



## East Cowes Town Council

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Minutes of a meeting of **East Cowes Town Council** held at the East Side Curve, York Avenue, East Cowes **Thursday 21<sup>st</sup> July 2022 at 6pm**

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### Present

**Chair:** Cllr Reardon (Mayor)

**Councillors:** Packham, Lake, Love, Webster, Palin

**Clerk:** S Chilton

**Also present:** 2 members of the public, Cllr Michael Paler (Cowes Town Council), Chris Ashman (IWC Director of Regeneration), Alan White (IWC Highways PFI - Group Engineer), Leanna Lakes (Operations Director - Red Funnel)

### Public Forum

- A member of the public asked Cllr Sharon Lake about the starting date for the next phase of the landslip area of the Esplanade. Cllr Lake explained that permission would need to be sought from the IW Council. A feasibility study would need to be commissioned and funded and engaged by the IWC. Chris Ashman explained that they would have to consider the suitability of the land. The current phase was undertaken within current safety regulations. To go further a feasibility study would be required. The IWC have a duty of care to the public especially where there are instability issues, so the study would need to look at certainty and safety and design a scheme to fit those ambitions. Currently the IWC has no budget. Cllr Lake said that she had spoken to a geo-technical engineer and cost around £10 - £25k would be required just for the study. She also stated that there would need to be a commitment from the community, a taskforce to take the project forward as she was not prepared to undertake a project like this alone. Chris Ashman stated that Cabinet had agreed an investment plan which would seek to employ 2 regeneration managers who would create capacity in the community to identify funding and bring forward support. They should be in post by the end of the year. Cllr Lake said the last phase had taken 4 years from inception to starting so the next phase, should it be possible would probably be at least 5 years.

### 92/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies from Cllrs Hendry and Walker

Phil Jordan, IWC, Colin Rowland IWC, G. Barnetson, Red Funnel, R Tyldesley, Southern Vectis.

### 93/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

2.1 Cllr Love declared a non-pecuniary interest as IW Ward Councillor and as a member of the East Cowes Community Partnership and East Cowes Business Association. Cllr Reardon declared a non-pecuniary interest as a member of the East Cowes Community Partnership and East Cowes Business Association.

2.2 No written requests for dispensations were received.

94/22 MINUTES

The minutes of a meeting held on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022 were approved and signed.

**Resolved:** To approve the minutes of 16<sup>th</sup> June 2022.

95/22 EAST COWES TRAFFIC PLAN

Cllr Reardon welcomed Alan White, Chris Ashman and Leanna Lakes and explained that in the past each agency had blamed the other for the traffic issues in the town and therefore, it was felt appropriate to bring all parties together to discuss a way forward.

Cllr Lake began by outlining the points of the letter sent to Colin Rowland by ECTC identifying the various traffic issues in the town. She described an incident that had gridlocked the town in July 2021, and how the town regularly comes to a standstill at weekends, largely due to the ferry traffic coming into the town, awaiting boarding. The town lies on a peninsular and all roads join the main road with potentially 8000 residents affected. On "black days" there can be up to 9000 cars coming through the town at slow speeds subsequently polluting the atmosphere. As a result, businesses are closing on weekends; the environmental damage is increasing, and stakeholders appear to be doing nothing to alleviate the problems, despite repeated pleas from the council over past years. She asked how can this situation be acceptable to stakeholders?

Leanna Lakes (RF) stated that RF are addressing reliability statistics now and can manage traffic on steady days. Clear instructions are sent to customers regarding delays and their arrival times at the ferry and traffic light are managed to the flow of ferry traffic. This is already showing benefits in Southampton and traffic is not locking up the town. Cllr Lake restated that it was traffic coming into the town to board ferries that caused the problems not disembarkation, and that any management of the traffic lights in Well Rd would adversely affect both pedestrians and local traffic.

Cllr Webster said that the yellow box at the junction of the RF yard is largely ignored further blocking local traffic.

Cllr Love stated he was shocked that RF were still talking about managing the lights in Well Rd as assurances had been given by Graham Barnetson (RF) that this would not be happening. There seemed to be conflicting reports coming from RF on this.

All councillors were of the view that there was no sharing of information by the Highway Authority, Island Roads and consultants working with them. Discussions between all parties had been requested by ECTC over a year ago and but were no further forward.

Alan White (IWC) stated that Island Roads was a service provider who liaises with IW Council and do provide input to the highways authority. He explained that there are network limitations as to what can be delivered. Proposals had been put forward to ECTC in the past which included a reduction in parking spaces, and these had been rejected.

Cllr Love spoke about the dangers of using Castle St for exiting traffic and that both he and Island Roads had repeatedly written to RF regarding this. Emergency vehicle access was also highlighted. The Fire station is located on the main road and when it is gridlocked, they cannot exit. It was generally agreed that until RF yard opened their yard and a proper traffic plan put in place everything else would only be a temporary fix.

Leanna Lakes stated that a detailed traffic plan was needed. Councillors agreed and offered to work with all concerned on developing this. Cllr Palin said that collaboration was needed between the agencies. Cllr Webster asked if Saunders Way could be utilised so that town could have a road in and a road out. AW stated that this would not improve the situation overall as heavy / commercial vehicles cannot use the route and there was no support for a bus route there either.

A member of the public questioned how RF used the checking in booths and that they added to the congestion problem. They needed to look at relocating them.

Cllr Reardon stated that a traffic workshop was needed with all parties taking part. RF and IWC agreed. Cllr Lake said it needed to take place before the Markides traffic assessment in September. It was suggested that members of the public be invited to share their thoughts with councillors who could bring them to the workshop. Chris Ashman (IWC) said that following the workshop a draft report could then be brought to a public meeting.

**Resolved:** IWC arrange a traffic plan workshop to take place in early August to include RF, IWC, IR and ECTC.

96/22 WATERFRONT REGENERATION PLAN

5.1 Cllr Lake showed a series of presentations (attached) from ERM, Markides and her own view, illustrating ideas for the redevelopment of the Esplanade. Chris Ashman said that there would be a two public consultation on the plans held during August.

Cllr Reardon thanked the guests for attending.

## 97/22 FLOATING BRIDGE

Cllr Palin had asked some questions regarding staffing which Alex Minns had responded to. Cllr Packham asked why the Floating Bridge was running so slowly. Cllr Love explained that they don't want to strain the engines and the service was now running at approx. 3 crossings per hour.

## 98/22 FINANCE

7.1 Payments for approval were presented

7.2 Payments for ratification were presented

7.3 The bank reconciliation was presented

7.4 Due to unforeseen circumstances the quarterly budget report could not be presented until the next meeting

**Resolved:** To approve and ratify payments including Direct Debit and BACS and to note the bank reconciliations.

## 99/22 REPORTS

### 8.1 Clerks report

The Clerk stated that a report from The Footprint Trust (attached), was available to councillors.

### 8.2 Mayors report

No report submitted

### 8.3 IW Ward Councillors reports

Cllr Love updated council on the status of the Frank James building and Maresfield Rd carpark, which is now considered to be a high value site with its sea views, which conflicts with the Island Plan.

There have been incidents of dog attacks on the seafront which he has reported. He called for more signs to inform dog owners and raise public awareness. He noted that it was anticipated that Springhill nursery would be closing due to falling numbers and he was expecting further news.

### 8.4 Town Councillors reports

Cllr Webster stated that parking was taking place in the turning circle at the public toilets on the Esplanade which needed enforcement action. And that there was a campervan on the carpark which was parking inconsiderately to other users of the carpark.

Cllr Palin stated that there needed to be a discussion with Market Days regarding the East Cowes market. Cllr Reardon stated that this was in hand. He reported overgrown vegetation on the Saunders RD link road. He had arranged a meeting with the Mayor, the Clerk and HTP to discuss the possibility of an apprentice. The Island Plan draft would be reviewed again in August.

Cllr Packham gave a comprehensive report from the Environment & Sustainability meeting he had attended which included air quality & pollution and the cost of monitoring air quality. New build partnerships with Southern Housing, the crisis in affordable housing, 2000 are needed, and the plans for modular housing for new builds.

Cllr Lake spoke about a conversation she had recently with Peter Collinson regarding monitoring air quality and how he uses a drone monitor for this purpose. Cllr Lake had passed information to him about the issues facing the town and he has asked what budget the town council has or this purpose. He will contact Cllr Lake when he has looked at the information provided and is keen to help.

## 100/22 EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

To resolve that in view of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted, that it is in the public interest that the press and public are excluded. (1960 Public Bodies Admission to Meetings Act s1 (2)).

Policy matters

**Resolved:** To exclude the press and public for this item

Meeting closed at 8.30pm

Signed:

Dated: