



MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

VIRTUAL MEETING

7PM

8 FEBRUARY 2021

MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillors: Stewart Blackmore (Chair), Stephen Cockett, Brian Lucas, Colm Watling, Jamie Macaulay, Dave Logan, Steve Milford, James Toogood, Ian Bond, and Delian Fry

MINUTE SUBJECT

PUBLIC FORUM

The arrangements for the meeting providing for public access for the Public Forum were on the web site. There were four members of the public present who were welcomed by the Mayor along with County Councillor Gary Peace. One member of the public said that as a local taxpayer he felt that contracts should be publicly advertised.

10/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no Apologies for Absence.

11/21 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) The Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 11 January 2021, having been previously circulated to Members, were taken as read.
- b) The Minutes of the Planning Committee meeting of 12 January 2021 were noted.

12/21 FINANCE REPORT

- a) The Finance Report for this meeting 10/21 had been previously circulated to Members and included information on Bank Balances at 31 January 2021 and a list of all payments made during January 2021.
- b) Also included was a listing of budget variances during the first ten months of the 2020/21 financial year.

It was proposed by Councillor James Toogood, seconded by Councillor Brian Lucas and unanimously resolved that:
the Finance Report be accepted.

13/21 FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

- a) The basis for the annual review of the Financial Risk Assessment by the Town Council was set out in Report 11/20 for this meeting.
- b) The current arrangements for the management of financial risks had been previously circulated to Members in advance of the meeting for comment and amendment.

It was proposed by Councillor Dave Logan, seconded by Councillor Stephen Cockett and unanimously resolved that:
the Town Council approves and adopts the circulated list of arrangements for the management of financial risk.

14/21 BUDGET AND PRECEPT 2021/22

- a) A copy of the draft Budget for 2021/22 and the Precept required to fund it was attached to Report 12/21 for this meeting.
- b) Councillor Ian Bond drew attention to an error in line 44 of the draft Budget and to the impact on the Band D calculation of the surprising reduction of 70 in the Isle of Wight Council's Council Tax Base prediction for the town in 2021/22.
- c) He also questioned whether it was necessary to include provision for the 31 Bus at the same

level as the current year given that at present the Town Council had only committed to retaining the service for the current financial year.

- d) The correction to the draft's line 44 gave a predicted expenditure for 2021/22 of £487,682 with a Precept requirement of £355,889, a 3.7% reduction from the current year's level and resulting in a Band D charge of £142,73.

It was proposed by Councillor Stephen Cockett, seconded by Councillor James Toogood and unanimously resolved that the Town Council:

- i) adopts the Budget presented with this Report as revised;
 - ii) confirms its Precept-related Budget for 2021/22 to be £355,889; and
 - iii) authorises the Town Clerk to inform the Isle of Wight Council accordingly.
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15/21 VENTNOR PARK

- a) The outcomes from the discussions at both the Town Council's Working Groups of the future management of the Park following the signing of the lease for it were recorded in Report 13/21.
- b) The Mayor introduced this item, commenting that the Park was a Jewel in the Crown for the town and indeed for the whole Island.
- c) Councillor Delian Fry said that she had been contacted by Matt Chatfield, currently President of the Island's Natural History and Archaeological Society and Editor of Naturenet.net to express an interest in the development of the Park and she suggested he be invited to join the informal meeting.
- d) Councillor Colm Watling stressed the importance of the Town Council being clear about its own policy and vision for the Park before widening the discussion too broadly.

It was agreed to hold an informal virtual meeting for all interested Members and appropriate staff at 6pm on Monday 15 February and to invite Matt Chatfield to join it.

16/21 GROUNDS MAINTENANCE AGREEMENT

- a) A new Partnership Agreement for the Town Council's continuing management of grounds maintenance in the town from the Isle of Wight Council was attached to Report 14/21.
- b) Councillor Brian Lucas expressed concern about the responsibility for trees and structures that appeared to have been added and the Clerk confirmed that that had not been the case in the preceding Agreement.

It was unanimously agreed that:

the Town Council accepts this new Partnership Agreement subject to any amendments the Town Clerk, advised by the Assets and Services Working Group, may negotiate about particular areas of it.

17/21 CENTRAL CAR PARK

Report 15/21 recorded the Isle of Wight Council's offer to match fund the cost of an Island Roads' survey of the Central Car Park to explore the potential for increasing the number of parking bays.

It was proposed by Councillor Stephen Cockett, seconded by Councillor Steve Milford and unanimously resolved that:

the Town Council accepts the match funding offer of £1,000 from the Isle of Wight Council with thanks and will commission the survey from Island Roads.

18/21 NEW PUBLIC TOILET

- a) Report 16/21 summarised the progress to date of the Town Council's unanimous decision on the tender process for its project to build a new public toilet in the Central Car Park.
 - b) The Mayor introduced this item, referring briefly to the Report and then proposed the
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following motion that was seconded by Councillor Brian Lucas:

Subject to the Isle of Wight Council agreeing to a charge of £1,000 or less a year for the hire of the four car park bays in the Central Car Park required for the new Public Toilet and the receipt of Borrowing Approval the Town Council is recommended to contract with its Preferred Contractor D N Associates Ltd for the construction of the new Public Toilet.

- c) Councillor Colm Watling presented the case for re-running the tender process on an open tender basis, reflecting the arguments he has been publicising locally in his personal capacity.
- d) Councillor Dave Logan responded that this had been one of the more dispiriting aspects of his time on the Town Council as a campaign to undermine the credibility of the Town Council does nobody any good and that to cast aspersions on people who have done a great deal of work for no financial reward is completely out of order.
- e) The Mayor said that the motion would be put to a vote of Members and read the Motion again; Councillor Brian Lucas asked for a named vote that had the following outcome:
 - o *In support of the Motion:* The Mayor and Councillors Brian Lucas, James Toogood, Steve Milford, Stephen Cockett and Dave Logan.
 - o *In opposition to the Motion:* Councillors Colm Watling, Jamie Macaulay and Ian Bond.
 - o *Abstaining:* Councillor Delian Fry.
- f) **The Motion was carried and the Town Council has resolved that:**
Subject to the Isle of Wight Council agreeing to a charge of £1,000 or less a year for the hire of the four car park bays in the Central Car Park required for the new Public Toilet and the receipt of Borrowing Approval the Town Council is recommended to contract with its Preferred Contractor D N Associates Ltd for the construction of the new Public Toilet.

19/21 TREATY ON PROHIBITION OF NUCLEAR WEAPONS

- a) Attached to Report 17/21 was a request from Isle of Wight CND that following the coming into force of the Treaty on the Prohibition of Nuclear Weapons on 22 January 2021 that Ventnor Town Council join others in declaring support for a world ban on nuclear weapons.
- b) Councillors Brian Lucas, Dave Logan, James Toogood, Stephen Cockett, Steve Milford and the Mayor all expressed support for the request.

It was resolved that:

the Town Council declares support for a world ban on nuclear weapons.

20/21 TOWN CLERKS' REPORT

- a) The Town Clerks' Report – 18/21 – recorded recent activity which did not require Town Council decisions at this time.
- b) It included information on support for vulnerable residents, our insurance claim, office management during the pandemic, the Boniface Fields Lease, the latest meeting of the South Wight Parishes Health and Wellbeing Forum and the dates of the meetings of the Working Groups.
- c) The Mayor said how delighted he was with the development of Boniface Fields that is now such a valuable resource for the town.

The meeting closed at 8.06pm.

SIGNED BY THE MAYOR

DATE