



The Yarmouth Isle of Wight Town Council

Minutes of a meeting of Yarmouth Town Council held at CHOYD Tuesday 3rd October at 6:30pm

PRESENT: Councillors D McCleary (Mayor), G Head (Deputy Mayor), S Cowley, A Ingram, T Cowley, P Cronin, P Farrell, P Spink.

IN ATTENDANCE: B Jacobs (Town Clerk), T Adams (Yarmouth Harbour Commissioner), Jeff Walls (Jeff Walls, Group Commander, Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service), M Collinson (Yarmouth Town Trust Chairman) and 10 members of the public

92/2023 APOLOGIES

There were no apologies for absence.

93/2023 PUBLIC FORUM:

Jeff Walls gave a presentation on behalf of the Hampshire & Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service in response to concerns about the future of Yarmouth fire station. He explained that the IW Fire Service is now part of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Fire and Rescue Service and no longer controlled by the Isle of Wight Council, which affords the Service more autonomy. The staffing structure comprises full-time and volunteer staff, and, as a result of various factors like demographics and rural isolation, Yarmouth's staff complement has fallen to 2 in spite of recruitment efforts, below the critical mass necessary to maintain an appliance. Therefore, the West Wight area is reliant on Freshwater as the only operating appliance station locally.

The following questions were tabled:

Is there an intention to close Yarmouth fire station permanently?

No, further recruitment drives will be undertaken in an attempt to restore the local staffing levels. A considerable sum has been spent recently on the building to ensure its continued operation. If recruitment continues to be a problem, there has been no time limit suggested for Yarmouth fire station's life expectancy.

Is there a lower age limit for recruitment?

No, but for various reason like health & safety, etc, it's effectively 18.

Are women allowed to join the Service?

Yes.

Can the Service meet statutory targets operating just out of Freshwater?

The Service meets statutory response times, though some areas like Brighstone pose a problem, as does the bridge operation in Yarmouth. Target response time is within 10 minutes 80%+ of the time. The problem of under-manning is Island-wide, and standards need to be maintained. Risk assessments for the Service are regularly carried out. An aging population and other demographics are challenging, and there is a great emphasis recently on fire prevention.

Mayor McCleary thanked Mr Walls for coming and emphasised YTC's commitment to helping the Fire Service in all possible ways.

i) HARBOUR ISSUES

The Harbour Commissioner reported that 18000 vessels had visited the Harbour so far this year, although the 2023 holiday season on the Island had been generally disappointing.

In response to a question about the operation of the Gossips public toilets, the Commissioner commented that the Harbour Commission had relinquished control to Gossips.

ii) YARMOUTH TOWN TRUST

The YTT Chairman presented the following report:

1) Town Hall: Wight Stonemasonry are now scheduled to replace the windows 19th to 24th November. Southern Lights: We have prepared the application to Island Roads for a pavement closure and will submit the form once we have confirmation that Southern Lights are able to fit around the stonemasons' schedule.

2) Memorial Benches: Bench no.7 still requires attention, we are looking for someone to do it.

3) Mill Terrace Cottage: No 11's tenancy has ended. Items requiring attention are nearly complete. Spence Willard are advertising and showing the property to prospective Tenants. The cottage chimneys have now been removed and the overgrown ivy and buddleia on the end wall of No.13 has been cleared.

4) Financials: Filing of last year's accounts is still delayed due to recent changes made in accessing online services. We have until end Jan 24 so hopefully they will have sorted themselves out by then.

5) Recreation Ground: The smart meter at the Recreation Ground has now been installed.

iii) ISLE OF WIGHT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

Cllr Spink presented the following report:

I attended a presentation by the Marine Archaeological Trust re their bid for the Yarmouth School Site, held at CHOYD. The bid is supported by a 'financial package' involving a Yarmouth based Trust. The fact that funding is in place may well be looked upon favourably by the IoW Council/DfE.

I also attended the 'opening' of the FYT Bus first electric vehicle. The FYT Bus provides an important service to the local community, which will no doubt be enhanced by electrification.

I was unable to attend the September meeting of planning committee at which the Barnfield Solar Farm application was considered. I did, however, prepare a speech which was kindly read to the committee by the chair. The committee was unanimous in approving the application. Renewable energy is, of course the future, however, there was a paucity of evidence in this particular application to demonstrate the amount of electricity that it would actually provide. In addition, I believe that the Council should be more innovative in promoting, where possible, solar on roof-tops, car-parks, council owned sites, rather than greenfield/agricultural land.

I note that YTC has been contacted re signage painted on the wall of 'On the Rocks' and whether this is appropriate for a building within the conservation area.

I attended, in my capacity as vice chair, the September meeting of Corporate Scrutiny. I raised, yet again, my concern that delegated decisions are being taken without proper examination, on the grounds of commercial confidentiality. I have asked for a report in future cases setting out the basis upon which the information is said to be confidential.

There has been much discussion at the IoW Council as to the future of the Draft Island Planning Strategy and whether or not a case of exceptional circumstances should be advanced. The Levelling Up Bill has been delayed, but is now expected to receive Royal Assent before the King's speech in November. The bill will make it easier for local authorities such as IWC to claim exceptional circumstances particularly where the standard method of calculating housing targets exacerbates demographic imbalance. Cllr Spink expressed his ongoing concern about delegated planning decisions and indicated that he felt the IWC should be prioritising affordable housing on land it owned, and a member of the public expressed her full support of this view, emphasising that emergency services needed the local availability of young volunteers, a view supported by the Mayor. She also asked Cllr Spink to take on board in planning issues swift bricks and hedgehog highways.

iv) LOCAL ISSUES

Concern was expressed about the signage outside On the Rocks and the Clerk was asked to bring this to the attention of Planning Enforcement.

Concern was expressed by several Councillors about the ongoing problem of cycling on the Green, a situation exacerbated by poor signage. Cllr Spink undertook to raise this at the next meeting of the Harbour Advisory Committee.

It was pointed out that the no-entry signs at Basketts Lane/Tennyson Road junction were difficult to see owing to their position and the Clerk was asked to bring this to the attention of Island Roads.

Further concern about parking on Coastguards Green was expressed, and it was ventured that parking wardens should monitor this area for illegal parking. Cllr Spink undertook to raise this with IWC who, it is believed, has control of this area, although YTC maintains it. The Clerk was asked to confirm ownership of this land with the Land Registry.

A member of the public commented about parking in the centre of Yarmouth. Cllr T Cowley suggested that a Neighbourhood Plan would help to overcome such issues. The issue of cyclists riding the wrong way along Bridge Road was discussed, and the Clerk was asked to bring this to the attention of the Environment Officer. Jill Cowley thanked YTC and everyone involved with assisting the publication of the Yarmouth School book, and asked that YTC considered historic plaques for Thorley.

v) PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

There were no further questions from members of the public.

94/2023 DECLARATIONS OF PERSONAL AND DISCLOSABLE PECUNIARY INTERESTS

Councillor	Personal	Pecuniary
G Head	British Horse Society RSPB	National Trust Bowcombe Estate
A Ingram	Shalfleet PC	
D McCleary		The Piano Bar
S Cowley	Yarmouth Town Trust Shalfleet PC Wight Nature Fund CHOYD	Lee Farm
T Cowley	Shalfleet PC Wight Nature Fund	Camp Wight

95/2023 MINUTES AND CONFIRMATION OF ACTIONS

It was proposed by Cllr T Cowley, seconded by Deputy Mayor Head and unanimously RESOLVED to take as read and confirm as accurate the minutes of the September monthly meeting held 5/9/23.

96/2023 FINANCE

96/2023.1 Payment of Accounts

It was proposed by Cllr T Cowley, seconded by Cllr Cronin and unanimously RESOLVED to approve payment of the following accounts for October:

BACS234054	Ability Dogs for Young People IOW	Grant	£250.00
BACS234055	Citizen's Advice Bureau IW	Grant	£250.00
BACS234057	B Jacobs	Clek's salary September	£901.57
BACS234058	Wight Digital Solutions	Printer cartridge	£98.81
BACS234059	Royal British Legion	Wreaths	£75.00
BACS234060	Paravectis	Repair to lock Bridge Rd toilets	£90.00
BACS234062	Glanvilles Damants	Legal advice Yarmouth School	£651.00
BACS234063	CHOYD	Broadband	£39.60
BACS234064	Wight Computers	Domain name renewal	£15.59
BACS234065	Peter Scott	Gate repairs Rec	£26.02
BACS234066	B Jacobs	Expenses	£156.80
BACS234061	Biltmores	Printing Yarmouth School Books	£5,600.00
BACS234056	BDO	External audit	£378.00
BACS234067	Island Cleaning Solutions	Cleaning services public toilets	£708.33
DD	Everflow	Water public toilets	£125.77
DEB	Post Office	Office post	£13.55
DEB	Pay by Phone	Car park charges	£12.35
DEB	Microsoft	Office 365	£2.76
DEB	WBS	Stationery	£25.00
DEB	Yarmouth Deli	Refreshments	£3.95
DEB	GiffGaff	Office phone	£6.00

96/2023.2 Bank Reconciliation

It was proposed by Cllr S Cowley, seconded by Cllr Ingram and unanimously RESOLVED to agree the financial statement for 30/9/23.

97/2023 PLANNING ISSUES

The following was noted:

Street Trading Application

Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982 Schedule 4

Application for: Street Trading Consent Island Wide Mobile Trader – Scarrots Lane Bakery FE56 OKO.

98/2023 FACEBOOK

The future operation of the YTC Facebook site was discussed and the Clerk was asked to record such items as planning applications and roadworks. The Clerk informed this had already begun. It was suggested that this information should also be available on the YTC website; the Clerk advised that planning applications already were via agendas and minutes but did undertake to comply with this request.

99/2023 HYP PROJECT PLAQUES

Standing Orders were suspended to allow Sylvia Mence to advise that she had a considerable amount of back-up information about this project. It was agreed that no remedial work was required to the existing plaques, but it was proposed by Mayor McCleary, seconded by Deputy Mayor Head and agreed unanimously that the following sites should be researched and costed:

The George
The Tide Mill
Refuge Lane
Various Thorley sites

Cllr T Cowley advised that funding might be available from IWC for this project and undertook to supply the Clerk with contact details.

100/2023 RECREATION GROUND

Cllr Cronin presented the minutes of the last Committee meeting.

It was reported that there were some loose slats on the bench in the Play Area and the Clerk was asked to arrange for this to be repaired.

Cllr T Cowley reported that he had spent a considerable amount of time and effort in bringing the condition of the pitch up to an acceptable standard, including removing many years of accumulated thatch and levelling the ground. Re-seeding with suitable grass was scheduled for 4/10. He will also move all the grass cuttings to the area adjacent to the meadow.

The Clerk was asked to contact Brighstone Landscaping to arrange for the newly-restored eastern boundary hedge and the one adjacent to the Victoria Road access to be trimmed.

101/2023 YARMOUTH SCHOOL COMMUNITY ASSET

A report from Cllr S Cowley about progress of the submitted bid and any other relevant developments was presented and forms Appendix A to these minutes.

He added that there were likely to be significant delays and expressed concern about the ongoing maintenance of the premises. He reported that there had been little dialogue between the Scout & Guides Group and the other known bidders, MAT and Herrapath-Shenton Trust, and expressed surprise at a reported recommendation from local MP Bob Seeley to demolish the entire premises and build affordable housing. He and Cllr T Cowley indicated that the Steering Group, if not selected, would work with the winning bidder.

102/2023 COUNCILLOR TRAINING COURSE

Cllr S Cowley indicated that a date in November was expected for a training course in Yarmouth.

103/2023 NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Cllr T Cowley reported that he was awaiting an update from James Brewer of IWC.

104/2022 CLERK'S REPORT

104/2023.1 YARMOUTH CARNIVAL COMMITTEE CORONATION EVENT

There was much discussion about a request from the above for a further grant to cover £1200 expenses associated with the above event after YTC had paid costs of hiring the marquee and chairs (£1500 ex VAT). Because YCC is not a registered charity and YTC Standing Orders stipulate that the maximum grant to such an organisation is £250, a suspension of Standing Orders would be required. Also, there is no Budget provision for this spend.

It was agreed that Yarmouth Carnival Committee was a highly-valued community group, had done a very good job in organising the Coronation event and deserved as much support as YTC could offer. However, it was recognised that YTC's funds were limited following 3 years of no increase in the precept and unforeseen costs such as remedial work at the Rec and legal costs associated with the Yarmouth School site bid. It was proposed by Mayor McCleary, seconded by Cllr P Spink and RESOLVED by a majority of Councillors, with 2 abstentions, to agree the following proposal:
To suspend Standing Orders and make a grant of £600 towards the YCC costs.

104/2023.2 REMEMBRANCE SUNDAY 12/11/23

It was agreed that the following Councillors will lay wreaths:

Yarmouth: Cllr Cronin

Thorley: Deputy Mayor Head

Freshwater: Mayor McCleary

105/2022 CORRESPONDENCE

Correspondence received since the last meeting was noted.

106/2022 FUTURE AGENDA ITEMS

Budget 2024/5

Yarmouth School

Neighbourhood Plan

Historic plaques

Councillor training

107/2022 MEETING VENUES

The venue for the next meeting – CHOYD 7/11/23 - was confirmed.

Appendix A: Yarmouth School Steering group - October update

The steering group was invited to meet with the IWC 's Andrea Jenkins (Property Services) and Jade Kennett (Education Department) on Monday September 25th at County Hall to discuss our bid for the site.

We made a full presentation of the plan that had received so much support from residents, all the Town Councillors and our MP, Bob Seely at the meeting in CHOYD in August. We discussed many of the details of our bid, including what we could deliver for the community of Yarmouth, and its financial creditability and sustainability. Although at the CH meeting we learnt a lot more about the processes, which we believe that our bid has to go through, this has changed with subsequent emails and phone calls.

S77 consultation is about the protection of school playing fields. Other schools and authorised users will be consulted. The DfE have now asked that the IWC 'commence the consultation in the forthcoming weeks'. No timing is given. An officer from IWC will attend a YTC meeting if requested. The outcome of the S77 consultation will be sent to the DfE for their consideration. If approved by the DfE it will go back to the IWC's Cabinet for their approval.

The report to Cabinet will be drafted with a recommendation for a preferred bidder. To be clear, the Steering Group will continue to talk with all interested groups as we move forward.

Last month I said that the Maritime Archaeology Trust were seeking £40,000/£50,000 for the plots for affordable housing ; the new MAT/H-ST initiated trust is not seeking this sum. The YTC steering group is working with the Scout movement representative; MAT is not. YTC initiated Trust's unique element is that it will be controlled by members of Yarmouth's community.