



# Yarmouth Isle of Wight Town Council

## Minutes of an extraordinary meeting of Yarmouth Town Council meeting of Yarmouth Town Council held at CHOYD on May 21st 2019 at 6:30pm

**PRESENT:** Councillors S Cowley (Mayor), P Cronin, D McCleary, S Devine, G Head, R Corbett, J Jackson

**IN ATTENDANCE:** B Jacobs (Town Clerk), IWC Cllr Stuart Hutchinson, and an estimated 200+ members of the public (so many attended, it was not possible to record actual numbers)

### 1. APOLOGIES

No apologies were received for absence.

### 2. DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

Councillor	Personal	Pecuniary
S Cowley	Yarmouth Town Trust CHOYD Shalfleet PC	Lee Farm
R Corbett	Yarmouth Town Trust	
D McCleary		Yarmouth School
G Head	British Horse Society RSPB Shalfleet Parish Council	National Trust
S Devine	RSPB	

### 3. YARMOUTH SCHOOL

Mayor Cowley gave a resume about the Isle of Wight Council's suggestion that a re-organisation of West Wight Schools, precipitated by the poor performance of All Saints School, Freshwater, could result in the closure of Yarmouth School and its transfer to Freshwater. He encouraged everyone present to register their views with IWC.

### 4. PUBLIC FORUM

Considerable discussion took place about this issue, and the points made are summarised as follows:

- Yarmouth School is one of the best-performing schools on the Island, well above the national average and has a proven record. There is no educational argument for relocating it, and certainly no logical argument for combining it with a school which has consistently under-performed in recent years. It is likely that the staffing mix and organisation in such circumstances would dilute the high standards which now exist at Yarmouth School. It should be borne in mind that the current high level of pupil numbers at Yarmouth and Shalfleet has come about because of the failure of All Saints to address its internal problems.
- This proposed reorganisation is being promulgated too soon. Experience from the previous reorganisation involving Weston Academy has shown that a delay of 3 years is likely to result in more places being available at St Saviour's, and there is already surplus capacity at Brighstone.
- Yarmouth School is a vital element of the local community in which it is closely integrated. Yarmouth with an electorate of only 800 is more vulnerable to losing facilities than Freshwater which has a population of nearly 5,000, and with far more community facilities. Experience in other small communities has shown that closure of the local school can have a devastating effect on that community in the form of facilities, age demographics and educational standards in the area.
- The expansion of Yarmouth School prior to moving it to Freshwater is likely to be not only logistically difficult but highly disruptive. Yarmouth School's capacity is 105 and does not have the infrastructure to expand beyond that. Moreover, resources involved in managing Yarmouth and Shalfleet Schools could well be stretched.
- Moving pupils from one school to another disrupts their education not only immediately but throughout their school life. There is also a significant adverse impact on staff transport. The IWC's record on schools reorganisation is not good.
- There are no plans, resources or budget identified for rebuilding All Saints, and no consideration has been given to an action plan for carrying out this proposal – it is effectively a 'blind' recommendation.
- The original recommendation from IWC was to close All Saints' CE Primary School and expand St Saviour's Catholic Primary School to 1 form of entry, and this option, which was originally well-supported by Freshwater parents, has only been abandoned because of significant public pressure from Freshwater councillors and residents, not for educational reasons. Moreover, this recommendation was logistically more sound as it involved less geographical disruption and a greater

reduction in surplus places, especially when combined with a reduction in the PAN (Published Admission Number) for Brighstone School. In fact, the IWC's proposal can be shown to be the least efficient of all the options available. It reduces primary places in the area by 35 fewer than the previous preferred option. This would have reduced places by 210 (All Saints) less 70 additional places at St Saviours so a net saving of 140. The current proposal will save only the 105 places at Yarmouth when it moves.

- These 35 places would mean that some or all the four remaining primaries, including the "new" Yarmouth, will be undersubscribed and struggling.
- The situation of Yarmouth School makes drop-off and collection of pupils far safer
- There is a covenant on Yarmouth School premises that it can only be used for educational purposes, which arouses concerns about the fate of the existing premises.
- The pre-school playgroup in Yarmouth is well-established, popular and highly-rated. This group would be lost in a move to Freshwater where a similar group is already in place
- The closure of small schools in the area and their consolidation in larger sites could lead to 'supermarket schools' which would almost certainly involve a dilution of educational standards. St Saviour's and Brighstone Schools will also be vulnerable in the event of Yarmouth relocating.

It was RESOLVED:

- That Helen Jones would act as co-ordinator for this campaign
- The Clerk will put the above summary, together with any supporting documents and relevant contact details, on Yarmouth Town Council's website, and also place the above summary on YTC's noticeboards.

In conclusion, the Mayor thanked all those attending this meeting, with special gratitude to Helen Jones and Jaimie Blake for playing a leading role in this campaign.