



SANDOWN TOWN COUNCIL

SANDOWN ANNUAL TOWN MEETING MINUTES – 9 MARCH 2026

Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting, held at the Broadway Centre, Broadway, Sandown, Isle of Wight, PO36 9GG at **6:00** on **MONDAY, 9 MARCH 2026**.

Present:

Mayor of Sandown: Cllr Alex Lightfoot

Residents: 18 Members of the Public.

Also Present: Sandown Town Councillors – Debbie Andre, Ian Boyd, Liam Cregg, Paddy Lightfoot.

Julian Wadsworth (Community Action), Nikki Parker (Greentown Volunteers) and Lawrence Bates (Bay Business Association/International School of Rewilding.)

Jennifer Armstrong (Clerk), Lorraine Elliss (Deputy Clerk).

1. Welcome by the Mayor.

The mayor welcomed residents.

2. Minutes of the Annual Town Meeting held on the 15 April 2024

Mr Gary Young proposed, and Mr Paul Coulsaunt seconded, approval of the minutes having attended last year's meeting.

4. Town Council Report

The Mayor presented an annual report outlining achievements in the Town in the past year attached to and forming part of these minutes.

3. Updates from Local Organizations:

Updates were received from the following organizations:

- Bay Youth Group and Town Hall – Julian Wandsworth
- Sandown Greentown Volunteers
- Bay Business Association, Building The Bay and International School of Rewilding (Lawrence Bates)
- Carnival (statement provided)
- Sandown and Lake Football Club (statement provided)

5. Public Comment / Question Time

Perry White from the Wight Aviation Museum advised the museum would be open from Easter and welcomed volunteers. He also thanked Cllr Andre for her assistance during the flooding of Riverview Court earlier in the year.

Another Member of the Public asked if there was anything the community could do in relation to young adults and anti-social behaviour and was advised building relationships was key as was continuing to report any incidents to ensure support from other agencies which was driven by statistics.

Meeting closed 20:45

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2026 Mayors Report

Council in the Community

The Broadway Centre continues to thrive as a community hub. It's been used regularly for eye screening, health and support groups, and community groups.

Despite withdrawal of central funding, the Town Council continues to support the Warm Space at Christ Church, as well as supporting Breakfast in the Bay at the school, and the council continues to work to deliver projects with the school.

The council continues to support and provide funding to the Carnival association, Green Town Volunteers, Sandown and Shanklin Independent Lifeboat and the Christmas Fun Day.

We continue to run and facilitate the events that have come to be expected, including the Christmas service next door and the Remembrance service.

Closer Working with the IOWC and Bay Councils

Working closely with our neighbours continues to be a strong theme. Sandown continues to provide back-office support to Lake Parish Council and collaborates with both Lake and Shanklin through the *Building the Bay* place plan steering group, and we will have an update from them later.

The impact of planning enforcement has seen significant visible improvements to some properties, and this is something we continue to fund, looking to tackle the more challenging sites. The S215 on the Esplanade has ensured that works are undertaken and planning enforcement will pursue these against other properties where appropriate.

Murals

Many of you will have seen the Mary Ellis mural that we commissioned down at Eastern Gardens, this was really positively received, and alongside Southern Waters works on the pumping station following on from planning enforcement, the area is now looking much smarter. We have just commissioned a further mural down at Eastern Gardens and look forward to seeing that brought forward.

The Beach

Our amazing lifeguard service will return once again this year — providing local job opportunities and, most importantly, ensuring the safety of beachgoers. We also hope to see the return of the *Swim Safe* programme, where lifeguards offer beach safety sessions to school children across the Island. Continuing to lead the way as the most accessible beach on the Island. This summer the three beach wheelchairs, and the

beach matting return and our Changing Places facility remains available to those who need it.

Los Altos

This year saw us hand back the lease of Los Altos to the Isle of Wight Council, who are now responsible for the trees, boundaries and grass cutting. However we secured lottery money and with additional funding from the Town Council, installed a number of carved benches, along with the new activity equipment in the park.

Sandham Gardens

Last month saw the opening of the new 2G football pitch, its already seeing lots of use from Sandown and Lake Football Club and the Bay Youth Project, and we expect to see further increased usage as the weather improves, with booking available through the town council website.

This year we will be beginning the work to look at redeveloping the Skate Park. We are engaging an expert to look at initial possible options and budgets for the space, with a significant sum already set aside to fund the new park. We have also engaged with John Cattles Skate Club who will be running engagement sessions from Easter throughout the year until the end of the summer, ensuring users can feed in to the design of the new park.

This month should also see the installation of improved lighting at Sandham Gardens, alongside replacements for both the mushrooms and zip line in Steven Jenkins Playground.

Young People

The Bay Youth Project continues to go from strength to strength. With the opening of LINK, the new youth centre at the town hall, and the 2G pitch, the facilities available to them are significantly improved, and alongside our funding, with YIF and PCC funding the team has grown and they are providing sessions 5 days a week, alongside interventions, outreach and referrals. Julian will provide an update on what they've been up to later.

Since the project began, youth-related anti-social behaviour had fallen by 49%. This has continued to fall even further in the last year

Town of Culture

The Town Council are supporting the Town of Culture bid, with councillors Tracy Mikich and Joan Solomon helping to lead on the bid. I attended a public engagement event for the bid at Boojum and Snark which was very well attended and positively buzzing with

energy and ideas. I look forward to seeing what comes forward as the bid is refined and developed.

Pier Street Toilets

You may have seen in the press that we had approached the IOWC to hand off the Pier street site to the town council, as all other public toilet sites across the Island were. We have funded the opening of these toilets during the summer now for years, while the IOWC have left the building to degrade and fall into disrepair. If we are able to secure the site, we will be able to address what is now verging on a derelict site, for the benefit of the town. The IOWC have undertaken multiple marketing exercises, with no real progress, and are now considering doing it all again. Hopefully the new Council come May will take a more sensible approach.

Toilets

Now speaking of toilets, we have seen a reduction in ASB since the installation of CCTV at all of the sites, but it does continue to be an issue. The council has made the decision to make all of the toilets we manage, free to use, and will monitor their usage and the levels of ASB and vandalism over the coming season. Hopefully we won't have a significant increase in issues.

Ocean Hotel

Finally as many of you will have seen, the Town Council were the winning bidder for the strip of land at the front of the Ocean Hotel, there are a number of reasons why it was felt that this acquisition was strategically sensible, but what we will be discussing later this evening is how we might make some temporary use of the site, for the benefit of the community, while issues around the wider site will continue to be worked on.

FOOTBALL CLUB STATEMENT

Sandown & Lake Football Club is an FA Charter Standard club that continues to grow in size, with more children joining all the time. We have over 150 children playing in 8 mixed youth teams, and over 50 girls playing for four girls-only teams that play in the new Island Saturday Girls League. We also have our Little Lions, aged 3–7 years, who start their footballing journey with the club.

We are all volunteers, and as with a lot of other youth organisations, we have to raise our own funds to survive—not always an easy thing—but we are extremely grateful to the wonderful people who help to sponsor our teams and those who provide grants or funding to enable us to survive.

We would also like to express our thanks to Sandown Council for providing the fantastic new 2G multi-games court at Yaverland. This has been a crucial help for our club, enabling us to continue training despite the horrendous weather over the last few months.

Looking ahead, we are planning a litter pick in the local community and are looking forward to entering the local carnivals again this year. We are always looking for volunteers or helpers, so please get in touch if you are interested in joining our fantastic club.



Dear Councillors,

SANDOWN CARNIVAL and REGATTA 2026

We'd like to thank you for your valuable support in 2025 and hope the Town Council's current budget consultation will show strong public backing for Carnival and Regatta as it has in the past. You might find this brief report on Sandown Carnival's work helpful as you consider the Council's budget for 2026-27.

2025 success

We've delivered a series of popular events in the town this year. Our Easter fireworks display (postponed from New Year), Sandown Bay Regatta in August and our three summer carnival parades attracted thousands to the High Street and seafront, providing a welcome boost for local businesses as well as fun and entertainment for residents and visitors.

Over the four years that we've been running the Regatta, we've increased financial support for the event via local business sponsorship, and the Regatta street market made a notable profit in 2025. We've also taken important steps to reduce Sandown Carnival's historic reliance on cash income, making cashless donations easier for all our activities.



Ongoing challenges

It takes up to £50,000 each year to put on our events and, as for many non-profit community groups, fundraising is an ever-present part of the job. As you might be aware, we're also having to address a few other issues at the moment.



We've announced the difficult decision not to put on a New Year fireworks display in January 2026. That's because we've been hit by two large, wholly unanticipated costs which have dented our finances to the tune of £10,000 or more: a share of landlord's service charge for roof replacement at our shop premises; and a big hike in non-domestic rates for our float-building and storage site at East Yar Road, levied by the Isle of Wight Council for the first time in 2024 and currently setting us back over £300 a month.

Unfortunately, we've had no choice but to cancel one of our major annual occasions to make sure we can fully fund the 2026 summer events that everyone expects us to provide.

At the same time, Southern Water's takeover of the Sandown float-building site we've used for the last 46 years looks set to progress. It means we'd have to leave the site permanently from 2026. Latest discussions suggest Southern Water might fund a solution while construction of their planned water recycling plant is under way, then provide a longer term new home once the works are complete. But nothing is agreed as yet.

We look forward to the Town Council's continued support in whatever ways you might feel able to provide it.

Best regards,

Paul Coueslant
Chair, Sandown Carnival Committee

20 October 2025