



SANDOWN TOWN COUNCIL – MEETING MINUTES – 20 NOVEMBER 2023

Minutes of the Meeting of Sandown Town Council held on **MONDAY, 20 NOVEMBER 2023** at 7:00 pm at The Broadway Centre, 1 Broadway, Sandown, Isle of Wight PO36 9GG.

Present: Alex Lightfoot (Mayor), Debbie Andre, Frank Baldry, Sue Betts, Emily Brothers, Ian Fletcher (Deputy Mayor), Jenny Hicks, Heather Humby, Paddy Lightfoot.

Also Present: Richard Priest (Clerk), Jennifer Armstrong (RFO), and 4 members of the public.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS:

The Mayor congratulated and thanked Coxswain Mark Birch who was representing Sandown and Shanklin Inshore Lifeboat, on receiving the Kings Award for Voluntary Services, presenting him with a framed letter from the town council acknowledging the work of the service and the award.

Mr Paul Coueslant, was invited to make a representation to the council on behalf of the Sandown Carnival Association to inform budget discussions and talked to a written statement (attached to and forming part of these minutes) circulated to all members prior to the meeting. He highlighted the financial pressures the Association was facing and asked Council to consider funding for the organisation from the Town Council be returned to previous levels of £5,000 while acknowledging the competing priorities in the budget.

No questions were asked.

58-2023/2024 APOLOGIES

Apologies were accepted from Cllrs Robert May, Ian Ward and Toby Wilcock.

59-2023/2024 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

1. To receive any declarations of pecuniary and non -pecuniary interests

Cllr Debbie Andre declared an interest in any matters pertaining to the Isle of Wight Council as a ward member and pecuniary interest in discussions relating to the Carnival Association as their landlord.

Cllr Heather Humby declared a personal interest in matters relating to the Carnival Association as their president.

2. To receive and consider granting any written requests for dispensations.

No requests for written dispensations had been received.

60-2023/2024 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

A proposal to approve the minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2023 was moved and duly seconded. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results were as follows and it was:

For (8), Against (0), Abstentions (1).

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2023 be approved as a true record.

61-2023/2024 FINANCES

1. To approve the Payments and Receipts lists as presented for September 2023

Clarification was provided that the replacement of the flag poles at the war memorial had been via an insurance claim less the excess. A motion, that the Payments and Receipts for September 2023 be approved, was proposed and duly seconded. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results were as follows and it was:

For (9), Against (0), Abstentions (0).

RESOLVED

THAT the Payments and Receipts for September 2023 be approved.

2. To approve the Payments and Receipts lists as presented for October 2023

A motion, that the Payments and Receipts for October 2023 be approved, was proposed and duly seconded. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results were as follows and it was:

For (9), Against (0), Abstentions (0).

RESOLVED

THAT the Payments and Receipts for October 2023 be approved.

3. To receive and note the verified bank reconciliations for September and October 2023

The verified banking reconciliations for September and October 2023 were noted.

4. To receive and note the expenditure against budget through October 2023

Members considered and noted the expenditure against budget through October 2023.

5. To receive an update on the external audit and public rights process.

Members noted that the auditors had been contacted by the RFO regularly but no progress had been made. The timeline to date was:

- Emails sent to council.audits@bdo.co.uk on 9th, 16th and 23rd with no response.
- Escalated to Business Assurance Resource Manager on 2 November 2023. A response was received advising relevant team would be asked to follow-up.
- Advised which auditor would be in touch on 3 November 2023. RFO followed up again on 10 November 2023.

- Advised answers to queries can be used to resolve challenge issues and would be submitted.

6. To receive the results of the budget consultation and options for the draft budget.

A report which provided background to the budget progress was presented. Members considered the basis on which the 2024/2025 budget would be drafted. Members noted that despite extensive advertising, only 104 people had responded to the budget consultation. A number of indicative proposals were debated and indicative votes taken, with councillors' votes being confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements.

Inflation

Members discussed forecasted inflation figures and noted that while inflation was predicted to return to two percent by the end of quarter four 2024, Consumer Price Inflation (CPI) would remain at 5 percent. The indicative vote (7 For, 2 Against with no abstentions) supported drafting the 2024/2025 budget on the basis of five percent inflation

General Reserves

Members considered the recommendation to increase the general reserves from three months to six months over a period of 3 years. It was noted that the Practitioners' Guide indicated an authority with income and expenditure in excess of £200,000 should plan towards three to 12 months equivalent general reserve, that Sandown Town Councils income and expenditure have been in excess of £200,000 for a number of years and that the council had significant borrowing liability (£496,630).

The impact of the increase on the precept was debated with members recognising that since the general reserves was driven by revenue expenditure it would be impacted by any changes and noting that £10,000 in the budget represented £4.11 annually for an equivalent band D property.

The indicative vote (Unanimous) supported drafting the 2024/2025 budget with provision for four months general reserves.

Provision for Public Works Loan for Pier Street Toilets

The RFO sought confirmation from Council regarding providing for a Public Works Loan to provide toilets at Pier Street should the site become available.

Members discussed the likelihood of such a project being taken forward in the 2024/2025 budget year as it was unclear what the Isle of Wight Council planned to do with the site. A suggestion was put forward that it would be better to work with local businesses such as the Pier regarding public access to their facilities, though members did not that the Pier toilets were not accessible.

The indicative vote (8 For, 1 Against with no abstentions) supported removing the provision for a Public Works Loan to provide toilets on Pier Street from the draft 2024/2025 budget.

Place and Town Improvements

Council was asked to indicate what level of provision was made in the budget for town and place improvements. Clarification was sought regarding what the budget line was for with agreement that the terminology should be updated to “Place Plan and Town Improvements” for clarity. The funding need to help deliver projects relating to the Bay Place was debated.

The indicative vote (8 For, 1 Against with no abstentions) supported provision for £35,000 to deliver the place plan and town improvements be included in the draft 2024/2025.

Youth Offer

Members noted the success of the Youth Offer including match funding for further grants. The appropriate level of funding to be allocated in the draft 2024/2025 budget was debated with suggestions of £30,000 with a revenue/capital split to provide for an outreach base and £25,000 being considered.

There was no support for maintaining £15,000 funding in 2024/2025 and the indicative vote (8 For, 1 Against with no abstentions) supported provision for £25,000 to deliver the Youth Offer be included in the draft 2024/2025 budget.

Planning Enforcement

The Isle of Wight Council had provided costings for the Town Council to contribute towards a Planning Officer to take forward enforcement in Sandown. Concerns were raised regarding continuous requests from the Isle of Wight Council to fund services. Members also discussed the need for a robust planning framework for monitoring impact and suggested it would be helpful to understand the results of similar funding contributions in other areas before a final decision was made. Arguments in support of the provision included planning enforcement not being a statutory function and residents wanting to see action in relation to rundown and derelict buildings in Sandown.

The indicative vote (6 For, 3 Against with no abstentions) supported removing the provision for planning enforcement from the draft 2024/2025 budget.

Mechanical Raking

Members considered obtaining costs for mechanical raking on the beach to the South of the Pier to include it in the budget. The points highlighted during the debate included the lack of investment on the beach to the south of the Pier; the North had the Blue Flag, Lifeguards, new toilets at Eastern Gardens and accessibility projects, and that the beach was managed by the Isle of Wight Council who also collected the income from the concessionaires.

The indicative vote (5 For, 4 Against with no abstentions) supported obtaining indicative costings for the raking of the beach.

Solar Panels

Council considered including provision in the budget to install solar panels at the Broadway Centre. The need to assess the viability of panels at the location and the potential requirement for a structural survey were raised. It was also noted that the proposal had not been brought forward to be included in the consultation.

The indicative vote (6 For, 3 Against with no abstentions) supported exploring costings the installation of solar panels at the Broadway Centre.

Streaming Equipment

Members discussed including funding in the draft budget to purchase equipment to stream the meetings, noting that the council had previously decided against streaming the meetings though not within the last six months. A suggestion was made that money would be better spent providing more bins on the esplanade. Members noted that proposals to address this were being discussed.

The indicative vote (3 For, 5 Against with 1 abstentions) did not support obtaining costs and including provision in the draft budget.

62-2023/2024 MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

A motion was moved without notice under Standing Order 9.13(i), and duly seconded, that the meeting be extended by 30 minutes. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results were as follows and it was:

For (9), Against (0), Abstentions (0).

RESOLVED

THAT the meeting be extended by 30 minutes.

63-2023/2024 FINANCES

7. To receive the results of the budget consultation and options for the draft continued.

Income

The Council's income was discussed. The factors which could impact on income generation such as the closure of toilets due to vandalism and cancellation of hall bookings. The budget had been drafted to include 50% of the income.

A motion was proposed and duly seconded to increase the budgeted income from the toilets and room hire to 75%. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results were as follows and the motion fell:

The indicative vote (3 For, 6 Against with no abstentions) did not supporting increasing the budgeted income from the toilets and room hire to 75%.

Sandown Carnival Association Monies

Cllr Debbie Andre declared a pecuniary interest and left the room. Cllr Heather Humby declared a personal interest as president of the association. Members considered the Carnival Associations Request that a £5,000 contribution be The Council's income was discussed. The indicative vote (7 For, 0 Against with 1 abstention) supported allocating the requested contribution in the draft budget.

8. To consider providing £1,000 to support the Sandown and Shanklin Independent Lifeboat with repairs following Storm Ciaran.

Members considered the request from officers to award £1,000 to the lifeboat to help fund repairs to damage from Storm Ciaran. However, it was suggested that the damage was covered by insurance and the funding was no longer required.

A proposal was made and duly seconded that the draft budget, a previous agenda item, include an increased amount of £3,000 funding for the lifeboat. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results were as follows and it was: For (9), Against (0), Abstentions (0).

RESOLVED

THAT the draft 2024/2025 budget include £3,000 funding for the Sandown and Shanklin Independent Lifeboat.

64-2023/2024 TOWN CLERK REPORT

Council noted the report from the Clerk. The time spent addressing the impact of antisocial behaviour (broken glass at Sandham Grounds, the fire at Easter Gardens toilets etc) was highlighted with the cost of repairing the damaged electric's at the toilet expected to exceed £1000 with the toilets remaining closed. The issue with the viewing platform at Eastern Gardens was also ongoing.

65-2023/2024 WORKING PARTIES

A report had been published and circulated prior to the meeting, and the notes from the meetings circulated afterwards. Council noted the report.

66-2023/2024 TO RECEIVE ANY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES RAISED

No environmental issues had been raised by the Isle of Wight Council, Environment Agency or other statutory body.

67-2023/2024 TO RECEIVE ANY PLANNING MATTERS

The following planning applications were considered.

- [23/01961/DIS](#): J A Dempsey, College Close, PO36 8ED

Condition compliance application on 21/01011/FUL relating to conditions 3 (Materials), 4 (Drainage), 5 (FWEP) and 6 (Flood proofing measures) to be discharged

No comments.

- [23/01853/HOU](#): 29 Victoria Road, PO36 8AL

Demolition of garage; Proposed replacement side extension, New front porch, increase height of existing front dormer, Increase width to rear dormer and insert french doors and inset rear balcony, doors and additional vehicular access and driveway

No comments.

- [23/01625/HOU](#): 10 Meadow Way, PO36 8QEJ

Proposed single storey rear extension; alterations to vehicular access and parking area/driveway

No comments.

- [23/01989/FUL](#): - Melville Hall Hotel, Melville Street, PO36 9DH

Change of use from hotel to single residential unit (C3); porch (revised scheme)

Members discussed the application noting the application had previously been turned down and there seemed to be little change other than the design of the porch. The application had previously been refused due to a lack of evidence to support the change of use and due to the design of the proposed porch, which was not in keeping with the Victorian building.

A proposal was made and duly seconded that council object to the application, Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results were as follows and it was:

For (9), Against (0), Abstentions (0).

RESOLVED

THAT the council object to the application, due to the lack of evidence for change of use, and any other material considerations.

68-2023/2024 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCILLORS AND OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Andre provided an update on the Ocean Hotel advising members that the Isle of Wight Council had been awarded costs though not quite the full amount and that the owners had 100 days to respond to the Section 215. She also thanked those that helped during the recent flooding.

Cllr Humby informed members she continued to hold Thursday Surgeries in the Library. Flooding at Morton Common and the closure of the road had been a frequent complaint. She had also attended the Warm Space at Christ Church and encouraged other members to do so.

Cllr Hicks reported she had not managed to attend the Sustainability forum but had attended a recent traffic regulation briefing.

Cllr Alex Lightfoot updated members on the progress of the Bay Place Plan. He also thanked the Towns Women's Guild for decorating the centre, including crafting some of the decorations.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

A resident asked questions relating to the flooding at Morton Common, the road closures and the issues with the signage for the diversions which was unclear. He suggested given the frequency of the flooding and road closures that signage which stated which road was closed be used and that it was important to have signage in place when the road flooded before motorist got stranded. The Mayor responded officers would feed comments back to Island Roads.

Another member of the public suggested a survey had been done on the Pier Street toilets which indicated there were some issues with the site.

Mr Coueslant, of the Carnival Association thanked the Council for considering his request.

Closed 21:30