



The Yarmouth Isle of Wight Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of Yarmouth Town Council held at Yarmouth Town Hall Tuesday 3rd January 2023 at 6:30pm

PRESENT: Councillors J Allen (Mayor), R Corbett (Deputy Mayor), G Head, S Cowley, A Ingram, P Cronin, T Cowley

IN ATTENDANCE: B Jacobs (Town Clerk), S Mence, Tim Adams (YHC), IW County Press, IW Cllr P Spink, Wightlink Chief Executive and Port Operation manager, West Wight Villages Residents' Association representatives, YTT Chairman and 5 members of the public

A presentation was given by the Wightlink Chief Executive, supported by Island Port Operation Manager about the Yarmouth-Lymington ferry service.

Apologies were given about the poor performance on the route during August to November 2022 due to 3 ship's masters out of 7 being unavailable. Since then, staffing levels had been restored and the route enjoyed a 99% reliability rating during December, with the likelihood of that rate continuing during 2023. The Chief Executive explained about the high level of expertise required by ship's masters and stated that the route had never been so compromised by this issue.

Cllr S Cowley thanked the Wightlink representatives for attending and pointed out the inconvenience to users of unreliable sailings who deserved a better service. Cllr Corbett agreed with this and asked if a telephone number could be provided for service updates and asked if other vessels could be made available, at least for foot passengers. Wightlink responded by saying this had been considered but was considered impractical as breakdowns usually occurred with no warning, obviating their ability to provide an alternative vessel, either by Wightlink or a contractor, on the route. However, service updates were available on the Wightlink mobile app. In response to a question from Cllr T Cowley about the future of the service, the Chief Executive assured him that Wightlink intended to grow the service based on demand, which was expected to recover in 2023 to pre-Covid lockdown levels. Active

recruitment was under way and service levels should be restored during 2023. He also explained that the 0730 ferry was often vulnerable because the 0630 sailing was prioritised as it was more critical to users. Cllr T Cowley asked if the service had become so run down that demand and expectation had been depressed, raising questions about the viability of the route. Wightlink assured him that they were working towards improving the reliability viability of the crossing during 2023, and that sailings were never cancelled on economic grounds. The Chief Executive was unable to provide details of abandoned bookings as such information wasn't recorded. Cllr Head commented on the difficulties of rearranging bookings for the return journey when the outward leg on the Yarmouth-Lymington route had been redirected to Fishbourne.

Cllr Corbett pointed out that foot passenger numbers on the popular 1105 daily sailing from Yarmouth were restricted due to 'dangerous goods', which often meant they were unable to board, contrary to normal expectations. The Chief Executive advised that recent changes in MCA regulations had forced this restriction because empty fuel tankers were now classified as hazardous but agreed to look at this problem.

A member of the public complained that ferries often departed before all cars were able to board, when there appeared to be space left for vehicles. The Chief Executive responded that the ferries were subject to weight restrictions, which was particularly pertinent in the case of lorries and electric vehicles, and problems also occurred with grouping vehicles.

Large puddles at the Lymington terminal were referred to, and the Chief Executive agreed to look at this problem.

The Chief Executive declared that he would be happy to attend future YTC meetings as required, and reiterated Wightlink's commitment to the Yarmouth route.

A presentation was given by representatives of West Wight Villages Residents' Association about the proposed solar farm at Thorley. Their objections are summarised as follows:

1. It would have significant, long term harmful effects to adjacent internationally, and nationally designated nature conservation areas, landscape designated areas and Public Rights of Way with a consequent impact on tourism
2. This industrialisation would degrade the visual amenity throughout the area as designated by The National Parks Commission and will be seen in many places from the AONB downland.
3. This proposal would impact negatively on residential dwellings.
4. The National Planning Policy Framework explains that:
 - A. "all communities have a responsibility to help increase the use and supply of green energy, but this does not mean that the need for renewable energy automatically overrides environmental protections and the planning concerns of local communities".

B. “deployment of large-scale solar farms can have a negative impact on the rural environment, particularly in undulating landscapes.” Barnfield Solar Farm would be on undulating and open land.

C. “Where possible, ground mounted Solar PV projects should utilise previously developed land, brownfield land, contaminated land, industrial land, or agricultural land preferably of classification 3b, 4, and 5 (avoiding the use of “Best and Most Versatile” cropland where possible.) However land type should not be a predominating factor in determining the suitability of the site location.

5. The area is in a Flood Zone 3 which means it has a high probability of flooding. The Environment Agency objects because of the possibility of flooding on the surrounding low-lying roads and housing nearby. Barnfield Stream flows through the proposed site directly into Yarmouth Estuary with high risk of harmful chemicals from the building of the solar farm flowing into the Estuary which is a protected site for birds and wildlife.

6. This application fails to comply with IOW Policy SP5 on Environment which states that “Development that has a demonstrable adverse impact on the Island’s natural, historic and built environments should be avoided.” And “The guiding principle in the countryside is that development should benefit the rural economy and maintain or enhance the environment. New development in rural areas should be sensitively related to existing settlement patterns and respect the historic, wildlife and landscape character of its surroundings.”

7. There would be no jobs or any other benefits for Islanders.

8. It does not comply with policy DM2 (Design Quality for New Development)

9. It does not comply with policy DM17 (Sustainable Travel)

10. Assurances were given when Wilmingham Solar Farm was built that it would not be extended - and that is what is now being planned.

Additional concerns:

- Applying a 40 year 'Temporary Status' is disingenuous as it will inevitably be renewed when technologies advance. Many people living in the area will never see the site as greenfield again.
- There is concern that the site will be deemed to be ‘brown field’ if and when the solar farm is decommissioned leading to substantial building construction in the future.
- Comparisons are drawn with the smaller existing development near Shalfleet which is well screened and does not have the negative impact that Barnfield will have.
- There is great scepticism about suggestion that the site could be used for sheep grazing.
- France has introduced solar roofing over public car-parks and commercial buildings, we need to be far more innovative, and not take the easy option of sacrificing yet more precious greenfield.
- The WWVRA supports the work of the CPRE who wrote in February 2022: CPRE, the countryside charity is committed to supporting solar energy but will always oppose harmful developments. This statement outlines the position at a time when many local communities are facing inappropriate solar farm schemes.

A Wellow resident claimed that the existing solar farm at Wellow has spoilt the environment and is likely to ruin tourism in the area.

Cllr S Cowley registered a financial interest in this solar farm as part of Lee Farm.

A question was asked as to whether the proposed solar farm is sustainable, and the Mayor said that was not a material concern from the planning viewpoint.

It was suggested that the claimed community benefit arising from the proposed solar farm was not supportable by adequate evidence.

133/2022 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr McCleary

134/2022 PUBLIC FORUM:

i) HARBOUR ISSUES

The Harbour Commissioner reported that the Harbour had received record low numbers of boats during December due to bad weather.

It was unclear what effect current high inflation will have on boat numbers.

The new water lodges had arrived and will be deployed when fitting out had been completed.

Work on the pink pontoon had been delayed by planning permission and poor weather.

Work on development south of Yarmouth Bridge will begin before Easter.

ii) YARMOUTH TOWN TRUST

Cllr Corbett read out the following report:

1) **Memorial Benches on the Common:** The foundations for the three new benches have now been completed and the benches themselves have been delivered ready for installation. The contractor who will be installing them is awaiting an eye operation which may lead to some delays.

2) **Town Hall:** The notice boards are being taken down one at a time for refurbishing during the winter. The Upper windows have now been repaired and painted. The project to scan, digitise and store a copy of every document in the Trust's Care is nearing completion.

3) **The Recreation Ground:** A confidential vote has taken place with the Town Councillors and the Town Trustees to decide what type of structure, if any, is most suitable to replace the previous Football Pavilion that had to be demolished due to safety concerns. The majority view was for a smaller, traditional, closed pavilion with a balcony. As the cost for this is some £5,000 more than had been budgeted there may be a delay until 2024 while fund raising activities take place.

4) **West Wight Heritage:** The Trust has held its first meeting with West Wight Heritage regarding co-operation and sharing of information between the two organisations.

5) **Yarmouth School:** The Town Trust holds the original documents regarding the transfer of land to the Church. It was brought to our attention that the original registration with the Land Registration by the Portsmouth Diocese did not mention the restricting Covenant nor does the recent application by the Isle of Wight Council. The Trustees, in their role as caretakers of the original documents, has submitted a

notification to the Land Registry of this omission so that they can check if the correct procedures have been carried out.

6) **Next Trustee Meeting:** The next Trust meeting is being held on Thursday 19th January.

iii) ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLOR’S REPORT

IW Cllr Spink reported that there was no automatic call-in to Planning Committee for the proposed solar farm in spite of its scale and contentiousness. Indeed, the same policy applies to all submissions for major developments on the grounds of subjectivity, and Cllr Spink’s call-in requests are often ignored by IWC. Cllr Head pointed out that triggers are present to ensure adequate consideration and Cllr Spink agreed to raise this with IWC.

Suggestions have been made suggesting that the former Yarmouth CE School premises could be used for special needs pupils, but Mayor Allen stated that he understood the building was unsuitable and Cllr S Cowley suggested that the IWC had already identified another site.

Cllr Spink reported that he had consulted other IWC elected members, and suggested that they would be willing to attend meetings of the YTC or the School Site Steering Group, the latter being more likely. Both Cllr Spink and Cllr S Cowley have both applied for disclosure of information by IWC under the Freedom of Information Act. Cllr Spink reiterated that IWC was seeking ‘best value’, not necessarily best price, in the sale of the School site.

iv) LOCAL ISSUES

Cllr Corbett asked about any progress on the 3 reported incidents of coastal erosion. The Clerk reported that these had all been reported to IWC Coastal Erosion Team, though no response had been received, and he agreed to contact Island Roads and report the same issues to them.

Flooding along Hill Place Lane Thorley by bridge – Mayor Allen has spoken to the landowners who have scheduled a meeting with the Environment Agency about this issue.

v) PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no further questions from members of the public

135/2022 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor	Personal	Pecuniary
R Corbett	Yarmouth Town Trust	
J Allen	RSYC	Multi-Service Marine River Yar Boatyard
T Cowley	Shalfleet PC Wight Nature Fund	Camp Wight
G Head	British Horse Society RSPB	National Trust Bowcombe Estate
A Ingram	Shalfleet PC	

S Cowley	Yarmouth Town Trust CHOYD Shalfleet PC Wight Nature Fund	Lee Farm
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136/20212 MINUTES AND CONFIRMATION OF ACTIONS

RESOLVED: To take as read and confirm as accurate the minutes of the last monthly meeting held 6/12/22 subject to amendment of the interests for Cllr T Cowley.

137/2022 FINANCE

137/2022.1 Payment of Accounts

RESOLVED: To approve the following payment of accounts for January:

BACS223078	Brian Jacobs	Clerk's salary December	£901.77
BACS223079	All Round Cleaners	Cleaning services public	£593.28
DEB	Amazon	Ukraine Flag	£24.97
DEB	The Range	Picture Frame	£6.99
DD	PWLB	Loan charges	£1,787.10
DC	HMRC	PAYE Clerk's salary December	£276.34
DD	Everflow	Water services public toilets	£141.37
DEB	Giffgaff	Office Phone	£6.00
DEB	Microsoft	Office 365	£2.76
DEB	Post Office	Office post	£10.15

137/2022.2 Bank Reconciliation

The financial statement for 31/12/22 was agreed.

137/2022.3 Budget 2023/24

The latest draft of the above was noted. It was proposed by Mayor Allen, seconded by Cllr Head and agreed unanimously to maintain the 2023/24 precept at 2022/23 level on the basis that any deficit would be met from reserves, which are currently considerably more than the recommended level.

138/2022 PLANNING ISSUES

New applications:

The following responses were RESOLVED:

22/01793/FUL: Mayor Allen agreed to circulate a list of objections to Councillors previously discussed in the public forum, and the Clerk was asked to submit them to IWC subject to approval.

22/02184/CLEUD: No objections

The following were noted:

Appeals:

Application No	Location	Proposal	Dates
22/00039/REF	The Laurels, Station Road, Yarmouth, PO42 0QT	Proposed integral garage; formation of vehicular access	Start date: 16/12/2022

Applications granted:

Application No	Location	Proposal
22/01889/HOU	Hill Place Hill Place Lane Yarmouth Isle Of Wight PO41 0XJ	Proposed rear extension to provide office

139/2022 RECREATION GROUND

Zip Wires are around £5K in wood and £7K in metal + delivery & installation. The additional insurance costs have been quoted at £144.21 per annum.

A response from the Island Petanque League about the demand for a court indicated that team numbers in the Island Petanque League have reduced by two thirds since 2000, partly because pubs are unwilling to devote lucrative cover space to Petanque. The League would welcome a team if there is sufficient interest locally, but Councillors concluded there was no evidence of demand in the Yarmouth area, and, in any case, there are terrains available in Brighstone and Wellow.

The Budget as it stands at present allows for £10K for additional facilities.

140/2022 PUBLIC INFORMATION

An email was circulated 19/12 with details of information which Northwood PC make available to the public. Cllr Corbett has suggested making similar information available on the YTC noticeboards and the Clerk was asked to circulate a list of suggested contacts.

141/2022 CONSERVATION AREA CHARACTER APPRAISAL

There were no developments regarding the Conservation Area Character Appraisal, though Mayor Allen suggested that the author be informed of the incongruous bollard outside Jireh Place.

142/2022 YARMOUTH SCHOOL COMMUNITY ASSET

IW Cllr Spink agreed to step down from membership of the Steering Group, and the members were agreed as:

Cllr S Cowley

Cllr T Cowley

Louise Metcalfe
John Caulcutt
Adrian Evans

The terms of reference were agreed subject to a more flexible reference to Group numbers

143/2022 KING'S CORONATION

Mayor Allen reported that Yarmouth Carnival Committee will be taking the lead in organising events.

144/2022 CLERK'S REPORT

144/2022.1 PLANNING APPLICATIONS

As this was a late addition, the Clerk was asked to circulate details of 22/02285 by email.

144/2022.2 COMMUNITY SUPPORT FROM LOCAL SCHOOLS

It was noted that Lizzie Grainger, Headteacher Shalfleet & Yarmouth CE Primary Schools, has asked if YTC Councillors can nominate public events in which they would like the new Yarmouth CE Primary School to participate in 2023, and the Clerk was asked to circulate a list of forthcoming events in Yarmouth to which they would be welcome. Councillors also expressed a wish to visit the new school at Freshwater.

145/2022 CORRESPONDENCE

The list of correspondence received since the last meeting was noted.

146/2022 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Kings Coronation
Conservation Area Character Appraisal
Yarmouth School site
Coastal erosion problems
Recreation Ground facilities

147/2022 MEETING VENUES

RESOLVED: To confirm the venue for the next monthly meeting – 7/2/23 CHOYD