



SANDOWN TOWN COUNCIL – MEETING MINUTES – 18 NOVEMBER 2024

Minutes of the Meeting of Sandown Town Council held on **MONDAY, 21 NOVEMBER 2024** at 7:00 pm at The Broadway Centre, 1 Broadway, Sandown, Isle of Wight PO36 9GG.

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

Also Present: Richard Priest (Clerk), Jennifer Armstrong (RFO), Lorraine Ellis (Admin) and two members of the public.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS:

The Deputy Mayor invited questions from members of the public.

Mr Paul Coueslant thanked the Council, on behalf of the Carnival Association, for their support in the current financial year, both in terms of the grant and use of the centre; and the residents of Sandown for indicating their continued support in the recent budget consultation. Mr Coueslant also requested the Toilets be opened for the New Year's Day Fireworks.

The Reverend Mark Williams thanked Officers for their work in relation to the Remembrance Service, and the partnership working which delivered Sandown's Warm Space.

Cllr Debbie Andre declared an interest as the Cabinet Member with the portfolio which awarded the Warm Space grants.

The RFO drew members attention to the Warm Spaces budget line.

The Clerk advised a resident had asked him to put forward a question in relation the Christmas Family Funday but noted the Council had not received correspondence from the organisers of the event. Cllr Fletcher commented he would want to see where money was allocated and a copy of the accounts where funding had been awarded.

54-2024/2025 APOLOGIES

Apologies were accepted from Cllrs Alex Lightfoot (Mayor) and Toby Wilcock. The Deputy Mayor, Cllr Ian Fletcher took the chair.

55-2024/2025 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

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

Cllr Debbie Andre advised she was an Isle of Wight Councillor, declared an interest in matters pertaining to Los Altos Park and a pecuniary interest in the Carnival Association, advising she would recuse herself from any related discussions.

Cllr Humby and Hicks advised they had an interest in Carnival matters, the former as the president and the latter as a volunteer.

Cllr Ian Ward advised he was an Isle of Wight Council ward member.

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

No requests for written dispensations had been received.

56-2024/2025 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING

Cllr Andre noted she would abstain as she had left the room due to her interest as a ward member.

A motion to approve the minutes as an accurate record of the meeting held on the 21 October 2024 was moved. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results of which were as follows and it was:

For (7), Against (0), Abstentions (3).

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes of the meeting held on 21 October 2024 be approved as a true record.

57-2024/2025 FINANCES

1. To approve the Payments and Receipts lists as presented for September 2024

A motion to approve the September 2024 Payments and Receipts was moved. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results of which were as follows and it was:

For (10), Against (0), Abstentions (0).

RESOLVED:

THAT the September 2024 payments and receipts be approved.

2. To approve the Payments and Receipts lists as presented for October 2024

A motion to approve the October 2024 Payments and Receipts was moved. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results of which were as follows and it was:

For (10), Against (0), Abstentions (0).

RESOLVED:

THAT the October 2024 payments and receipts be approved.

3. To receive and note the verified bank reconciliations for September and October 2024

The verified bank reconciliations for September and October 2024 were noted.

4. To receive and note the expenditure against budget through October 2024

The expenditure against budget through October 2024 noted.

5. Update on Football Foundation Grant

Members were updated on the progress of the Football Foundation Grant. The key points highlighted were:

- The letter of intent has been signed and returned.

- The draft application has been reviewed by the foundation.
- The activation form and project plan will be completed this month.
- The planning application has been submitted; the contractor is discussing biodiversity.

The process for the application was also noted, with the Grant Award itself following the planning stage.

6. Formal Consideration of External Audit Report.

Council formerly considered the report from the external auditor noting the following matters:

- *Question 11 a has not been answered in the Accounting Statements however 11 b has been answered as N/A. The answer should have been No.*

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

- *The smaller authority has confirmed that it has not complied with the governance assertions in Section 1, Box 7 as the external audit for 2022/23 had not been closed and the final report and findings had not been issued.*
- *To be in line with best practice we recommend that when minuting the appointment of the internal auditor, the council record they have considered the independence of the appointed auditor on an annual basis.*

In response to the comments on the report, regarding the independence of the internal auditor, an item had been added to the agenda for the meeting.

7. 2025/2026 Draft Budget

The RFO presented the basis of the budget and drew attention to the key areas members needed to consider from the written report. Highlighting, this was not the officers recommended budget but a starting point for Councillors to consider.

Members discussed the initial options for the precept. A proposal that the Zero precept increase option be removed from the Council's consideration was moved. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results of which were as follows and it was:

For (10), Against (0), Abstentions (0).

RESOLVED:

THAT the a zero Increase precept option be removed from the draft budget presented for consideration.

The appropriate rate of inflation was debated with some councillors supporting a cautionary approach and other indicating the budget should be based on industry projections. It was noted that the changes to National Insurance contributions were also likely to impact on the economy. A proposal that four percent of inflation be applied to relevant items was moved. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results of which were as follows and it was:

For (9), Against (1), Abstentions (0).

RESOLVED:

THAT a rate of 4% inflation be applied to the items which are budgeted with an inflationary increase.

Finally, the basis on which the Council budget should be drafted was then considered with Council providing steer to officers on which projects should be taken forward to the draft. Councillors were reminded that they were still able to bring forward their own alternative budgets.

Members spoke in support of protecting Warm Spaces highlighting the difference it made to vulnerable members of the community.

There was a majority consensus to remove budget provision for the following items:

- The Sandown Guide (digital and hard copy); and
- Repairs to the Gravel Carpark

And there was a majority consensus to include budget provision for the following provisions:

- Additional Accessible Beach Matting
- Audio Visual Equipment for the Broadway Centre
- Solar Panels for the Broadway Centre
- 12 months funding for Warm Spaces
- Maintenance and refurbishment budgets for the Sandham Grounds parks
- The future of Pier Street toilets

There was also support for continuing to fund the Youth Offer at the current level with all but one Councillor, Cllr Brothers, recognising the positive impact of the partnership.

8. Appointment of 2025/2026 Internal Auditor

The Council considered the independence of the Council's Internal Auditor, Maxine Warr. Noting Ms Warr had undertaken the 2022/2023 and 2023/2024 audits, it was agreed it would be appropriate for her to be appointed for the period ending 2024/2025; that while it was generally considered best practice for the Internal Auditor to be changed regularly to ensure independence, the provider does not have to be changed every year and every three years was acceptable. Confirmation was also provided the council received a very good level of service from Ms Warr.

9. Grant Application - Historical Society

The RFO advised the Society had withdrawn the application.

10. Place Plan Funding:

Cllr Paddy Lightfoot introduced the items in Cllr Alex Lightfoot's absence, advising members that the proposed projects were within the Mayors financial threshold for Place Plan projects but he wanted Council to have the opportunity to discuss them.

a) Willow Walk

A presentation had been circulated outlining details of the Willow Walk, its background and purpose. Clarification was sought on what funding would be used for; this was detailed in the presentation which also outlined the projects to be taken forward, such as new bridges.

b) Business Association Seed Funding

Support was being sought for a Bay Wide business association, following the Bay Place plan demonstrating an appetite for such a venture. Members noted that Lawerence Bates of the Wild Heart Sanctuary was working in conjunction with a local graphic designer and the Community Association to set the organisation up. Seed funding would help the association with venue and other set-up costs.

58-2024/2025 TOWN CLERK REPORT

Members considered the written report from the Town Clerk. Updates were provided on projects which had moved forward since the report was published. The Clerk also advised members a pop-up surgery had been arranged in December for residents with the local MP. Clarification was provided regarding officers' involvement in the Sandown and Shanklin Inshore Lifeboat event.

Updates were sought on the status of the Yaverland Toilet and Los Altos activity equipment project; the old Yaverland Toilet block had been demolished and the new unit was scheduled for delivery in December. The Los Altos project could not be taken forward at this time as a variation of the licence was required from the Isle of Wight Council to progress the project.

59-2024/2025 TO RECEIVE ANY ENVIRONMENTAL ISSUES RAISED

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

60-2024/2025 TO RECEIVE ANY PLANNING MATTERS

a) To consider any relevant planning applications.

The following applications were considered; no comments were returned.

[24/01240/FUL](#) – Oban, Yaverland Road PO36 8QN

Proposed single storey side/rear extension and new front door

[24/01588/HOU](#) - 14 Meadow Way, PO36 8QE

Proposed front porch

[24/01653/DIS](#) - Old Town Hall, Grafton Street, PO36 8JJ

Condition compliance application on 24/01146/LBC in relation to condition 4 (Various Works)

[24/01676/TW](#) - Los Altos Park

Horse Chestnut - Crown reduction

b) To receive an update on planning enforcement activities

The report from the Isle of Wight Council's Senior Planning Enforcement Officer was noted, with Council noting the positive results yielded from the contribution.

61-2024/2025 TO RECEIVE REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCILLORS AND OUTSIDE BODIES

Cllr Heather Huby reported on issues raised at her Thursday surgeries at the library. There had been complaints regarding the untidy and poor condition of the basements and lightwells along the high street. Officers advised the matter had been raised with the Isle of Wight Council and would follow-up.

Cllr Jenny Hicks advised she had attended an Environment and Sustainability forum, highlighting the levels of microplastics on the Island. She also supported Cllr Humby's comments regarding the basements and lightwells.

Cllr Ian Ward advised he had met with Southern Water and visited the treatment plant. The unpleasant odour residents were complaining about was due to a lack of rain and issues obtaining the chemical used to suppress the smell. He also advised members that the outfall was located some 3 miles of the coast and if pollution was reported Southern Water would track down the source.

Cllr Paddy Lightfoot updated members on the Bay Place Plan AGM. 65 people had attended. Now projects were being bought forwards, there was a believe that change was possible.

62-2024/2025 MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

A motion, under 21.1(vi) that Public Question Time be bought forward on the agenda, was proposed and duly seconded. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results were as follows and it was:

For (10), Against (0), Abstentions (0).

RESOLVED

THAT Public Question Time be bought forward on the agenda.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Reverend Mark Williams shared details of a Christmas Day Lunch offer for those in need or alone at Christmas which was being undertaken with the support of the Town Council.

Mr Paul Couelsant informed the meeting that there was an exhibition of Sandown Regatta hats being held at Quay Arts.

63-2024/2025 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

A motion, that the public and press be excluded from the meeting, was proposed and duly seconded. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results were as follows and it was:

For (10), Against (0), Abstentions (0).

RESOLVED

THAT under the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 and Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business, namely Agenda Item 10 (Minute number 64-2024/2026) on the grounds that there is likely to be disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph(s) 1 - 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act and in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

64-2024/2025 MOTION WITHOUT NOTICE

A motion, under 9.13(i) that the meeting be extended by up to 60 minutes, was proposed and duly seconded. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results were as follows and it was:

For (10), Against (0), Abstentions (0).

RESOLVED

THAT the meeting be extended by up to 60 minutes.

65-2024/2025 RECOMMENDATIONS FROM THE HR COMMITTEE

Members debated the recommendations from the HR committee regarding which informed the staffing budget. Clarification was provided the decision would not change the current staffing structure but would build provision within the budget for the incoming Council, following the 2025 elections and retirement of the Clerk, to make changes. An explanation of the benchmarking exercise and how this had informed the budget was also provided.

A motion, that the three recommendations from the HR Committee be adopted enbloc was moved. Councillors' votes were confirmed verbally to meet accessibility requirements; the results were as follows and it was:

For (9), Against (1), Abstentions (0).

RESOLVED:

THAT Council budget for changes to the staffing structure to increase capacity.

RESOLVED:

THAT Council budget for the following Staffing Structure and undertake a benchmarking exercise:

- CILCA qualified Clerk/RFO (full time)
- CILCA qualified Deputy Clerk (full time)
- Facilities Officer (fte 0.8)
- Administrative assistant (fte 0.8)
- Caretaker (fte 0.67)
- Lock-up (abolish)

RESOLVED

THAT the Council budget reflect the benchmarking exercise, undertaken by, and pay scales recommended by the HR Committee.