

Minutes

Name of meeting	FULL COUNCIL
Date and time	WEDNESDAY, 17 OCTOBER 2007
Venue	COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNTY HALL, NEWPORT, ISLE OF WIGHT
Present	Cllrs Roger Mazillius (Chairman), Barry Abraham, Henry Adams, Wendy Arnold, John Bowker, George Brown, William Burt, Vanessa Churchman, Mike Cunningham, John Effemey, Jonathan Fitzgerald-Bond, Barbara Foster, John Hobart, Heather Humby, Tim Hunter-Henderson, Patrick Joyce, Gill Kennett, Geoff Lumley, Win McRobert, Muriel Miller, Brian Mosdell, Lady Pigot, Garry Price, David Pugh, Susan Scoccia, Ian Stephens, Melanie Swan, Arthur Taylor, Diana Tuson, Ian Ward, Margaret Webster, Alan Wells, Colin West, David Whittaker, Julian Whittaker, David Williams, Jilly Wood
Officers Present	Steve Beynon, David Burbage, Julia Corkey, Debbie Dixon, Gavin Foster, Stuart Love, Alison Lowton, Chris Mathews, Amanda Thomas
Apologies	Cllrs Anne Bishop, Ivan Bulwer, George Cameron, Charles Chapman, Dawn Cousins, Deborah Gardiner, Charlie Hancock, David Knowles, Erica Oulton, Lora Peacey-Wilcox, Andy Sutton,
50.	Minutes <u>RESOLVED</u> : THAT the Minutes of the meeting held on 19 September 2007 be confirmed.
51.	Declarations of Interest Cllrs Adams and Price declared a personal interest in Item 5 as they both had Post Offices ear-marked for closure within their wards.
52.	Public Question Time Three written questions had been received from members of the public (PQ 42, 43 and 44) about the Council's schools reorganisation plans. As the questioners were not in attendance the Chairman advised that a written response would be provided.

Mr Wortham of Brighstone asked about financial probity checks being undertaken prior to granting licensing applications for Island events. The Cabinet Member advised that financial information was not discussed as part of the licensing process. However, Mr Wortham was invited to write to the Cabinet Member with details.

53. **Chairman's Report**

The Chairman had provided a written report of his activities during the month. Members were urged to visit their local schools during Local Democracy Week and to consider serving as a school governor.

54. **Motion Under Procedure Rule 11 by Cllr Abraham**

The Cabinet Member introduced the motion and called upon all affected Members to support appropriate action against the potential closure of nine post offices on the Island. Councillors were also urged to co-operate with the Rural Community Council in their campaign against the proposed closures.

During the debate, Members raised particular concerns about:

- the impact on the elderly and single parents, many of whom did not own cars and might not have easy access to bus routes;
- the general breakdown of local communities;
- no replacement services being planned;
- no new consultations undertaken, the information used for the review being out of date;
- a potential increase in traffic volume should people be forced to travel in order to access a Post Office;
- the extra costs for car parking or public transport for those on a low income.

Members were also concerned about current housing developments, which included affordable housing units. Part of the criteria included for such developments was being close to local amenities. However, following the planned closures, some amenities may now be lost. Post offices were also seen as meeting places within the community and enabled continuing contact with the most vulnerable.

Suggested solutions put forward included incorporating post office services with local libraries, police stations, churches, or the Council's one-stop-shops. Members also urged the County Press to support the Island's campaign against post office closures.

The Cabinet Member advised Council that the Chief Executive had secured a meeting with Government Officers where the concerns raised at Council could be discussed.

RESOLVED:

- (i) THAT if any Island Post Offices are proposed for closure, the Isle of Wight Council will support residents in campaigning to keep them open, with local Members taking a leading role in supporting the retention of post offices in their wards.
- (ii) THAT a meeting be arranged for all Members with post offices marked for closure within their wards, to discuss what action could be taken.

55. To appoint a Chairman to the Council's Scrutiny Committee

The Leader provided a brief background regarding the current situation of the Scrutiny Committee for Members' information. Cllr Miller was nominated for the vacant position of Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee. Cllr Miller would be offered a Conservative vacancy.

It was proposed and seconded that Procedure Rule 18(4) be suspended to enable a vote by a show of hands and following the vote it was

RESOLVED:

THAT Procedure Rule 18(4) be suspended to enable a vote by simple majority.

Following the debate, and there being no further nominations, it was

RESOLVED:

THAT Cllr Miller be appointed Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee.

The Leader further proposed that Council should consider paying a backdated allocation of the Special Responsibility Allowance to Cllr Churchman in recognition of her work with the Scrutiny Committee during the interim period. A brief debate took place and following the vote it was

RESOLVED:

THAT in recognition of her role, Cllr Churchman be paid the Special Responsibility Allowance as Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee for the period from 22 May 2007 until 17 October 2007.

Cabinet**Reports of the Cabinet Members****(i) The Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing, Leisure and Governance**

A written question had been received from Cllr Ward (MQ 03/07) about the perceived lack of progress with the Sandown Bay Regeneration project. The Cabinet Member advised that the project remained a Council priority and suggested that a Focus Group be set up to include all Bay area Members.

A written update report had been provided for Members' information.

Cllr Mosdell asked if details regarding manpower levels and costings since May 2005 could be provided. The Cabinet Member agreed to provide a written response.

(ii) The Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Economy, Planning and Property

A written update report had been circulated for information.

(iii) Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport

A written question had been received from Cllr Mosdell (MQ 04/07) regarding the current works at the Coppins Bridge car park. The Cabinet Member advised that a further review was currently being undertaken following concerns about the reconfiguration.

A written update report had been submitted for Members' information.

Further questions were put forward by Cllrs Humby and Price about the criteria for utility companies undertaking roadworks. The Cabinet Member advised that a close liaison was always maintained, but particular concerns could be put in writing and would be investigated.

Cllr Churchman asked if Planning Services could be kept informed of impending roadworks, particularly if likely to be of long duration. The Cabinet Member noted the question.

(iv) Vice Chair of Scrutiny

A written update report had been submitted for Members' information.

(v) **Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Supporting People**

A written report had been provided in the Member's absence.

(vi) **Cabinet Member for Residents and Resources**

A written report had been circulated for Members' information.

Cllr Price asked if the Cabinet Member could investigate the number and value of Council services that could potentially be delivered by post offices. The Chairman advised Cllr Price to provide the question in writing for the Cabinet Member.

(vii) **Cabinet Member for Safer Communities**

A written report had been submitted and the Cabinet Member also commented on the appointment of the Island's Town Centre Managers.

(viii) **Cabinet Member for Children and Young People**

A written statement about the Council's proposals for schools reorganisation had been circulated. Council's attention was drawn to the importance of outlining a way forward.

The Cabinet Member also provided an update about the coach accident earlier in the day involving a party of schoolchildren visiting the Island.

Cllr Lumley asked if in future elected Members could be advised of any statements or information about the schools reorganisation before it became public knowledge. The Cabinet Member apologised for the unfortunate timing.

CHAIRMAN