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Mayor's Annual Report

At the start of 2020 the Town Council recognised volunteers in East Cowes, who do such a marvellous job of helping and enriching the lives of others by hosting the Mayor's Tea Party. Full Council Meetings, Facilities Projects and Events and Planning Committees kept the Council busy with many different projects and responsibilities including the new Community Hub and Library. The public are welcome to attend these meetings and ask questions during the public forum.

Covid-19 kicked in at the end of March forcing us to close the Town Hall. Staff worked from home and our wonderful caretakers continued to keep things ticking over in the town. We had to close the public toilets, the play parks and other council facilities. To support the more vulnerable in the community a Volunteer Hub was set up and coordinated by our former Councillor, Michael Paler; a team of volunteers helping to get shopping and medication for those who were shielding and unable to leave their homes. We all owe them a great deal of thanks for their unstinting and tireless efforts.

During lockdown donations were made to Cowes and Ryde Food Banks and to Waitrose for food parcels for the those in need. Town Councillors and I kept in touch with various neighbours and people living alone to ensure they were OK. One of our caretakers and I made sure that notices were placed at play parks informing the public of the closures. Cllr Love filmed Easter messages, which I was pleased to take part in, to bring messages of hope to the community.

To celebrate VE Day there was a competition for residents for the best VE themed front garden, house frontage and window. Cllrs Love, Paler and I judged the competition. Everyone was in good spirits despite the lockdown with one road holding a socially distanced street party. VE wreaths were also placed on the cenotaph and onto the seat at the front of the Town Hall.

In July ZOOM meetings were introduced which enabled us to continue "business as usual". At first this seemed quite strange and everyone seemed to look so different with the longer hair styles we had all acquired. Once all the Covid-19 safety precautions had been put in place the Town Hall gradually opened for hire and we were able to implement a "click and collect" library service.

We have been pleased to welcome a film company recently, who were based at the Barracks site, making a film called "The Beast Must Die" for Brit box.

Lockdown 2 means the Town Hall has been closed initially for a month. This will hit us all very hard especially with Christmas looming, but if we are to beat this then the measures must be taken seriously. Please keep an eye out for anyone needing extra help and try to be a good neighbour. I am hopeful that we shall all be able to spend Christmas with our families and friends. On behalf of the Town Council, I wish you all good health and happiness for 2021 and look forward to seeing you all again during the new year.

Cllr Jane Rann, Mayor of East Cowes

EAST COWES LIBRARY



Normally open for drop off and collect Mondays 10am-1pm

If covid restrictions prevent the Library opening or if you can't get there.....

people who have library cards can download the Borrowbox app. and borrow e-books to read.

There is RbDigital for downloading news papers, magazines etc.

You can log in to your library card account on the IWCouncil's website, browse and borrow e-books and audio books. The service is available for adults and children.

www.iow.gov.uk/Residents/Libraries-Cultural-and-Heritage/Library-Enjoy/eBooks

Looking forward to 2021 - It is hoped that **Rhyme Time** and **Reading Groups** will be able to begin encouraging more people in the community to participate regularly in reading activities and all the joy that can bring.

Community Hub Latest News

2021 promises to be an exciting year for East Cowes as building work will commence on the Community Hub/Library adjacent to the Town Hall. The Osborne Road toilets and old flat roofed side extension to the town hall will be demolished.

The front of the new building will be constructed with floor to ceiling glass windows leading to a light and welcoming space housing the library and computer suite. There will be a bright and welcoming entrance area, an accessible public office, together with a community meeting room, that will be available for hire. Three accessible, unisex toilets will replace the old toilet block with one accessed from inside the new building which will include baby changing facilities.

This major Town Council project has been made more complicated by a restricted site, but it is hoped that it will be completed by the end of 2021. In the meantime, the library will operate from the town hall and hirers will be able to continue their regular groups there. If there is one thing that has been learned from the Covid 19 crisis, it must be an appreciation of how important it is for people to be socially connected with others. The Community Hub will provide a valuable community asset in the heart of the town where individuals, groups and activities can continue to bring people together for many years to come.

COMMUNITY VOLUNTEERS NOTICEBOARD

Can you spare a few hours a week to get involved in your community? In the year ahead there will be opportunities to participate in a variety of different groups and activities.

- **Community Speed Watch** – teams of 3 volunteers needed. Free training provided by Hampshire Police to conduct speed watch monitoring
- **Litter Pickers** - wanted following the success of national litter picking initiatives to keep the town looking its best
- **Library Volunteers** – training provided, needed to help with regular sessions and supported by the Library Volunteer Co-ordinator
- **Friends of East Cowes Library** - a new group helping to raise the profile of our community library and help with events
- **Community Cinema Project** – following up on a suggestion from last years public consultation. Is this something you'd like to help with?

Please contact us if you are interested in finding out more....

clerk@eastcowestowncouncil.co.uk assistantclerk@eastcowestowncouncil.co.uk

Town Plan Questionnaire Results

A huge thank you to everyone who took the time to complete the recent Town Plan survey. There was a brilliant response with 698 returned in total which equates to 18% of households in the town.

More than 100 residents and stakeholders have asked to be kept informed about progress with the plan. The next stage for Plan Research who have carried out this comprehensive piece of work is to draft their recommendations for discussion at a forthcoming Town Plan Forum meeting.

More news to follow in 2021.....

EAST COWES VENTURE QUAYS UPDATE

Many of you will have read in the press that the Isle of Wight Council purchased Venture Quays on 28th September 2020. This includes 4 parcels of land: the Columbine and frontage; the area behind the Barracks building; the specific site of the Albany Factory and the temporary carpark to the rear in Maresfield Road. Chris Ashman, Director of Regeneration from IWC, attended the Town Council meeting in October to inform the public of these developments. Conditions of the IW Council's agreement with Homes England, the former owner, is that a housing scheme must commence on one of the sites by 2024.

The Barracks has been identified by the Regeneration Team as a possible community facility and will form part of the overall improvement of the Esplanade. A short term lease of the Albany Building will be going ahead with an island based business which requires an enhanced storage capability.

Mr Ashman will be providing informal updates to the Town Council at 6 weekly meetings and the Town Council will also be represented on a steering group that will be looking at the Waterfront Masterplan for the town. He will also be attending future council meetings to update the community on progress.



Local artist Chris Kemp has produced the above impression of what the landslip at the Esplanade could look like once gabions (cages of stones) have been installed and landscaping improvements have been made. A Facebook Page called **East Cowes Esplanade & Landslip Community Project** has been set up by Sharon Lake, East Cowes resident and Chair of the East Cowes Regeneration Steering Group. Please take a look!

Introducing East Cowes newest Town Councillor!



In November the Town Council co-opted Cameron Palin to serve as a Town Councillor. A huge welcome to Cameron, probably one of the youngest councillors in the country. All councillors are volunteers. Their role is to represent the interests of the Town's residents. They are champions for the community and endeavour to improve the town for everyone. They look after the council's assets and facilities, are responsible for setting an annual precept and allocate and manage the budget. There will be parish and town council, as well as Ward Councillor, elections in May 2021.

DID YOU KNOW?



The Town Council has recently taken on a lease from the IW Council which includes the landward side of the Esplanade, including the car park. It does not include the café and boat store. It is hoped that this will enable improvements to be made to enhance the area for the benefit of residents and visitors to the town.



A CRAFTY NEW INTEREST FOR 2021?

East Cowes Town Crafters is an inclusive crafting group, you may have seen our work in the decoration of the chain arch by the crossing in the town. The ethos of the group is to display craft using recycling resources and crafting with any age, any sex and any need.

East Cowes Town Crafters are now working towards an elephant themed pop up display to flood our town during Cowes Week 2021. We want to show "the world" this community, who we are and what we can do. There will be a selection of different ideas, the 6 inch knitted elephant displays in shop windows, the colouring in sheets to go in homes through out the town, elephant bunting, decoration of LARGE images of elephants and anything we haven't thought about yet!! Tell us your ideas and we will see if we can achieve it with you.

East Cowes Town Crafters Facebook page shows the work already started and if you wish to contact the group please e-mail us at ancjac@gmail.com. Anyone, yes, that includes you or your group can join in.

Be there or be left out. Article submitted by Joy Cleightonhills

Dates for Your Diary 2021

All Council meetings are held by Zoom until further notice. Details of how you can join the meeting can be found on the agendas in the Council Notice Boards or on our website www.eastcowestowncouncil.co.uk

You can even join the meeting by phone!

Full Council meetings start at 6 pm
January 21st, February 18th, March 18th

Facilities, Projects and Events Committee start at
6 pm January 14th, March 4th

HOW TO CONTACT THE TOWN COUNCIL

The Clerks Office
East Cowes Town Hall
York Avenue
East Cowes
Isle of Wight
PO32 6RU

Tel: 01983 299082

Email: clerk@eastcowestowncouncil.co.uk

Website: www.eastcowestowncouncil.co.uk

XMAS HOLIDAY
Office closed from 1pm on 24th December
Re-opens 9am on 4th January 2021

SEND US YOUR COMMUNITY NEWS!!!!

Community contributions to this quarterly newsletter are very welcome. If you are involved with a local group, project or event, or have an interesting story about the town to tell, please email an article and a photo to: assistantclerk@eastcowestowncouncil.co.uk

Copies of the newsletter are usually available from the Town Hall lobby, retail outlets in the town, Queensgate Primary School, Holy Cross Primary School as well as on the Town Council website and Facebook.

DISCLAIMER: This newsletter is produced by East Cowes Town Council. All articles are taken in good faith. We cannot take any legal queries resulting from these. Submitted articles do not necessarily reflect the views of the Town Council. We reserve the right not to print submitted articles.