording of Standing Order 6) a) (ii) being amended as per 2) (a) of Report 07/25.

12/25 CHILD PROTECTION POLICY

The Town Clerk gave an overview of the paper.

It was proposed by Councillor John Watkins, seconded by Councillor Dave Logan, and unanimously resolved to:

Agree to the adoption of the Child Protection and Vulnerable Adults Policy.

13/25 SOCIAL MEDIA POLICY FOR COUNCILLORS

The Town Clerk noted that previous changes from 2022 had not been incorporated and that these would need to be added.

It was proposed by Councillor Mark Jefferies, seconded by Councillor Ian Bond, and unanimously resolved to:

Agree to the adoption of the Social Media Policy for Councillors subject to the changes from 2022 being incorporated.

14/25 **EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS**

In view of the confidential nature of the following items:

It was resolved under the Public Bodies Admissions to Meetings (1960) Act:

To exclude the Public and Press whilst the next items are under discussion as they are of a confidential nature.

The meeting closed at 8.24pm

SIGNED BY THE MAYOR

DATE
