

Minutes of a meeting of VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL held at The Winter Gardens, Ventnor, I.W. on 16th April 2007.

Present: Councillor B.M.Lucas Town Mayor
Councillor Mrs.M.Cawley Deputy Town Mayor
Councillors C.J.Elvers, Mrs.B.Lawson, R.J.Mew, S.B.Milford,
Mrs.S.J.Scoccia and
Mrs.V.Taylor.

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

1. PRAYERS

The meeting opened with prayers led by the Town Mayor.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 12th March 2007 were approved and signed.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Mrs.M.Cawley declared an interest in agenda item No. 9 (Childrens Play area - Salisbury Gardens) and Councillor Mrs. B.Lawson an interest in agenda item No.10 (Spring Hill Gardens) and did not vote thereon.

4. FURTHER ELECTORAL REVIEW OF THE ISLE OF WIGHT

The Town Clerk submitted a letter of acknowledgement from The Boundary Committee for England of receipt of the views of the Town Council. The Town Council also noted the Isle of Wight Council Draft Submission. Councillor Mrs.Lawson reported that the IW Association of Parish and Town Council were preparing a recommendation on behalf of all members of the Association which would include the views of Ventnor Town Council as already presented.

5. VENTNOR BOTANIC GARDEN

Further to Minute No. 11 of the last meeting Councillor Mrs.S.J.Scoccia made a report on the plans of the IW Council for the future use of Signal Point and the former Smuggling Museum at Ventnor Botanic Garden.

Signal Point is to be used as a residential element for a training course to produce horticultural trainees/apprentices as part of a rolling programme of training which has been recognised as addressing a national need. The proposal has the support of the Learning and Skills Council and funding is being explored and would be offered by the national accreditation body for horticulture, LANTRA, due to the high levels of expertise at Ventnor Botanic Garden. Accommodation could be made available in term time and house short-term students out of term time. The Botanic Gardens already receives many requests for specialist targeted training from gardens and private sector contractors on and off the Isle of Wight. The courses would be fee based and would support the income to the Garden.

Councillor Scoccia referred to the plans to renew The Green House and whilst for technical reasons this is at present on hold the proposed training schemes would bring this project forward. The old Smuggling Museum which was largely underground would be used to house the engineering and pumping plant for the new greenhouse which aims to be carbon neutral.

The Town Council were very pleased to receive this report and to learn of the intended developments and congratulated Councillor Scoccia on the plans and progress which she had reported upon. The development was good news for the future of the Botanic Garden and for Ventnor.

6. LETTER FROM THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT OMSBUDMAN

Further to Minute No. 12 of the last meeting a letter was received from the Local Government Ombudsman stating that the questioning of payments made to ex-officers of the Isle of Wight Council was not a matter which he could deal with as he was only able to accept complaints from members of the public which does not include a Parish or Town Council. He added that the use of public money is a matter for the District Auditor. The reply was accepted and noted.

7. NEW CHILDRENS PLAY AREA - LAND AT SALISBURY GARDENS

A letter from the Engineering Department of the IW Council said that an approach had been made by Ventnor Enhancement Fund to create a play area land in Salisbury Gardens to the rear of The Winter Gardens and it was understood that Ventnor Town Council would negotiate a lease of the land in question and Ventnor Enhancement Fund would manage and maintain the site.

Councillor Mrs.Cawley explained that this was a proposal which was currently being explored together with Ventnor Partnership and no final decision had yet been made. What was required at this stage was an indication as to whether the Town Council would be prepared to take a lease if the project went ahead.

Members felt that they would need more information as to the size, operation and sustainability of such a scheme before they could give firm commitment but agreed that the Town Clerk should reply saying that the Town Council in principle accept the negotiation of a lease but would need to consider in detail the terms and conditions.

8. SPRING HILL GARDENS - PAINTING OF RAILINGS

The Spring Hill Gardens Group wrote to say that the railing between the garden and the car park needed painting but because of the position on the edge of the car park it would not be within their insurance cover to undertake the work.

The Town Clerk said that the railing had been provided some years ago by the former Ventnor Town Trust and handed to the Isle of Wight Council on their land and he suggested that he write to the IW Council asking if they will carry out repainting. This was agreed.

9. **IW ASSOCIATION OF PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS.**

Councillor Mrs. B.Lawson reported upon a meeting of the Association held on 21st March 2007 and on issues being considered by NALC.

Note: Councillor Mrs.SJ.Scoccia left the meeting at this stage having to attend another engagement.

10. REPORT OF FINANCIAL OFFICER

The written report of the Financial Officer was received.

11. VENTNOR PARTNERSHIP

The minutes of meeting of Ventnor Partnership held on 22 February 2007 and 5 April 2007 were received and noted.

12. ISLE OF WIGHT PARTICIPATION IN THE WORLD YOUTH ISLAND GAMES IN

CORSICA 2007

The Community Development and Leisure Manager of the IW Council, Mr.Lee Matthews wrote giving details of the World Youth Island Games in Corsica in 2007. The IW Council were looking for sponsorship from other private and public bodies

12. IW PARTICIPATION IN THE WORLD YOUTH ISLAND GAMES (Continued)
to assist in the costs falling upon participants. The games were open to young people under the age of 17 and linked to the development of sport in schools offered an international experience to young people.

It was Resolved - That the Council make a grant of £1000 to support the entry of the Isle of Wight.

13. DATE OF ANNUAL MEETING

in order to avoid clashing the international Geophysical Conference being held at The Winter Gardens and the Town Mayor's commitment to this important event it was agreed that the date of the Annual Meeting of the Town Council be fixed as Tuesday, 29th May **2007**.

14. QUESTIONS

Councillor Mew referred to press reports relating to the possible sale of Red Funnel and reminded members that some years ago there had been much debate about the need to establish a company representing the interests of the Island to take control of ferry services from the mainland. With the possibility of investment of venture capital he felt that a consortium with island based investors could make a bid and what was needed was someone to take the lead in trying to set up such a group. He felt that the Leader of the Isle of Wight Council might be prepared to do this and Councillor Mew asked if the Town Council would agree to make such an approach to Councillor Sutton. The Council agreed to do so.