



## East Cowes Town Council

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Minutes of a meeting of **East Cowes Town Council** held at East Cowes Town Hall, York Avenue, East Cowes **Thursday 16<sup>th</sup> November 2023 at 6pm**

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### Present

**Chair:** Cllr Reardon (Mayor)

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

**Clerk:** S Chilton

**Also present:** 7 members of the public, Louise Hill, County Press

Public Forum

There were no questions from the public forum

Meeting opened at 6.00pm

127/23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr Hendry sent apologies as he was going to be late owing to a Governors meeting

128/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

2.2 No written requests for dispensations were received.

129/23 MINUTES

The minutes of a meeting held on 19<sup>th</sup> October were approved and signed.

**Resolved:** To approve the minutes of 19<sup>th</sup> October 2023.

130/23 WATERFRONT/LUF REGENERATION

4.1 No update had been received from Gino Wooldridge but a report from the last meeting of the Waterfront Implementation Group which took place on the 17<sup>th</sup> October and the agenda for the 5<sup>th</sup> December had been received from Ross Edmunds. There was some discussion around the funding for the project which apparently needs a top up if the under-prom project is to be completed. If this is not achieved, then there is a risk that this will not go ahead. Cllr Love stated that he does not accept that there needs to be a substantial reduction in the funding available. He stated that the funding is in place but over time it has diminished in value. He requested that a letter be sent to Colin Rowlands setting out the Council's concerns that this project will not be completed in time for the planned celebrations that will be taking place on the Esplanade during next year. He wants to see the allocated sum spent on the project and the project delivered on time. Assurances were required that the money allocated is not compromised. Concerns were expressed about the time frame for the rest of the project. No expressions of interest had been received for the Maresfield Rd redevelopment. Cllr Lake stated that the Town Council should be consulted on any significant changes to the project plan, including housing and under the prom. It was suggested that a letter be sent to all IW Council officers concerned with this project, including the Chief Executive seeking reassurance that

the best option to maintain the integrity of the project in the circumstances be achieved. Further discussion took place on the contamination of the Maresfield Rd site and that it had not been dealt with by Homes England nor the IW Council and therefore it was not a viable site for developers. Cllr Webster stated that there had been a garage on the site and that the contamination had resulted from that. Cllr Webster also spoke about the history of the original arch at Bells Landing. Cllr Love said that it would be nice to have a plaque fixed to the archway to commemorate Robert Bell. Cllr Webster spoke about the slipway being replaced by Red Funnel and Cllr Reardon said that this was a given.

**Resolved:** To send a letter to the IW Council stating that assurances were required by the Town Council that original funding allocated for the project is not compromised and that the time frame for the project is achieved. That the Town Council should be consulted on any significant changes to the project plan, including housing and under the prom area.

#### 131/23 FLOATING BRIDGE

The Council received an update on the Floating Bridge from the IW Council. Comments were made about the changes to the IW council leadership and how that might affect the future of the floating bridge. KL stated that the IW Council had agreed the Town Council should receive a copy of the report on the floating bridge and that had not happened.

**Resolved:** To ask the IW Council for a copy of the report

#### 132/23 CASUAL VACANCY CO-OPTION

6.1 The Council considered the programme for co-option to the current casual vacancy.

**Resolved:** The programme was agreed

#### 133/23 F,P&E COMMITTEE

7.1 The Council considered combining the F,P&E committee with Full Council to enable items to be dealt with on a monthly basis rather than bi-monthly.

**Resolved:** To combine F,P&E committee matters with Full Council

#### 134/23 XMAS POSTER

The Council considered the 4 entries received for the Xmas Tree switch on Poster and selected the entry from Emma Willey who attends Holy Cross school. Emma will be invited to switch the Xmas tree lights on December 1<sup>st</sup>

#### 135/23 WATER SAMPLING

9.1 The council considered continuing to fund water sampling at an annual cost of £350.00. A member of the public stated that the Environment Agency were sampling in front of the beach hut when the worst of the contamination was usually in front of Cambridge Rd.

**Resolved:** It was agreed that water sampling will continue to be funded at a cost of £350 and to request that the Environment Agency change the sampling location to the area in front of Cambridge Rd

#### 136/23 IW COUNCIL PLANNING ENFORCEMENT

10.1 The council had received a request from IW Council Planning department requesting them to consider funding a Planning Enforcement Officer dedicated to East Cowes, ranging from 1day per week at an annual cost of £7,884.80 to 5days per week at an annual cost of £39,424.00. After much discussion it was agreed that this would be a burden on the local taxpayer and that it could be seen as double taxation for this service. The council felt that enforcement have a duty to investigate planning breaches and therefore should not need to be funded by parish councils.

**Resolved:** Not to fund an Enforcement Officer

#### 137/23 CENTENARY PANEL

11.1 The council considered commissioning a centenary information panel to commemorate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of the opening of the Esplanade which had been suggested by Angie and Ken Mathews. Ken had kindly drafted a panel for the council to consider, together with costs of producing the panel. The location was discussed, and it was suggested that it be placed where the panels for the landslip project are, as they are protected from the weather. Cllr Love asked if the words "continuation of the enhancement of the Esplanade" could be incorporated

within the wording. There was some discussion about the material to be used for the panel and it was agreed to go for the aluminium option as it would be more robust. The council thanked Angie and Ken for their hard work.

**Resolved:** It was agreed to commission the panel and to place it alongside the Landslip panels

## 138/23 FINANCES

12.1 The council considered the payments as presented including those made by Direct Debit and BACS

12.2 The Council noted the bank reconciliation for October 2023

**Resolved:** To agree the payments as presented and to note the bank reconciliation

## 139/23 REPORTS

13.1 The Clerk read letters from Victim Support and Ability Dogs 4 Young People thanking the council for their kind donations which were very welcome and would make a difference to local people

13.2 Mayors report – The Mayor did not have a report this month

13.3 IW Ward Councillors reports

Cllr Love gave his report which included lobbying Matt Price regarding trees that had been cut down and the recent flooding that occurred in East Cowes. He was extremely concerned that the pumps had not been switched on by Southern Water which had intensified the flooding and caused suffering to local people. He had contacted the Fire Brigade and the police who were unable to help but had contacted Southern Water on the council's behalf and instructed them to put the pumps on. As soon as this happened the difference in the levels of flood water were noticeably lowered. He stated that questions needed to be asked of Southern Water and the Environment Agency in respect of actions to mitigate flooding which were promised up to 18 months ago and had not happened. He said that East Cowes was unprepared for further inevitable flooding and that we need to act more quickly. He stated that cars exiting the ferry were driving through the flood water at speed and causing the water to flood nearby homes. He said that there needed to be a point where Red Funnel stopped the ferries when flooding occurred. He also said that people affected needed to opportunity to put their cases forward to Southern Water and the Environment Agency. The IW Council needed to look at the sandbag situation as there are not enough stores around the island and people were ransacking the store in Well Rd leaving local people without any. He also stated that Red Funnel are discussing building on a flood plain with no plans for flood mitigation. He suggested that Southern Water and the Environment Agency be asked to come to East Cowes to speak with the Town Council. Councillors agreed that this should be arranged. Local people that had been affected could claim up to £500 to help with damage and the IW Council officers who attended during the flood should have the names of those affected.

13.4 Town Councillors reports

Cllr Palin reported that he had attended the Remembrance services and wreath laying to represent the Mayor who had been suffering with Covid. He had also attended the community market in the Town Hall which had been the best attended to date.

Cllr Lake stated that she thought the resilience plan for flooding should be sustainable and would assume no outside help would be forthcoming and that we should be self-sufficient at these times. We need to identify local sandbag stores, appropriate telephone numbers for people in need and locations for displaced people. She said that the Town Council needs the authority to act and take whatever steps are necessary.

Cllr Packham had attended the Remembrance Service on Sunday 12<sup>th</sup> November. He stated that the Sustainability Forum meeting had been cancelled.

## 140/23 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)).

**Resolved:** To exclude the press and public.

Staffing Matters

Meeting closed at 8.15pm

Signed:

Dated: