



# MINUTES OF A MEETING OF VENTNOR TOWN COUNCIL

GREEN ROOM, SALISBURY GARDENS

7PM

13 FEBRUARY 2017

## MEMBERS PRESENT

Councillors: Jason Mack (Chair), Leigh Geddes, Tony Marvin, Delian Backhouse-Fry, Brian Lucas, Jim Toogood, Ed Gouge, Stewart Blackmore, Harry Rees

## No. SUBJECT

### PUBLIC FORUM

- a) There were two members of the public present.
- b) Nick Ballanger drew attention the lack of activity by Island Roads and to the increasing number of empty shops. The Mayor responded there was an initiative underway to identify the landlords.
- c) Councillor Ed Gouge said that there was an informal meeting of Councillors tomorrow to consider the empty shops issue. Councillor James Toogood added that he had been in direct contact with the owner of the Bus Station.
- d) Councillor Brian Lucas said that although it might not be possible for all the shops to be let, action could be taken to ensure the shop fronts are presentable.

### 12/17 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence at this time.

### 13/17 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest at this time.

### 14/17 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETINGS

- a) The Minutes of the Town Council meeting of 9 January 2017, having been previously circulated to Members, were taken as read.
- b) The Minutes of the Town Council's Planning Committee meeting of 1 February 2017 were noted.

### 15/17 FINANCE REPORT

- a) The Finance report for this meeting (7/17) had been previously circulated to Members and included information on Bank Balances at 31 January 2017 and a list of all payments made during January 2017.
- b) Also included was a listing of budget variances for the first ten months of the financial year.

**It was proposed by Councillor Stewart Blackmore, seconded by Councillor Ed Gouge and unanimously resolved that:**  
the Finance Report be accepted.

### 16/17 YOUTH OFFER FUNDING

- a) Report 8/17 for this meeting recorded the background to the Isle of Wight Council's decision to extend its Youth Offer Programme into 2017/18 through a Prospectus inviting applications up to £20,000 for providers of activities for young people.
- b) It noted that the Town Council's application for a total of £19,941, supported by match funding of £5,000 from each of Southern Housing Group and the Town Council had been

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accepted in full.

- c) The grants are, however, conditional on the funding for the extended Youth Offer programme being included in the Isle of Wight Council's 2017/18 Budget and so will not be confirmed until after its Budget meeting on 22 February.
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#### 17/17 2017/18 BUDGET & PRECEPT SETTING

- a) The Draft Budget for the Town's Council's work in 2017/18 was attached to Report 9/17 for this meeting with an anticipated total expenditure of £413,137 offset by income from activities and grants totalling £132,714 leaving the amount needed from the Precept at £280,428.
- b) Although that is an increase of £8,614 over this year, it is fully offset by an increase in the town's Council Tax Base, leaving the Precept requirement for 2017/18 at the same level as this year of £111.45 for Band D tax-paying households.
- c) Councillor Brian Lucas said that the decision not to increase the Precept was not an easy one given that the cost of the Public Toilets was significantly higher than anticipated.

**It was resolved that the Town Council:**

- i) adopts the Draft Budget as presented with this Report;
  - ii) confirms its Precept-related Budget for 2017/18 to be £287,852;
  - iii) sets the Precept income to fund it at £280,423, together with the Local Council Tax Scheme grant of £7,429 from the Isle of Wight Council;
  - iv) notes that the Band D charge will be the same for 2017/18 as for the current year at £111.45; and
  - v) asks the Town Clerk to inform the Isle of Wight Council accordingly.
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#### 18/17 FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

- a) The basis for an annual review of the Financial Risk Assessment by the Town Council was set out in Report 10/17 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 Jason Mack, seconded by Councillor Leigh Geddes and unanimously resolved that:**

the Town Council approves and adopts the circulated list of arrangements for the management of financial risk in the financial year 2017/18.

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#### 19/17 VENTNOR CENTRAL DEVELOPMENT

- a) The recent progress in the development of Ventnor Central to provide 12 one-bedroom flats above a ground floor Library were set out in Report 11/17 for this meeting.

**It was proposed by Councillor Harry Rees, seconded by Councillor Leigh Geddes and unanimously resolved that:**

- i) the Town Council offers to extend its lease for three months;
  - ii) asks the Clerk to draw up a full inventory of contents and clarify issues of ownership and responsibility for dispersal
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#### 20/17 BUTTERFLY PROJECT

- a) The latest draft of the Management Plan for the project to provide a site for the Granville Fritillary Butterfly on the Bonchurch revetment had been previously circulated to Members.
- b) Councillor Harry Rees said that it was important the Natural England funding was delivered as stated.

**It was proposed by Councillor Leigh Geddes, seconded by Councillor Delian Backhouse-Fry and unanimously resolved that:**

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In view of the Town Council's previously expressed support for the project and the assurance from Natura England that there will be no significant variation from the attached draft Management Plan the Town Council delegates authority to the Town Clerk, advised by the Public Buildings Working Group, to sign the final Management Plan on its behalf.

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#### **21/17 PRIMARY CARE STRATEGY CONSULTATION**

- a) Following the Town Council's consideration of the draft Strategy at its January meeting, comments on it were invited from Niton & Whitwell and Wroxall Parish Councils and the two Ventnor surgeries.
- b) In addition, the Town Council held an informal meeting with the Strategy's author on Monday 23 January.
- c) The written responses from Niton & Whitwell Parish Council and the Grove Road Surgery were attached to Report 13/17.
- d) The Mayor reported on the discussion with the Ventnor Medical Centre Partners who expressed serious concerns about the move away from smaller surgeries and felt that although phone consultations work well, the IT proposals face real issues of security and infrastructure.
- e) On the recruitment question addressed in the report the Partners are less concerned given the development of in-house training provision under the Bursary scheme within six of the Island's surgeries, and they were very clear in their view that their patients do not need a seven day a week service.
- f) Overall they want to see the Strategy amended to give a stronger role for and support to the smaller surgeries.
- g) The Mayor added that it would be helpful to remember that GP Surgeries are small businesses.
- h) Councillor Harry Rees said that his main concern was about the need to attract 39 additional GPs by 2020 as the financial issues are compounded by the workforce challenges.
- i) Councillor Stewart Blackmore stated that he agreed with most of the concerns raised by the notes from Niton & Whitwell Parish Council and the serious issues of recruiting professional staff to work on the Island.
- j) Councillor Leigh Geddes said that she really wanted to be able to support the Draft Strategy as it is clear that something does need to be done.

**It was proposed by Councillor Stewart Blackmore, seconded by Councillor Harry Rees and unanimously resolved that:**

the Town Council asks its Clerk to draft a response to the Consultation based on the discussion at this meeting and the comments received from others for circulation to Members prior to submission by Friday 17 February.

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#### **22/17 ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCIL BUDGET**

- a) Councillor Harry Rees reported on the concerns about the Budget and the process for arriving at it at recent Isle of Wight Association of Local Council events and at the Isle of Wight Council's Scrutiny Committee.
  - b) Councillor Stewart Blackmore said that the cuts affecting the most vulnerable residents and savings from the benefits and support services for the disabled and those with mental health are scandalous.
  - c) Councillor Ed Gouge referred to the fact that several of the proposed savings are dependent on changing systems and that will initially require additional spending.
  - d) The Mayor said that he was encouraged by the responses received from Ventnor residents through the Town Council's Residents Forum that carried a common theme of opposition to
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all cuts affecting vulnerable people.

- e) Councillor Brian Lucas commented that the Isle of Wight Council is simply dancing to the government's tune and should instead have resolved that although it could set a legal Budget, it was unwilling to do so due to the unacceptable impact on our most vulnerable residents.

**It was proposed by Councillor Ed Gouge, seconded by Councillor Stewart Blackmore and unanimously resolved that:**

the Town Council cannot support a Budget that is so damaging to the Island's most vulnerable residents.

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**23/17 TOWN CLERKS' REPORT**

- a) The Town Clerks' report – 15/17 – recorded recent activity which did not require Town Council decisions at this time.
- b) It included information on Beach Safety, Upper Ventnor Community Association, My Life a Full Life, the Sustainability and Transformation Plan, Working Groups, Steephill Court, Ventnor Business Association and the death of our colleague, Dave Gray.`
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**PUBLIC FORUM**

There were no comments or questions at this time.

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**THE MEETING CLOSED AT 8.50PM**

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SIGNED BY THE MAYOR \_\_\_\_\_

| DATE \_\_\_\_\_