



BELGRAVE ROAD GREEN AREA

FULL TOWN COUNCIL MEETING REPORT 40/25

11 AUGUST 2025

The purpose of this Report is to ask Members to consider taking on a Section 142 Licence to take on maintenance of an unkept piece of land at the Western end of Belgrave Road, with the request submitted by Councillor Karl Hunter

NO. DETAILS

1) BACKGROUND

It has been noted locally that the green area at the Park Avenue end of Belgrave Road is currently under the responsibility of Island Roads. The space would benefit from some significant improvement.

Councillor Karl Hunter has been leading discussions with a local business who would be willing to take on maintenance of this area.

2) SUGGESTED APPROACH AND VTC INVOLVEMENT

The suggestion is for Ventnor Town Council to take out a Section 142 Licence Agreement with Island Roads for a fixed term, and then outsource the maintenance of this area to the local business.

Attached to this report is a letter from the gardener outlining their proposal and approach.

The only part of the request which requires any financial commitment is in the form of asking Ventnor Town Council to pay for the green waste removal, as is done with various groups and areas in town. Following discussions with contractors, officers have identified budget capacity to accommodate the cost of this removal within existing budgets, made possible by a reduction in contractor workload in other areas, without compromising budget integrity or service to our community.

3) RECOMMENDATION

- a) The Town Council is recommended support this approach and approve for officers to have discussions with the Isle of Wight Council to the project underway
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Dear Councillor's,

I am pleased to submit the following proposal for your consideration.

The new owner of the Royal Hotel, Mr Mohammed Bathich, is embarking on plans to invest in the premises, with the aim of adding value while retaining the Royal's Victorian charm. Former head gardener at the Botanical Gardens, John Cronin, is in charge of developing the grounds.

There is a small plot of County owned land west of the Royal between Belgrave Rd and Park Ave. At present, the plot falls under the management of Island Roads, but as you can see from the attached photos, it does not receive much attention. Given the plot's close proximity to The Royal, Mr Bathich would like to bring it up to a better standard as outlined in Mr Cronin's proposals below. The cost of any work undertaken will be borne by the Royal, and they only ask if VTC can arrange the collection of any green waste.

There is legislation that covers access and permission to plant and maintain trees, shrubs, plants, or grass on parts of the highway, by way of a licence granted under section 142 of the Highways Act. Island Roads informs me that Shalfleet, Newport and Carisbrook Town Councils have also used this legislation to enhance County owned land in their respective parishes.

I have been advised by Island Roads that the best solution in this instance would be to create an S142 licence between the Highway Authority and VTC. Once in place, VTC can delegate powers to the Royal Hotel under a separate agreement. The rationale for this arrangement structure is that the Town Council has adequate continuous liability insurance to indemnify work undertaken.

If Councillor's sees fit to approve this proposal, an agreement can be drawn up between the VTC and the Royal in the same vein as the licence agreement between the IWC and VTC, also stipulating mutual withdrawal terms and conditions not to develop beyond the scope of any agreement.

As you all know, the Royal Hotel is among Ventnor's most iconic and historical buildings and businesses, bringing thousands of tourists to the town each year. I believe this is an opportunity for VTC to work with and show its support for a local business that is willing to invest to help create a more vibrant and resilient town.

Mr Cronin adds the following:

The new owner of the Royal Hotel Mr Mohammed Bathich wishes to take responsibility for the plot moving forward. The area from all sides looks unkempt. Please see attached photos of the area. The overgrown plot has a negative impact so close to the well tended surrounding gardens of The Royal Hotel.

We propose to improve the plot in the following manner, managed by myself, John Cronin.

- General weeding and pruning of existing plants and lifting canopy of trees to add more light.
- Remove any saplings not originally planted.
- Add planting in keeping with the area, low level plus additional trees to be discussed with council Members.
- Dodonaea (hot bush) shrub, has got too tall in my opinion, to see the best appearance of this plant. Unfortunately if you cut below the flower it will not come back and it needs lifting.
- Palm trees in this area look untidy, again with managing they can give the area a showcase this remarkable climate affords.
- The tall Grass Flax needs to be removed as they add no value to this small area. They are hard to control and facilitate Ivy and bramble establishing a foothold of the area.
- Removal of litter.

We would ask for continued support with the removal of green waste. If you have any questions or need reassurance that this will be maintained please contact the owner as he has huge experience with maintenance of land.

I hope you are assured that the gardens and surrounding area are important to Mr Bathich, he wants to bring colour to the hotel which can only benefit Ventnor.

Kind regards,

John

