

Minutes of the ANNUAL TOWN MEETING held at The Winter Gardens, Ventnor, I.W. on 23rd April; 2007.

Present: Councillor B.M.Lucas Town Mayor
Councillor Mrs.M.A.Cawley Deputy Town Mayor
members of the Town Council, representatives of local organisations and members of the public.

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors J.S.Fitzgerald-Bond, C.D.Mortimer and Mrs.S.J.Scoccia.

MINUTES

The minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on 24th April **2006** were approved and signed.

REPORT OF THE TOWN MAYOR

The Town Mayor reported on the business of the Town Council during the past year.

There had been twelve ordinary meetings with additional meetings informally to hold discussions with other local groups and representatives.

At local and national level the Town Council participated in consultations and surveys which meant that members had to spend much time studying information in detail so that the comments made were in the best interests of the town. The Council had worked closely with the Isle of Wight Council sometimes criticizing but being constructive in their suggestions.

The question of the possible pedestrianisation of the Esplanade had been considered and action taken to seek out the views of the public and the Town Council supported action proposed by Councillor Mrs.Scoccia for a feasibility study to deal with the improvement of The Esplanade. The Town Council contributed **£2000** towards the cost of the study.

Pressure had been put on the IW Council to improve the maintenance of public conveniences.

The condition of local roads had been raised and discussed with officers of the IW Council and questions raised concerning traffic management. In particular Leeson Road and Whitwell Road were of concern because of their essential use as part of the access to the town.

Regular maintenance and upkeep of public seats had been continued and a new source of supply of seats from the workshops at Albany Prison had been obtained. Several seats had been donated and dedicated in memory of loved ones and the Council were always pleased to accept these.

Meetings with the police regarding disorder in the town had taken place and the Council were pleased that we now had a level of policing greater per head of population than many other towns in the Island.

Discussions had been held regarding the possible installation of **CCTV** in the town centre. No final decision had been taken because of the high cost of ongoing operation which could amount to **£30,000** p.a. Negotiations were continuing and a provisional sum of **£8000** had been included in the budget for 2007/08.

Bus shelters had been maintained and the IW Council had provided several new shelters of a new design to meet regulations regarding electric lighting.

The old festoon lighting in High Street and Pier Street which had proved to be totally defective over the Christmas period had been removed. New decorative motifs were to be erected on the new street lighting columns the first three at the expense of the IW Council.

The operation of the putting green at Ventnor Park was very successful and a new concessionaire would take over for the 2007 season. It was planned to renew the existing arrangements with the IW Council.

The IW Council had approached the Town Council to ask if they would take over the management and operation of the bandstand to which the Town Council had agreed. Unfortunately the IW Council withdrew their proposal and it is hoped that such an arrangement can be considered again and finalised.

In regard to the review into electoral arrangements for the Isle of Wight by The Boundary Committee for England the Town Council had submitted their views that no change is required in the present warding for the Town Council area. The Town Council opposed any reduction in the number of members serving on the IW Council having regard to the existing pressure on members of that authority. Any reduction of membership could mean that more work would fall on local councillors who give their services voluntarily and already undertake a heavy workload both as councillors and active members of the community.

The Town Council worked closely with local groups such as Ventnor Enhancement Fund, the Spring Hill Garden Group, Ventnor Partnership and others and supported them **with** financial assistance recognising the value of the service which they gave voluntarily to the community as a whole.

The precept for the coming year had been fixed at £90,000 - a reduction of 10% against the precept for last year. The Town Council gave good value for money and were pleased that they had again received the approval of the District Auditor in respect of procedures and accounts.

The Chairpersons of the Grants Committee, the Plans Committee and the Winter Gardens Committee would make reports after this report and give information as to the activities of these Committees.

The Town Mayor thanked the local press for reporting so well all meetings of the Council.

Members of the public were welcome to attend meetings and the Town Council set aside fifteen minutes before every ordinary meeting to allow the public to ask questions.

The Town Mayor thanked his chaplain, Re. Barry Downer for his support throughout the year and the Town Clerk and Financial Officer for their very professional service.

His charity, Shelter, had benefited by the sum of £600 during the year and he appreciated all who had helped to raise this sum.

In conclusion the Town Mayor thanked all members for their work and for giving him the honour to serve as Town Mayor.

REPORTS ON BEHALF OF COMMITTEES

The meeting received reports from the Chairpersons of the Grants Committee, the Plans Committee and the Winter Gardens Committee detailing the work of these Committees during the past year.

ISLE OF WIGHT ASSOCIATION OF PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS

Councillor Mrs.B.Lawson reported upon the work of this Association during the year.

ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL

Due to the importance of their attendance at a meeting of the Isle of Wight Council dealing with the provision of education in the Isle of Wight Councillors J.S.Fitzgerald-Bond and Mrs.SJ.Scoccia were unable to attend the Annual Town Meeting. The Town Clerk read a report on behalf of Councilor Mrs.Scoccia.

JUST A MINUTE

Representatives of local groups gave reports on behalf of their members dealing with current activities and plans for the future

CONCLUSION

The Town Mayor thanked those who had attended the meetings and taken part.

Town Mayor