ISLE OF WIGHT ASSOCIATION OF LOCAL COUNCILS

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DRAFT minutes IWALC AGM 25th June 2026 at The Riverside Centre, Newport Isle of Wight, starting 7pm.

Present:
Cllr Patricia Redpath (Chair), Brian Jennings (County Officer - CO), Cllr Jonathan Bacon (Leader – IWC)
Members:
Cllr Diana Conyers (Ryde), Cllr Bob Blezzard (Newchurch), Cllr Penny Acton (Gurnard), Cllr Ian Boyd (Sandown), Cllr Mick Lyons (Havenstreet), Cllr Sally Chaucer (Freshwater), Cllr Steph Toogood (Ventnor), Cllr Sue Hardy (Lake), Cllr Nick Stuart (Brighstone), Cllr Paul Garratt (Brading), Cllr Steve Dyer (St Helens), Cllr Vivian Roberts (Arreton),Cllr Ed Hopper (Fishbourne), Cllr Paul Fuller (Cowes).

Welcome. The Chair welcomed all to the meeting and clarified the purpose of the AGM.

1. **Apologies**. Apologies were received from; Mrs Wendy Perera (CEO – IWC), Cllr Sarah Morris, Cllr Claire Critchison, Cllr Joanne Ballington and Cllr Steve Cooper.
2. **Declarations of Interest**. Cllr Fuller explained that whilst he was also an IWC elected member, he was at the meeting on behalf of Cowes Town Council.
3. **Minutes**; to approve the minutes of the last AGM held on 26th June 2025. The minutes of the AGM were approved by a show of hands as a true and accurate record of the meeting. During the discussion around the minutes, the Chair pointed out that in the previous year's minutes there had been a reference to updating the IWALC Constitution to clarify the process for nominating IWALC members to roles during the AGM and this work had not yet been carried out and will be looked at by a working group after this year's AGM.
4. **Election (a) Chair**. Cllr Patricia Redpath was nominated by multiple member councils; there were no other nominations received for the role of Chair. Cllr Patricia Redpath was duly elected by a unanimous show of hands. **(b) Vice Chair**. Cllr Ian Boyd was nominated by Ryde Town Council, there were no other nominations received for the role of Vice Chair. Cllr Ian Boyd was duly elected by a unanimous show of hands.
   (c) Treasurer: To appoint a treasurer for 2026/2027. Multiple nominations had been received for Cllr Sue Hardy to continue the role of Honorary Treasurer, there were no other nominations received for this role and Cllr Hardy's re-appointment to the role was approved by a show of hands. (**d) Auditor**. Cllr Sue Hardy had nominated Maxine Warr, (the current independent auditor) This was approved by a show of hands.
5. **IWALC/IWC Future Relationship:** Cllr Jonathan Bacon (Leader - IWC) had been invited in to address concerns over the future working relationship between IWALC and the IWC.
   Cllr Bacon had been sent three questions in advance that asked for the IWC's view on how closer collaboration between the organisations could be achieved (especially in the aftermath of IWALC losing its non-voting role on the Planning Committee) and how he saw the new

devolved Combined Authority's influence on Local Councils playing out. There was a robust discussion with several clarifying questions being asked and Cllr Bacon's responses are summarised here:

i. Removal of IWALC Representative from the Planning Committee

- **The Monitoring Officer's Decision:** Cllr Bacon explained that the decision to remove the IWALC representative from the Planning Committee was a formal ruling from the IWC Monitoring Officer, intended to improve governance and protect the integrity of the planning process. The Monitoring Officer deemed it legally inappropriate to give a preferred, formal status on the committee to a representative of a statutory consultee.
- **No Impact on Public Attendance:** He clarified that this ruling does not prevent IWALC representatives from attending planning meetings or seeking to speak as members of the public; it merely removes formal, dedicated representation on the committee itself.
- **Full Council Context:** Cllr Bacon acknowledged that the decision caused concern but explained it was pushed through 'en bloc' alongside a large series of constitutional changes at the IOWC AGM. This was done due to severe time constraints and the absolute necessity of passing other urgent measures, such as the establishment of a new Standards Committee recommended in the recent independent report on council functionality. He apologised for the negative impression or misunderstanding the abruptness of this decision created.

ii. Future Working Relationship and Engagement Framework

- **Commitment to Collaboration:** Cllr Bacon strongly rejected the assumption that the IWC wishes to pull away from IWALC, emphasising a genuine desire from the new administration to work more closely together.
- **Updating Protocol 16 / Parish Charter:** He agreed that the existing protocol is outdated (making obsolete references to scrutiny committees) and expressed total support for working up a revised protocol or a comprehensive "Parish Charter" that aligns with the council's current committee system.
- **Proposed Way Forward:** He outlined a first-draft framework to rebuild the structural relationship between the authorities, which includes:
    - A **joint workshop** to build a mutual understanding of respective roles, effective engagement, and how to improve consultation responses.
    - The creation of a **quarterly IOWC, Town, and Parish Councils Forum** structured around themes of common concern.
    - An **annual strategic conversation** regarding key budget considerations and shared priorities.
    - IWALC to create a list of requests to be sent to the IWC.
- **Officer Resourcing:** He noted a caveat from Claire Shand regarding the need to formally identify the internal officer resource required to administer these initiatives, but pledged to do his best to ensure it is secured.

iii. Devolution and the Combined Authority

- **Shadow Combined Authority Status:** Cllr Bacon confirmed that the IWC formally entered into the Combined Authority approximately two to three weeks prior. The first meeting is scheduled for mid-July to appoint officers and chairs. The authority will operate as a "shadow" body for the first two years before a Mayor is officially elected.
- **Local Power and Parishes:** He expressed hope that devolution would bring strategic powers (such as transport management) down from Westminster—which he noted frequently lacks a basic geographic and structural understanding of the Isle of Wight—to a local level.

- **Parish Representation:** While the exact mechanism of how the Combined Authority will interact with town and parish councils is still being explored, Cllr Bacon committed to acting as the Island's representative to advance parish council requests and look into precedent models used by other mainland combined authorities.

iv. Responses to Member Feedback

- **Committee Co-option Requests:** In response to queries regarding a year-old, unanswered IWALC request for co-opted seats on the IWC's service committees, Cllr Bacon stated he was personally unaware of the history but invited IWALC to submit a formal written request so he could advance it to the Monitoring Officer.
- **Inviting Committee Chairs:** He welcomed the suggestion of involving the Chairs of relevant IWC decision-making service committees (such as Economy and Environment) in future joint dialogues to ensure IWALC's views are directly integrated into the committee system.

  The County Officer will follow up with NALC as to the validity of the legal interpretation the M.O. has made regarding IWALC having a non-voting seat on the Planning Committee and will also write to the IWC to challenge the lack of progress that has been made on assigning service committee seats to IWALC.

6. **Accounts**: The C.O. had distributed the annual accounts (prepared by the Treasurer) before the AGM. There were no questions and the accounts were accepted. Cllr Hardy was thanked by the chair for another year of excellent work.
7. **Chairs Annual Report**. The Chair presented her annual report, extending formal thanks to the outgoing Chair for his service and to the former County Officer, Julie Hutchinson. The report was noted by the meeting, and there were no questions raised.
8. **Training**. To appoint members to the Training Group. The Chair, Vice-Chair and Treasurer are automatically members and Cllr Diana Conyers was appointed to join the group.

   It was then explained that the Chair and County Officer had reviewed the appointment process following historical difficulties in filling certain roles and a lack of nominations ahead of the constitutional seven-day deadline. It was agreed that appointments would only be made where valid nominations existed. Remaining positions would be left vacant subject to a comprehensive review, to be brought back to the next Executive meeting. However, where urgent representation is required before then, interim appointments may be approved to cover the gap. The review will be carried out by the Chair, Vice Chair, Cllr Penny Acton and the CO.

9. **Representatives to Outside Bodies**: to appoint representatives to:

a. **National Association of Local Councils** - Cllr Bob Blezzard
b. **Hampshire and Isle of Wight Local Government Association (HIWLGA) –** Vacant (with cover to be provided by Cllr Blezzard).
c. **Isle of Wight Council Health and Wellbeing Board** - Cllr Steph Toogood.
d. **Isle of Wight Standards Committee** - Vacant
e. **Local Access Forum** – Vacant (with cover to be provided by Cllr Lyons)
f. **Voluntary Sector Forum** – Vacant.
g. **Isle of Wight Bus and Rail Users Group** – Cllr Diana Conyers
h. **Campaign to Protect Rural England** (CPRE) - Vacant
i. **AONB (National Landscapes)** - Cllr Nick Stuart
j. **We The 33/Together For Mission Zero** - Vacant
k. **Isle of Wight / German Twinning Association** - Vacant
l. **Hampshire and IW Wildlife Trust** - Vacant

m. **Anti-Poverty board** - Vacant

10. Meeting dates: to approve meeting dates for 2026/2027. The meeting dates (as circulated) were approved.

Some further discussion took place on moving ahead with the required work to define the future working relationship between IWALC and the IWC and it was agreed that IWALC will need to be proactive with this as the IWC has multiple statutory priorities. Cllr Blezzard (as NALC representative) explained that NALC were looking to tie their annual affiliation fee to the CPI (Consumer Price Index – a measure of inflation) which currently sits at 2.8%, rather than the bespoke mechanism they have worked through in previous years. It was agreed that IWALC would be in favour of this new approach.

The Chair thanked everyone for their attendance and the meeting was closed at 8.15pm.