

Minutes of a meeting of VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL held at The Winter Gardens, Ventnor, IW on 14th January 2008.

Present: Councillor Mrs.S.J.Scoccia Town Mayor
 Councillor Mrs.M.Cawley Deputy Town Mayor
 Councillors A.C.Bartlett, C.J.Elvers, J.S.Fitzgerald-Bond, B.M.Lucas, R.J.Mew,
 S.B.Milford, M/s D.Robinson and Mrs.V.Taylor.

An apology for absence was received from Councillor Mrs.B.Lawson.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting Councillor M/s D.Robinson the recently elected member for Ventnor West Ward.

1. PRAYERS

The meeting opened with prayers led by Rev.B.Downer.

2. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 2007 were approved and signed.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. THE NATIONAL TRUST

Mr. Robin Laing addressed the Town Council on the work locally of The National Trust. He said that since the introduction of goats on Bonchurch Down in 1993 to control the growth of shrubs and holmoak the project had been closely monitored and had proved very successful. This was a "green" approach and gave long term control in a natural way. The scheme would be extended to Coombe Bottom and he was pleased to report that a grant had been received to support the project. The number of goats now on the Downs was approximately 45 which was a suitable population for the area. When this number was exceeded by natural breeding surplus stock was sent to other locations.

Mr.Laing answered a number of questions from members relating to the possible use of land behind St.Boniface School, the need for allotments in the area and the existence of covenants on land acquired by The National Trust and gave information on these matters.

The Town Mayor thanked him for his attendance and said that the Town Council would be pleased to have a meeting again.

5. REPORTS FROM THE POLICE AND TOWN MANAGER

P/Sgt. Stapleton made a report on policing matters referring to vandalism in the area including damage at Ventnor Middle School which had been extensive. The use of mobile CCTV cameras during the Christmas and New Year period had been successful in the town centre area. He answered members questions.

Mr.Bob Reed, Town Manager, made a report on his activities and submitted details of a project to restore and upgrade the appearance of the bus shelters in Trinity Road. Discussions had been held with an officer of the Highways Department and a plan drawn up which it was hoped would have the support of the IW Council, the Town Council and Sothorn Vectis. The Town Council gave their support to this project.

6. WINTER GARDENS COMMITTEE

The report of the Winter Gardens Committee dated 7th January 2008 was received. The Chairman gave further information on her meeting with the Property Services Manager of the IW Council to press for urgent repairs to

6. WINTER GARDENS COMMITTEE (continued)

to the building particularly to deal with the many leakages in the roof and windows She was glad to say that she had been given an undertaking that repair would be carried out shortly and an estimate for the complete renewal of the main roof would be obtained for consideration. The railings on the balcony would be attended to and the windows in the tower sealed. A ramp for use by the disabled would be installed at the entrance to the reastaurant.

The Chairman answered questions from Councillor Bartlett regarding the use of The Winter Gardens by the organizers of the Jazz Festival.

7. UNDERCLIFF DRIVE

Councillor Scoccia said that she had met the Vice Chairman of Niton and Whitwell Parish Council to discuss a joint meeting with members of Ventnor Town Council relating to the future of Undercliff Drive and the impact upon the use of Whitwell Road. It had been agreed to hold a meeting between representatives of the two Councils together with the appropriate members of the IW Council. It was agreed that the Town Council be represented by Councillors B.M.Lucas, R.J.Mew and Mrs. V.Taylor. A date for the meeting would be arranged.

8. UNTIDY STATE OF PUBLIC AREAS

Councillor R.J.Mew raised his concern at the untidy and dilapidated condition of many areas of public land in Ventnor and it was agreed that action needed to be taken to clear rubbish, improve street furniture and acheive a better standard of general maintenance. The Town Council will consider this in connection with their budget for the coming financial year and the issues will be raised with the IW Council for those areas under their control.

9. REPORT OF THE FINANCIAL OFFICER

The written report of the Financial Officer was received.

9. QUESTIONS

Several questions were asked and answers given. Councillor J.S.Fitzgerald-Bond agreed to bring to the notice of the Higways Department holes in Spring Hill. Councillor Mew suggested that possibly the vacant land at Havensbush could be used for allotments and the IW Council will be approached on this subject.