

MAYOR'S REPORT

TOWN COUNCIL MEETING – THURSDAY 17TH SEPTEMBER 2020

It does not seem a month since I was writing my report for August and yet here we are. The weather on the whole has been fabulous in these unfamiliar times. Covid 19 continues reminding us that we all need to be vigilant and continue to take care, keep yourself safe and your loved ones. Please always remember to socially distance and keep up the hand washing! The new six per household rule has been put in place to try to keep us safe, difficult though it may be. As you are all aware this pandemic is deadly and obviously not leaving our shores anytime soon.

The Town Council (TC) continues with business as usual, with virtual meetings taking place. You can attend our meetings by using the link that is advertised on the meeting agenda. This can be found in the Council's Notice Boards and, on our website, and our Facebook page.

I thank the council staff in continuing to keep East Cowes clean and safe.

The Isle of Wight Council (IWC) has purchased Venture Quays and the TC will be in talks soon regarding the future. The Barracks and the green opposite where the toilets were, Columbine Building and the machine shops next to The Barracks are now owned by IWC as is Maresfield Road Car Park. This is all part of Venture Quays. The IWC has promised to keep us informed of everything happening in this area and the TC will hold them to this promise and Town Councillors will be kept informed of all developments.

The landward side of the Esplanade has been leased to the Town Council from the toilets to end of the Coastguard Cottages. The TC signed the papers last Monday and we are just awaiting the completed documents from the IWC.

The TC have been looking at the Government White Paper regarding changes to the national planning system. The TC have the opportunity in giving their opinion through a consultation paper which the National Association of Local Councils (NALC) is co-ordinating. The TC will be adding the final touches at Full Council ensuring our voice is heard. We thank our planning consultants Martha and Daniel James for their guidance. This whole process, although a national process, will be useful in planning for our future here in East Cowes; as is the recent questionnaire the community have so kindly sent back to us giving their thoughts. Thank you.

Cllr Karl Love was elected as Deputy Mayor at last month's meeting and we congratulate him on taking on the role. The TC have much to discuss during the next few months regarding East Cowes and I look forward to working closely with Cllr Love.

It was brought to my attention that a fire was ignited on one of the picnic tables at the Skate Park on the weekend of the 12/13 September. This vandalism is not helpful and costs the residents of our town dearly. If you saw anyone in this vicinity on Saturday, please contact our Clerk. We are now most fortunate in having CCTV in this location and I am hoping between us we can find those at fault and possibly pass on the repair costs to them.

I do hope you have managed to read a copy of September's Town Crier, which is available on our website and Facebook page. The TC will be discussing more effective distribution at the Full Council meeting on the 17th Sept. The Town Crier can be found in Kathy's, Flix, Hardware Store, Premier Shops (Floating Bridge, Adelaide Grove), Meadow Road Stores and York Avenue Garage Shop. We appreciate feedback, so please let us know your opinion on the content and any improvements you think we can make in keeping you updated.

The Floating Bridge is a disaster in my opinion, as I know first-hand, how frustrating this bridge FB6 is; especially since it has not been in service. This is the tenth week of the bridge laying idle. Let us hope that it is resolved very soon. It was pleasing to read that the IWC have at last admitted what a white elephant this has been.

The replacement launch is not ideal, and it is very worrying how it works. Specifically, the gap between the launch and shore..... even worse the Rib which is put in place from 6pm as the launch retires for the night. I had the most frightening experience in taking this vessel, social distancing non-existent, you take your life in your own hands, no life belts visible or told where they are, one man only operated with approximately a maximum of 12 people taken across at one time, squashed in like sardines. What a nightmare! I personally would like to invite the IWC officers in charge of this fiasco to take the five-minute journey, carrying a bike/pushchair/small children onto it. I also invite their elderly relatives with walking difficulties/any other disabilities to join them. East and West Cowes have been so badly treated, I fear for the safety of our community.

On this note I conclude this month's report.

Take care and keep safe *Jane Rann*