



SHIRE OF
HARVEY



Annual General Electors' Meeting **Minutes**

**Harvey Council Chamber
Tuesday, 28 January 2025
6.30PM**

Shire of Harvey
Annual General Electors Meeting

Minutes of the Annual General Electors' Meeting of the Harvey Shire Council, held in the Council Chamber, Young Street, Harvey, on Tuesday, 28 January 2025, commencing at 6.30pm.

Electors

Shire President

Ms.	M.	Campbell
Cr.	A.	Hitchcock
Cr.	D.	Krispyn
Cr.	C.	Carbone
Cr.	M	Boylan
Cr.	W.	Dickinson
Cr.	R.	Coleman
Cr.	R.	Holly
Cr.	J.	Bromham
Cr.	J.	Junio
Mr.	D.	Booth
Mrs.	P.	McGregor
Ms.	S.	Ferguson
Ms.	M.	Lofthouse

Staff

Chief Executive Officer	Ms.	A.	Riordan
Acting Director Infrastructure Services	Mr.	S.	Faber
Director Sustainable Development	Mr.	S.	Hall
Director Corporate Services	Mr.	D.	Winter
Director Community and Lifestyle	Ms.	S.	Haslehurst
Manager Governance and Strategy	Ms.	K.	Williams
Manager Public Relations and Communications	Ms.	T.	Palmonari
Manager Information Services	Mr.	A.	Ewing
Governance Support Officer	Ms.	M.	Foster
Governance Compliance Officer	Ms.	F.	Schindler

There was 1 member of the press present.

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1. Official Opening

The Shire President opened the meeting at 6.30pm.

Disclaimer

Annual General Meeting of Electors of a district are to be held once every financial year. The purpose of this meeting is to accept the annual report and then to deal with general matters, including Public Questions and any Notice of Motion's.

Please ensure that you have been confirmed as an Elector of the district prior to the commencement of this meeting as only Electors of the Shire of Harvey are allowed to participate in the meeting.

Each Elector is entitled to one vote on each matter to be decided but does not have to vote, all decisions are to be made by a Simple Majority and voting is to be conducted by a show of hands, ensuring that no voter's vote is secret.

Only electors are entitled to move motions and vote at the meeting. Both the mover and seconder can speak for a maximum of five minutes, and both must state their name and address prior to moving or seconding a motion. Voting will only take place after a motion that has been moved and seconded has been provided in writing to the administration in full.

Should a Notice of Motion be carried, is not to be taken as notice of approval. All decisions made at the Elector's Meeting are to be considered at the next practicable Ordinary Council Meeting where a formal decision of Council will be made.

Any questions asked and taken on notice will be provided within the next practicable Ordinary Council Meeting Minutes.

An Audio and visual record will be made, by means of livestreaming, of these proceedings and uploaded to the Shire's YouTube page for viewing.

Acknowledgement of Country

The Shire of Harvey acknowledges the traditional custodians of the land and their continuing connection to the land, waters and community. We pay our respects to all members of the Aboriginal communities and their cultures, and to Elders and Emerging Elders both past and present.

2. Record of Apologies

Apologies:

Cr. Capogreco.

3. Confirmation of Minutes

Annual General Electors' Meeting – Tuesday, 27 February 2024.

Recommendation

That the Minutes of the 2022–2023 Annual General Electors' Meeting held on Tuesday, 27 February 2024, as attached, be confirmed as a true and correct record.

Moved: Cr. Coleman

Seconded: Cr. Bromham

That the Minutes of the 2022–2023 Annual General Electors' Meeting held on Tuesday, 27 February 2024, as attached, be confirmed as a true and correct record.

Carried 12-0

4. Receipt of Annual Report

A copy of the 2023–2024 Annual Report which includes the Shire President's Report, Chief Executive Officer's Report, Auditor's Report and Financial Statements for the Financial Year Ended 30 June 2024 has been advertised in accordance with Section 5.55 of the *Local Government Act 1995*. Copies of the Annual Report will be available for the public at the meeting.

Section 5.27 (3) of the *Local Government Act 1995*, and Regulation 15 of the Local Government (Administration) Regulations 1996, require the Electors Meeting to consider the following:

“For the purposes of Section 5.27 (3) the matters to be discussed at a general electors meeting are, firstly, the contents of the annual report for the previous financial year and then any other general business.”

The Shire President introduced the Annual Report.

Recommendation

That the Shire of Harvey Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2024, as printed be received.

Moved: President Campbell

Seconded: Cr. Holly

That the Shire of Harvey Annual Report for the year ending 30 June 2024, as printed be received.

Statement – Shire President:

I am pleased to move the annual report for the Financial Year 2023–2024. This report outlines a year marked by significant progress following the Covid Pandemic.

Many key milestones dotted throughout the year include:

- The official opening of the Harvey Skate Park – a project championed by the youth
- Continued efforts to enhance community safety with the implementation of the CCTV Strategy
- In the area of sporting facilities – the Tender was awarded for the upgrading of the Brunswick Oval lighting
- The expansion of the Harvey Senior Citizens (now known as Harvey Connect)
- We celebrated the commencement of the Brunswick River Cottages Stage 3 expansion which will see another 12 units and central community facilities
- The Yarloop Workshop and Interpretative Centre commenced construction
- An enclosed exercise dog park was established at Fees Field in Australind
- A mural arts project was delivered with murals at Christina Street, Australind and on the Harvey Myalup Road water tank

- An information bay was installed in Cookernup and Yarloop
- The Harvey Arts Prize was a resounding success featuring 54 artists and 211 pieces of artwork
- Our Friendship City Agreement with Moka City saw its first official delegation visit to our Shire, which also consisted of 70 students visiting our schools
- The revamped Harvey Region website incorporating Invest Harvey Region and Visit Harvey Region was launched – resulting in a 200% increase in website traffic
- Our leisure facilities continue to provide vital sport and cultural events – the HRCC hosting 23 cultural events
- Our libraries welcomed 64,954 visitors and hosted 4,186 program sessions attended by 20,994 people
- The Shire continues to support community grant funding of \$118,305 to 12 local organisations, whilst Alcoa and the Coastal Communities Fund contributed \$196,267 and \$96,672 respectively to community initiatives
- The Shire proudly celebrated individual and group achievements at the 2024 Community Award Night and honoured two new Freeman of the Shire – Mr. Peter Monagle OAM and Ms. Tania Jackson

And this is just the tip of the iceberg.

The Shire continues to provide the numerous essential services which operate quietly in the background, with little fan fair or receipt of public recognition, such as the maintenance and upkeep of our parks, playgrounds and open space, road maintenance, community health and safety programs, environmental conservation and the front desk enquiries just to name but a few. These services are being delivered in an environment where it is difficult to attract staff, a housing crisis and the rising costs of materials and contractors' prices – just to name a few of the impediments.

Therefore, I wish to acknowledge our CEO, Directors and all the Shire of Harvey Staff for their tireless efforts and commitment to ensuring our region continues to thrive in these difficult and challenging times. Also, to our Councillors for their ongoing commitment to the Shire and their role as leaders within our communities.

Thank you.

Statement – Cr. Holly: I'd like to say that I joined the Shire to try to make a difference, like we all do I'm sure, and I think the community must start looking at the things the Shire is doing and trying to achieve rather than the things that aren't being done. We must get the town moving and the Shire moving in a forward direction rather than worrying about what we haven't done yet. We are moving forward, whether you're in Australind, Yarloop, Brunswick or Havey, we're moving forward. It's not a bottomless pit and the Report there shows that it's a really good place to be in. So I reiterate what the Shire President said.

Ms. Sheila Ferguson asked the following questions:

I have been told that at Council Meetings I must ask each time for my questions to be recorded in the minutes as I ask them and not summarised as permitted by Standing Orders, and for background information I provide to be published in the minutes so the context and meaning of my questions is clear. I have asked this as in the past the meaning of my questions has sometimes been distorted or obscured. I'm not sure if I am required to ask at this Annual General Meeting but I now make that request.

Question 1: The Australind Community Precinct has been mentioned in the last three Annual Reports, last year as a "Key Priority Project". The only mention in this Annual Report is \$2.5 million in the "Borrowing and Lease Liabilities" section.

Cr. Carbone raised a Point of Order in accordance with Section 9.2(1) of the Shire of Harvey Standing Orders Local Law 2017.

Presiding Member rejected the Point of Order in accordance with Section 9.5(1) of the Shire of Harvey Standing Orders Local Law 2017, as there was no breach of any written law and invited Ms. Ferguson to continue her question.

I was at a meeting of the Australind Leschenault Place Advisory Group in August 2024 when it was announced that Council had put the proposed new Australind Community Precinct on hold for the foreseeable future. I asked at that meeting and at a subsequent meeting, that the community be informed. Community members of the Precinct Reference Group have recently been informed and it is now on the Shire's Have Your Say page, but it has not been published in the 4 O'clock Report, the Shire's online newsletter or latest news page, nor through any social media. Reasons I have been given for this are, in my view, untenable. I have them here is anyone is interested. In the interest of transparency and in line with Council's "Promise to the Community" that you will keep us informed, which appears numerous times in every Council Agenda and Minutes, I believe it should have been.

Will the fact that the Australind Community Precinct has been put on hold indefinitely be included in the next Annual Report?

Answer 1 – Chief Executive Officer: As the Project is not in the Corporate Business Plan for this coming Financial Year nor is it in the Budget, there is no requirement to report on the Australind Community Precinct for the upcoming Annual Report for 2024–2025.

Statement – Ms. Sheila Ferguson: In my view the Have Your Say page is where people go to have their say, it is not where they go to see what happened about things that they've previously had their say on. The community have no idea, they're left to guess what is happening. I'm not querying the decision that it's been put on hold I am querying that I believe the community deserves to be informed, should be informed.

Question 2: My question was, will it be in the next Annual Report. So, the answer is, no?

Answer 2 – Chief Executive Officer: The answer is no.

The Shire President put the motion to the vote.

Carried 11-0

5. General Business

Ms. Sheila Ferguson asked the following question:

Question 1: Thank you for the comprehensive answer to my questions last November about payments to support the Friendship City Agreement with Moka.

Will you provide a similar report to Council on all future incoming and outgoing delegations as a matter of course, i.e. without a question from the public being necessary?

Answer 1 – Shire President: When a future report is presented to Council for consideration the costings are outlined, this allowed Council to make an informed decision.

Answer 1 – Chief Executive Officer: The Shire provided a response to your questions with the information requested. Council is provided with updates from Officers through Concept Forums and the expenditures are listed in the monthly List of Payments Council Report, ensuring all expenditures are allocated to the Budget Line for Friendship Cities. The Shire considers that this information supports the Council Report if there was a future delegation.

Question 2: My question is about whether you will provide a report similar to what I had asked for in November automatically on the event after it has occurred, or does the public have to ask every year if it wants to know what happened?

Answer 2 – Shire President: Councillors receive a list of payments and are able to ask for further information on any of the payments listed. A post report is presented at a Concept Forum, detailing the activities that were undertaken and the costings related to any of the events.

Question 3: I'm concerned about the community being informed not Councillors; we can't go to the Concept Forums.

Answer 3 – Shire President: Members of the Public are able to attend Agenda Briefing Sessions or Ordinary Council Meetings where they can provide a deputation and / or a public question.

Question 4: So if we want to know about anything about the Japan visits we have to ask a the question at a Council Meeting?

Answer 4 – Shire President: If there are any concerns that a Member of the Public would like to raise Ordinary Council Meetings are an appropriate place to do so.

Question 5: The total cost to Shire of Harvey ratepayers for the incoming visit by seven delegates and a translator, which was for two nights, was \$26,058 or \$3,257 per head, which is a lot of money for a brief visit, and they paid for their own accommodation.

Some figures relating to this visit taken from monthly payments statements have been rough to my attention:

a) Catering for Moka dinner, \$7,970 and wine for celebration dinner \$756 which amounts to \$8,726.

In addition to the seven delegates and the translator, how many Councillors, staff and others attended the dinner? How much per head is that?

Answer 5 – Chief Executive Officer: Taken On Notice

Question 6: Two separate entries dated 29 November read "Moka event Harvey Lions Club \$1,300" and "Amana Inn Motel Harvey accommodation Shire Staff \$5,520".

Were these items related? How many staff were accommodated at the motel and why? And for how long?

Answer 6 – Chief Executive Officer: A similar question was received from Ms. Marion Lofthouse in regard to the Amana Inn accommodation. The Shire is unable to find an amount of \$5,520 paid to the Motel. Are you able to detail the list of payments or provide where those details came from? If not, this question will be taken on notice.

Statement – Ms. Sheila Ferguson: That is the only information I have with me.

Question 7: Incoming visits are not subject to Council approval but are considered by the Shire President and Chief Executive Officer.

In view of the fact that the incoming visit costs ratepayers more than the outgoing visits, and that an unknown number of Staff, Councillors and others may take part, will Council consider requiring that a budget for incoming visits be presented to Council in the same way that a budget is required for outgoing visits? I'm not asking you to consider this request today but at a Council Meeting in the near future.

Statement – Shire President: Please clarify what you mean by “incoming visits”, can you provide an example.

Statement – Ms. Sheila Ferguson: The incoming Moka Visit. My question is will you consider my request at a Council Meeting in the near future that a Budget be required for an incoming visit as well as an outgoing visit.

Answer 7 – Shire President: Yes.

Question 8: The minutes of the Council Meeting February 2024 state “no further delegation visits anticipated until late 2025”. If there is either an incoming our outgoing visit in 2025 there will have been three visits in three years.

In view of the costs, which are paid by ratepayers will Council consider placing a limit on the number of incoming and outgoing visits? Now the initial visits have been made I suggest an incoming or outgoing visit every two or three years would be more than adequate. Again, I'm not asking you to consider this request today but at a Council Meeting in the near future.

Answer 8 – Shire President: Would you like to make that request into a motion that Council will then consider or would your preference be for it to be taken away and a discussion be had between the Shire President and the Chief Executive Officer?

Ms. Ferguson put forth the following motion:

In view of the costs which are paid by rate payers would Council at a meeting in the near future consider placing a limit on the number of incoming and outgoing visits with Moka City, under the Friendship City Agreement.

Moved: Ms. Ferguson

Seconded: Mrs. McGregor

Carried 13-1

Question 9: In the 2024–2025 Budget process the Australind Community Precinct was put on hold for the foreseeable future. I was one of two or three community members who were informed of this at the Place Advisory Group Meeting in August 2024.

I wrote to the Shire in October 2024 to ask how much had been spent on the project to date and what was included in the figure. Apart from an automatic reply I did not get a response, so I gave notice that I intended to ask the question at this meeting.

APP was appointed in 2021 to develop a Feasibility Plan and the following year they were appointed to develop a Master Plan and Business Case. There are amounts of \$1 million, \$1.5 million and \$2.5 million mentioned in the Borrowing section of Budgets from 2020–2021 onwards, which is a total of \$5m. I don't have the resources or expertise to be able to work out how much was spent on what and whether money is still owing, but it is clear that a large amount of public money was spent on a project that is not going ahead.

Would you please make public now how much was spent on the proposed new Australind Community Precinct, whether any money is still to be paid, what the payments were for and what has been learned from the whole episode to ensure public money is not wasted like this again?

Answer 9 – Chief Executive Officer: The total amount spent was \$354,813 for the development of the Australind Community Precinct, the Precinct Masterplan and the development of a Business Case.

Regarding what was learned through this exercise, as part of the planning for the Precinct, it was a Project that was being considered by Council at the time and it was included in the Forward Capital Works Plan. Due to the number of competing Projects as well the construction market post Covid, Council undertook a prioritisation of Projects within the Forward Capital Works Plan and as such, this project was deprioritised. The Shire still has the Master Plan and the Business Case which can be utilised for any future development for the Australind Community Precinct.

Question 10: Could you explain why there is still \$2.5 million showing in the “Borrowing” section?

Answer 10 – Chief Executive Officer: There should be no funding for this Project in the 2024–2025. There has been \$2 million that has been allocated towards an extension of the Australind Administration Office. There is no further funding this year in the Budget for the Australind Community Precinct.

Statement – Sheila Ferguson: I don't understand why it appears in the “Borrowings” section, but I don't understand Financial Statements.

Question 11: Attendance at this meeting by members of the public is affected by the start time and the fact that the majority of residents have a round trip of about an hour to attend. The only place I saw it advertised was in the 4 O'clock Report in a small box at the bottom of the page. It contained the bare minimum of information, didn't explain the purpose of the meeting or invite the public to attend, and in my opinion, would not have encouraged people to attend. The information was posted on the Shire's latest news page but not in the Shire's online newsletter. It may have been on social media.

Next year, will you consider holding the Annual General Electors' Meeting at a time when members of the public are more likely to be able to attend, advertise it widely, explain its purpose and invite the public to attend and to ask questions? I saw the following somewhere on the Shire's website and suggest it's a lot more invites than this year's notice in the 4 O'clock Report: “Members of the public are encouraged to use this opportunity to ask questions about any issue relating to the business of the Shire”.

Answer 11 – Shire President: The Shire did advertise the Annual General Electors' Meeting widely; it was also addressed on the Harvey Community Radio. The Shire considers the advertising that was conducted to be sufficient.

It is difficult to find a time for this meeting that accommodates everyone. This year's meeting was held later than last years to allow those that work to attend.

Statement – Sheila Ferguson: I'm delighted to hear you were on the Radio about it, I am primarily referring to this little box here which gives the bare minimum and says when the meeting is and where and that complex questions should be submitted today, in bold, email your queries to...

It's not an inviting statement.

Question 12: I noticed recently in the local press that Dardanup is conducting a Community Scorecard Survey next month from memory last time, many, if not all, local governments conducted the survey at more or less the same time.

Is Harvey going to conduct a survey and if so, how will it be advertised and will it be available in hard copy as well as online?

Answer 12 – Chief Executive Officer: The Shire is commencing its consultation for the Council Plan, I'll ask the Manager Public Relations and Communications to detail our Community Consultation and Communication Plan.

Answer 12 – Manager Public Relations and Communications: The Shire has a team working on this currently from Governance as well as an Officer who is solely dedicated to Community Consultation. The team has prepared an eight-month communications plan, which includes online surveys, workshops, pop-ups at various shopping centres in Harvey, Treendale and Australind. The Shire can provide Ms. Ferguson with the entire detailed communications plan.

Question 13: For clarification, does that mean the MARKYT Survey that happened last time, is not happening?

Answer 13 – Manager Public Relations and Communications: It is happening; however it is now called a Council Plan rather than the Strategic Community Plan.

Question 14: Is this in house, it's not an external survey? Something that just the Harvey Shire is doing.

Answer 14 – Manager Governance and Strategy: It is the Community Scorecard benchmarked on the previous Scorecard.

Answer 14 – Shire President: The Shire, as part of the Council Plan, will be conducting the Community Survey again.

Answer 14 – Chief Executive Officer: The Survey will be made available in hardcopy.

Statement – Mrs. McGregor: In relation to the comment that Ms. Ferguson made about knowing about this public meeting. Not everyone listens to the community radio, not everyone is on social media, so there must be another way to make sure that every Shire resident, ratepayer is made aware of this meeting.

Ms. Marion Lofthouse asked the following question:

Question 1: How much did Staff and Councillors spend on alcohol consumption this financial year, where the alcohol was paid for by the Harvey Shire ratepayer? These costs are not transparent in the budget.

Statement – Chief Executive Officer: Ms. Lofthouse, Shire Administration must make it clear, that all expenditure that you are questioning is listed within Budgets approved by Council. The expenditure is provided to Councillors in the monthly report's as well as the list of payments.

Some of the questions you are asking, have previously been responded to when you presented to Council at the September Ordinary Council Meeting 2024.

Some of the questions you submitted are convoluted due to the limited information provided on payment lists. Often the list of payments will detail a payment made to a creditor which incorporates more than one invoice. The payment will list the creditor name and provide a brief description of the invoices included within that payment. Due to the limited space, not all that information can be provided on the one line.

There will be many questions being asked today that, without a reference number, such as an EFT number, the Shire is unable to provide the full details. You can provide those reference numbers after the meeting and the Shire will be able to investigate and provide you with further details.

Answer 1 – Chief Executive Officer: It is my foremost responsibility to ensure the safe consumption of alcohol.

Alcohol when purchased is generally allocated to an event than one specific cost code, which is why it is not transparent in the Budget. There is no specific cost code for alcohol and the cost associated with it, is generally incorporated in other invoices, making it difficult to identify the exact amount without going through each invoice in our finance system.

The quantity and value, however, is considered minor.

Shire Officers have estimated the annual expenditure on alcohol relating to civic functions to be approximately \$2,800 and have estimated the expenditure for the Shire's Administration end of year Christmas and Service Award Presentations to be approximately \$3,500; this equates to approximately \$22 per Officer in attendance.

Question 2: We will never know the exact amount. Does it get hidden under "kitchen needs", "refreshments"?

Answer 2 – Chief Executive Officer: The Shire does not hide amounts, it is how it gets detailed on the invoices and how it's reported through. The descriptions on the invoices are pulled through to our Finance System so without going through each individual invoice and cost code it is very difficult to accurately provide a figure against the information you have requested.

Question 3: How much was spent on meals and accommodation for staff and Councillors for this financial year, that is being discussed at this Meeting.

Answer 3 – Chief Executive Officer: The Shire has several cost centres where these expenditures are allocated across several budget lines. Looking at "accommodation and meals for training and conferences" equates to \$35,365. Of that, some of it is Department of Transport training which is for a week at a time and can be recouped from the Department of Transport.

Regarding Councillors, accommodation was \$11,730, with conference and training equating to \$3,062.

Question 4: That was for Councillors did you say?

Answer 4 – Chief Executive Officer: That is correct.

Statement – Cr. Bromham: It is legislative for Councillors to attend training.

Statement – Shire President: There is a requirement that Councillors attend specific training as part of their elected term. This is usually through the Western Australian Local Government Association (WALGA) and is generally conducted in Perth. Courses generally begin at 8.30am and finish at 4.30pm.

Question 5: A lot of these accommodations at the Crown Resort etc. are they one-day courses or two-day courses where they stay overnight? Or does it vary?

Answer 5 – Shire President: It varies, and it could also be for a conference, award presentation hosted by WALGA. There are a number of reasons for Councillors needing accommodation. Another one would be attending the WALGA conference which is held over three days, and Councillors are encouraged to attend this conference.

Question 6: How much was spent on gifts and gift cards for staff and Councillors which were paid by the ratepayer? E.g. Gifts of silk ties and scarves for Councillors cost the ratepayer \$4,020. Staff retirement gifts, farewell gifts and other multiple gift cards were given to staff, these varied in price, but some were more than \$1,000 each, all paid by ratepayers. These gifts are extra to the costs of \$18.8 million in wages for staff and \$303,000 in payments to Councillors each year.

May I point out here too that roughly \$4,000 of our rates was spent on gifts for people in Japan. People, Harvey ratepayers, have never met or will ever meet.

Cr. Carbone raised a Point of Order in accordance with Section 9.2(1) of the Shire of Harvey Standing Orders Local Law 2017.

Presiding Member rejected the Point of Order in accordance with Section 9.5(1) of the Shire of Harvey Standing Orders Local Law 2017, as the Chief Executive Officer has a response in this matter.

Answer 6 – Chief Executive Officer: In relation to the ties and scarves, which are not made of silk, they did cost \$4,020 however, there were 50 ties and 50 scarves. Not only have they been provided to the 11 Councillors, but these have also been provided as gifts and a stock remains.

Regarding the gift cards, the Shire does not provide gifts or gift cards to Councillors. Shire Officers received approximately \$4,765 in gifts which related to length of service awards or promotional items to assist in productivity and are in the Shire Brand.

The service awards are awarded for increments of five years from, 10 years' service. They equate to \$10 per year per Officer.

The Shire had two long serving Officers with over 30 years of service. The Shire does not have a gratuity policy and therefore, there were gift cards provided on their retirement as acknowledgement of their service.

Additionally, a Director left, who provided valuable service to the Shire and he was farewelled and provided with gift cards.

Question 7: Why every month do Harvey Shire ratepayers have to pay for unnecessary things such as these few examples? There are hundreds more unnecessary costs not mentioned due to limited time.

- *Catering costs to farewell staff members up to \$1,000–\$2,000 of catering and drinks to farewell individual staff members who left. All costs were charged to the ratepayer. At other Shire Councils, the staff pay for their own outing to farewell a fellow staff member.*
- *Catering and hire of venue for staff meeting \$2,209 paid by the ratepayer*
- *\$600 to hire a photo booth for one of the staff Christmas parties (recent)*
- *Staff Christmas party food \$2,465*
- *Catering staff function \$1,070*
- *Refreshments staff kitchen \$2,074*
- *Catering for meeting \$391*
- *Another meeting cost \$499 for catering*
- *Refreshments \$995*
- *Food platters for a Council meeting \$1,594*
- *Staff refreshment \$2,418*

- *Council refreshment \$2,285*
- *Another Council refreshments last January \$1,506*
- *Councillor function at Chalbury Park \$4,068*
- *Four Sundowner parties where ratepayers paid all the costs. One Sundowner cost \$985 for food and extra for alcohol. Photos on facebook show plenty of alcohol was consumed.*
- *Amana Inn Motel in Harvey accommodation for Shire staff \$5,520.*
- *Harvey Shire ratepayers continue to buy an average of two new staff cars every month and pay the staff monthly \$60,000 fuel bills.*

Statement – Cr. Holly: I am taking offense to this; I am a non-drinker for starters so allegations that all Councillors were drinking is inaccurate. It is very frustrating that we are being picked on here as some of us are non-drinkers.

Answer 7 – Shire President: In relation to catering for Councillors, generally Council Meetings finish at 6pm/6.30pm and often start around midday. Several of the payments mentioned are for evening meals and these expenses are deemed reasonable.

Regarding refreshments for functions, these functions are generally in acknowledgment of Officers or Councillors, or Officers or Councillors leaving which have served the Shire extremely well. All of these costings are brought to Council and Council endorses them.

Answer 7 – Chief Executive Officer: As previously mentioned when members of the public go through a list of payments, the payments do not always include an exhaustive list of invoices that relate to that payment.

Without an EFT or reference number Shire Officers are unable to validate these costs mentioned. It is not conceivable that a food platter for a Council Meeting would cost \$1,500 as an example.

If you could provide those reference numbers Shire Officers will be able to provide a breakdown.

Statement – Ms. Lofthouse: In future if I want to speak up for the ratepayers I will have to date everything.

Statement – Shire President: Ms. Lofthouse, I appreciate that you are speaking on behalf of the community but for the Shire to respond to these, and so there no generalised statements, please provide those reference numbers so that Officers can respond to them directly and respond informatively to your enquiry, meaning you will receive a better response. Currently, these statements are very generalised, and some Councillors are taking offense to them. However, you are entitled to ask the question, the Administration is just requesting you to provide more detail so that you can have a more informative answer.

Statement – Ms. Lofthouse: Some of these I've mentioned were Facebook photos, so they did happen.

Statement – Shire President: I am not questioning or denying that they did not happen, it is just the information you are providing to us so we can give you are more informed response.

Statement – Cr. Krispyn: In respect to one of the questions regarding the monthly fuel bills. At the Agenda Briefing last week, I also questioned fuel costing. Those types of questions are being asked

by Councillors monthly. Councillors are looking through all the reports, through all the payments and are questioning these things. In relation to the rest of your questions, I would really appreciate being provided with the EFT numbers or the dates of when these costs occurred for transparency so Councillors can look back on those times and have a clearer understanding of what was happening. Whereas, when it is laid out the way you have, most people will assume that you are referring to payments made last month.

Statement – Cr. Coleman: Ms. Lofthouse, do you understand when we are talking about EFT, do you understand what we mean? In the statements you are probably referring to, in the left-hand column, is an EFT followed by a number. This is the reference number that both the CEO and the Shire President are referring to, that gives them a line item to look at and explain what the actual amount comes to.

The Administration is limited to an A4 piece of paper, meaning that the description is sometimes hyphenated. Once the reference number is provided for any query relating to finances, both the CEO and the Shire President can answer your question in greater detail. I hope that helps in understanding what the CEO and Shire President mean when they say they require more detail or the EFT reference number.

Statement – Ms. Lofthouse: I'm not really interested in that. I wanted to point out that ratepayers are paying for all these costs.

Statement – Shire President: I would suggest that you are receiving a very good service from the Shire of Harvey Officers as well.

Question 8: Why do ratepayers have to pay for staff birthday gifts?

Answer 8 – Chief Executive Officer: The Shire Administration has found one incident of a payment of \$20 for a Staff gift. The Officer who organised this payment will be advised that this is not an acceptable practice.

Question 9: Why give \$5,000 of Harvey Shire ratepayers money to an artist in residence in Bunbury?

Answer 9 – Director Community and Lifestyle: This funding was provided to enable residents of the Shire of Harvey to participate in the highly respected Artist in Residence Program that is run by the Stirling Street Art Centre in Bunbury. The \$5,000 paid for those people to participate and connect with other artists in the region.

Question 10: I spoke at a Shire meeting in September 2024, to reduce wasteful spending. A few weeks later, the ratepayers had to pay \$1,100 to have a coffee van go to the Harvey Shire Offices to provide barista made coffees for all Harvey Shire staff. I don't think this is fair on ratepayers. Did the ratepayers (who paid for it) benefit in any way from this?

Answer 10 – Chief Executive Officer: Funding for this Safety Month initiative, was provided by the Shire's insurer LGIS.

Question 11: February 2024 – 11 months ago a new colour bond fence was put up around the old Harvey Radio Station in Young Street. It was already drawn up in a plan that the old building would be demolished, and yet you spend \$5,247 on a new colour bond fence which will soon have to be removed when they demolish the old building. That money could have paid for an air conditioner in the Town Hall, but instead, the new fence will soon be carted out to the tip.

Answer 11 – Acting Director Infrastructure Services: Shire Officers have investigated your claim about the fence. The current fence around the Radio Station has been there since at least 2013. Officers are unaware of any upgrades to this fence.

Statement – Ms. Lofthouse: Well, I'm not sure what fence we paid for then. The Budget said it was for the old Harvey Radio Station.

Question 12: Independent living units in Brunswick have cost a few million dollars. How much is paid by ratepayers? How many people living in these units have lived all their life in Brunswick? Do any of the 33 units pay Shire rates? Are they Brunswick people or are they people from Perth that have come to live there? Are Shire ratepayers paying out money to house Perth people?

Answer 12 – Chief Executive Officer: The Brunswick River Cottages Project has been very successful and oversubscribed. The Project assists in meeting the accommodation needs of the ageing population and people experiencing housing difficulties. The personal circumstances of residents who live in those units are confidential. However, the Brunswick River Cottages selects residents for occupation of the units and a connect to Brunswick and the Shire is a consideration.

Question 13: Do any of the units pay Shire rates?

Answer 13 – Chief Executive Officer: No, they do not.

Question 14: Special area rates add up to \$762,435 per year. But the landscaping in Treendale, Kingston, Galway Green and Lakewood Shores costs at least 1.3 million each year. Why should ratepayers in other areas have to pay out more than half a million dollars each year to cover the excessive landscaping costs in these four areas?

Answer 14 – Director Corporate Services: The Shire provides maintenance of the Public Open Spaces in all its townsites. Those townsites or subdivisions that demand a higher level of maintenance, the Shire charges an additional rate at a higher level. There is a disparity between the cost and what the Shire charges on the Specified Area Rate. However, it is a similar cost to what the other areas are already paying for maintenance.

Question 15: \$11,000 given to 10 ratepayers in a lottery draw as incentive to pay rates. That is an extra \$11,000 burden that the rest of us have to pay. Reduce the Shire costs by \$11,000 or use it to benefit everyone. Instead of doing something useful with this \$11,000, you gave it to 10 people, three who already claim half their rates back from us, the taxpayer. So, we have to pay their Shire rates as well as their claim back from the taxpayer.

Answer 15 – Director Corporate Services: Council adopted the incentive scheme for payment of rates to encourage prompt payment of Shire rates. Council will be reviewing whether it continues to do that or not at the next Budget deliberations.

Statement – Ms. Marion Lofthouse: I see only about 70% paid.

Question 16: That \$11,000 could have updated the Harvey Town Hall. You have two antiques fairs booked for the town hall in February / March, up to 70 stalls each Antique Fair where people come from far and wide to show or view. Readymade tourists on the spot. But you put them in a hall for three days on what could be 40-degree days with no air conditioner, no fans and no ladder to open windows. Do you think these people will come back to Harvey? Are there any Plans to improve the Town Hall?

Statement – Shire President: The question is are there any plans to improve the Town Hall. The Shire cannot comment on if the people will come back to Harvey,

Answer 16 – Chief Executive Officer: The Antique Fair has decided to hire the Town Hall knowing what the conditions are and that there are no air conditioners currently in there. The Shire is unaware of any plans to improve the Town Hall besides annual repairs that the Shire is currently undertaking.

Statement – Ms. Lofthouse: There is plenty of other costs here, but I fear that I won't get a response.

Statement – Shire President: Ms. Lofthouse, I suggest you are getting a response to your questions.

Statement – Ms. Lofthouse: More than \$46,000 of ratepayers' money for staff and Councillors to travel to Japan and for Moka Japanese delegates to come here. It was of no benefit to 99% of your ratepayers. That money could have been spent on something useful for local ratepayers. Another member of the public has spoken about this already.

Question 17: \$61,000 to hold and cater for Advisory Group Meetings where ratepayers were not informed of what happened at these meetings. Another \$61,000 to pay legal fees for rate debt collection. If rates were reduced and people could afford them, the Shire could save money in legal fees. How many properties were sold from under the owners this financial year because they could not afford to pay Shire rates? Why should these property owners have to pay all the above-mentioned bills when most of it is unnecessary expenses and of no benefit to them or any other ratepayer?

Statement – Cr. Dickinson: I appreciate that Ms. Lofthouse is asking these questions, however, I believe that she has already asked some of these questions at a previous Council Meeting. I am wondering if it is appropriate if they get asked again when she has probably already been provided with an answer to some of these questions.

Statement – Shire President: Ms. Lofthouse, you have asked a number of questions which the Shire has not responded to yet, would you like an answer in relation to the Advisory Group Meetings?

Statement – Ms. Lofthouse: I believe that most of them are finishing up anyway.

Answer 17 – Director Community and Lifestyle: After a comprehensive review of the Advisory Group system of community engagement, Council determined to disband several of the groups, in part due to the resource costs but also due to the introduction of a range of community engagement tools that are available to the community.

Question 18: Why do Shire of Harvey support Peel Harvey Biosecurity Group? Shire of Harvey do not pay any pest rates. PHBG are useless and do nothing about declared weeds despite numerous reports sent to them. Private landowners are enforced pay a pest rate otherwise they suffer threats of legal action, threats of bad debt put on properties or have money extracted after the sale of their property. Yet this Shire took pest rate money which was enforced out of landowners and used it on Shire land. PHBG claim this will be ongoing where each year they will give \$150,000 of landowner's money to the local Shire Councils. Neither Peel Harvey Biosecurity Group nor Shire of Harvey have informed the landowners.

Answer 18 – Director Sustainable Development: The Peel Harvey Biosecurity Group is a non-for-profit organisation dedicated to eradicating the effects from declared pests (both plants and animals). The Shire is not able to comment on how they function in terms of a day-to-day entity. The Shire has heard from them, and they have presented to Council previously and some of what they are doing is exceptionally valuable.

This Group is 'recognised' under the *Biodiversity and Agricultural Management Act 2007* and is therefore able to access funds raised by Department of Treasury through its application of the Declared Pest Rate. The Shire cannot comment on the event of the landowners who refuse to pay and how that is recouped.

The Shire of Harvey initially did not support the introduction of the Declared Pest Rate and did so because it was seen as a cost shifting from State Government to private landowners for properties of 1 hectare and above. There were concerns that money raised through this Declared Pest Rate would be absorbed in the administrative functions of that group and not spent on the grounds. There was also a significant lack of community engagement and lack of

consideration of other funding models. The Shire did have concerns, and these were raised with State Government, however it was introduced, and the Department of Treasury collect the monies not the Shire.

There have been recent initiatives, as far as on ground works, of which the Shire has benefited from the monies raised through the Declared Pest Rate. An example of this is a \$30,000 allocation of money that hasn't been spent and was offered to the Shire to aid in the eradication of Arum Lily in Australind Reserves. \$20,000 has been spent and the remaining \$10,000 is not for expenditure by the Shire and is offered to other government organisations / affiliated organisations within the Shire of Harvey.

To suggest that the Shire is a recipient of this money and then spends it is incorrect. The Shire engages with the Peel Harvey Biosecurity Group, and the Peel Harvey Biosecurity Group then spends the money collected from Treasury.

Question 19: But you support them to keep extracting money from landowners under threats of legal action?

Answer 19 – Shire President: No Ms. Lofthouse. The Shire does not support that and Director Sustainable Development, Mr. Simon Hall, has given a clear response to your question.

Question 20: This Shire Council want to construct a \$2.1 million bike riding trail out in the bush on land the Shire does not own. Who will own the bike trail after ratepayers pay all the costs that will go into the project?

Answer 20 – Director Sustainable Development: The Project being referred to is a spur line off the Munda Biddi from Lake Brockman into town and then back to Yarri Hut. That land is predominantly State-owned land, under care and control of DBCA however, the Shire does have some reserves within this area. The trail, like the entire Munda Biddi, will sit on top of Crown Land and prior to entering into any agreement to build the spur there will be a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), there are draft ones currently between all parties, in terms of how the construction costs will be allocated and how maintenance going forward will occur.

At present the Shire is of the understanding that the design will cost around \$2.5 million and there is a current election promise for \$1 million towards this. Part of that funding agreement there is another entity involved, which is Alcoa, as they have mining leases over that area. It is unlikely that there will be any additional funding on top of the \$1 million from the State, however the Shire is engaging with private industry in particular to assist in some of the upfront costs and ongoing maintenance costs. The management will be under a strict MOU, in line with the rest of the Munda Biddi.

Question 21: Are people aware that Harvey Shire ratepayers pay the WA Electoral Commission \$111,000 for each Shire election held to vote in Councillors? Could Councillors please consider saving us \$111,000 from this list of unnecessary costs and from future unnecessary expenses to at least cover the cost of voting in Councillors.

Answer 21 – Chief Executive Officer: The requirement to hold Local Government Elections is legislated in the *Local Government Act 1995*, with elections to be held every two years. The WA Electoral Commission (WAEC) is the lead State Agency for electoral services in Western Australia and plays a key role in the Local Government Elections. Ahead of a Local Government Election, a local Council will determine whether the Election will be held in person or via postal voting. If it is held via postal voting the WAEC must conduct the election on behalf of the Local Government. Costs are provided to the Local Government on a cost recovery basis.

Statement – Ms. Lofthouse: The Shire put in the Reports that the rates went up 7%, your Councillors passed that it went up 7%, but our rates went up more than 10%, you must have the figures there. An increase of \$1,894.77 for one year was a rise of 10.36%.

Question 22: How will the Shire of Harvey Council reduce their wasteful spending in 2025 and future years?

Statement – Chief Executive Officer: The Shire would like to provide some commentary in relation to your rates. Shire Officers have reviewed the rating, relating to your property and it was confirmed that the total rates for your property increased by 6.3% between 2023–2024 and 2024–2025 Financial Years. Should you require further information please get in contact with the rates team to confirm those amounts.

Answer 23 – Shire President: Offense is taken to your comments around wasteful spending. Council, Councillors and Shire Officers spend an enormous amount of time reviewing budgets and making decisions around how the Shire spends its money. The intention is to serve the Shire, improve the infrastructure and services. The Shire is working in a difficult environment and as Shire President I take offense in the notion that we are spending ratepayers' money wastefully, we are not.

Statement – Ms. Lofthouse: In your eyes the ratepayers are quite happy?

Statement – Shire President: I will not speak on behalf of all ratepayers, Ms. Lofthouse, that is what you are doing here today. I would suggest that the Shire is doing a fairly good job within the Shire of Harvey.

Statement – Ms. Lofthouse: I've heard other ratepayers say that they do not like coming to the meetings to speak up as they are made to feel intimidated. Out of 21,258 Electors in the Shire of Harvey, four people were here tonight.

Statement – Shire President: Ms. Lofthouse, I can recall that when I first came on Council that we did not have anyone come to our meetings. In fact these AGMs were covered in around five minutes; I am encouraged that we now have people attend. At the last Annual Meeting the gallery was full. I am very pleased to see that we have some community members here and there will be people viewing online.

I am disappointed by your statement that you feel, or the community feels that they are uncomfortable to come and speak to Council. If they do not wish to speak to us in this environment, they are more than welcome to reach out to any of us personally. All our contact details are on the Shire's website, and we welcome phone calls and emails. Members of the public do not need to come to the Chambers to address their concerns.

Mr. Duncan Booth put forth the following questions:

Question 1: The Shire's vision statement, I would like to ask the CEO and Shire President, the two leaders in the room, what does it mean to you? How does it guide you? Do you think it is the most appropriate statement for us?

Answer 1 – Chief Executive Officer: The vision statements have been developed through community consultation. The Shire's Strategic Community Plan and Corporate Business Plan follow through that as they come through to the actions that guide the work of Council as well as Shire Officers. Through consultation, in particular the MARKYT Scorecard, which is being undertaken again, the Shire is ensuring that the vision statement, through our strategic direction, is appropriately enacted.

Question 2: My question is how does it guide you and is it best fitting? What is our vision statement?

Answer 2 – Chief Executive Officer: The statement is “Together Towards an Even Better Lifestyle”. Yes, I do believe, as I’ve stated, that through our community consultation and strategic plans all the actions the Shire undertakes, are developed in line with that strategic vision and the goals that have been established through community consultation.

Answer 2 – Shire President: I agree with the CEO. There is another MARKYT Scorecard review occurring, which is an opportunity for the community to, through the consultation process, voice their opinion on the vision of the Shire. At this time, it is what the Shire believes in and what the Shire is working towards.

Question 4: The information bays, are they complete?

Answer 4 – Director Sustainable Development: Yes, that is the design that has been finalised and the project is complete.

Question 5: How has that been a benefit to the town? The information bay is quite far off the road, there is nothing to say that there is an information bay, and you need to get out of your car to read anything. What was the idea around these bays? I’ve put some things on Facebook and the feedback received was that many of the business owners would like a big sign depicting “shops, hairdressers, bakery, this way” and I don’t think the information bay is really what the Town of Harvey was expecting.

Answer 5 – Shire President: I believe the information bay project was instigated by the Harvey Mainstreet Inc, many years ago. It was the preferred site for the information bay

Answer 5 – Director Sustainable Development: If there is a suggestion that the Shire needs to put an information bay sign up, the Shire will take that into consideration. This project was one of many used to get people off the Highway and into the Town. The Shire has been engaging and discussing further signage on that intersection to direct traffic into the Town centre and to shops.

Statement – Mr. Booth: It seems like that would be the same project not a separate thing needed.

Statement – Director Sustainable Development: As we were talking earlier, there are quite a few different funding sources and projects the Shire undertakes, and not everything can be delivered at once. The budget is shared around and in this instance this project was able to be completed with the funds the Shire had.

Question 6: I’ve been in town for three years; we had Christmas lights in Snell’s Park and in 2023 the lights disappeared; I did hear that it was because the flex was eaten by the birds. However, this was never communicated to the community by the Shire. In 2024 it was not communicated to the community if there was going to be a Christmas Tree and instead some minimal lighting was put up in the Mainstreet. Why does the Shire never talk about the things that we are having difficulties with?

Answer 6 – Acting Director Infrastructure Services: The Shire did have lights at Snell’s Park and unfortunately the Cockatoos destroyed to a point where they were unable to be repaired safely anymore. It was determined that it was not a continuing way to provide those lights as the birds would likely damage the lights in the same way again.

Last year the Shire ordered a Christmas Tree which was delivered, but it was determined that the Tree was unsafe when delivered as the electrics were noncompliant with Australian Standards and so it was returned to the manufacturer. The Shire did have three pole lights which were put up and going forward the Shire is looking at purchasing another Christmas Tree for next year.

Question 7: The extent of the lights that the Shire had were those installations along the main road?

Answer 7 – Acting Director Infrastructure Services: That is correct, after the Christmas Tree was returned that is all that was left for Christmas 2024. Unfortunately, in order to get the lights and trees in time for Christmas they do need to be ordered in advance and at that stage we had no other option but to use what the Shire already had.

Statement – Mr. Booth: It's disappointing that this isn't communicated to the public. We are just left wondering why there aren't any lights. The Shire had the intention of doing it, however, were unable to and this wasn't ever communicated.

Question 8: I put up a post on the Noticeboard about the Harvey Pool and I said, "use it or lose it" and many people mentioned that there wasn't sufficient shade and that they would use it more if there was sun protection for the kids in the pool. Is that something the Shire could investigate?

Answer 8 – Acting Director Infrastructure Services: Currently there is nothing planned in relation to shade the Harvey Pool. However, it is something the Shire could investigate if that is the intent of the community.

It would probably have to be done with shade sails, and they would need to be significant in size. It is reasonable to expect the cost in doing this to be high as the poles needed to hold these shade sails would need to be specifically engineered.

Question 9: I live on Harvey Street opposite the Pub. Halfway along this street are two large square, new two storey, half-built homes, which have been in that condition for quite some time now. The first time I came to a Council Meeting I came explaining my concern about there being a two-storey building being built on the vacant block. I was told that there would be a board that I would be able to address my concerns and write any objections that I had; this didn't happen. I would like to understand how that happened and what is happening with these two homes that don't seem to have been built on for 9 months.

Answer 9 – Director Sustainable Development: There are no provisions that precludes the ability to approve anything and there is nothing there that triggers the requirement for a referral. The unfinished homes were being built by a company that is no longer active, and the Shire is looking into a number of different options including removing them or finishing them.

Question 10: What does that mean?

Answer 10 – Director Sustainable Development: The Shire is trying to pursue an outcome that is an appropriate outcome and one that the Shire can enforce.

Question 11: Will there be any timeframe on that if you cannot get a hold of anyone?

Answer 11 – Director Sustainable Development: If I can't get a hold of anyone, I can't give you a timeframe.

Cr. Boylan asked the following clarifying questions:

Question 1: Are we able to restrict a person from building a two-storey property, within the building code on their personal land?

Answer 1 – Director Sustainable Development: No.

Question 2: Therefore, we don't have a great deal of control over the fact that a two-storey home is being built on that land. Is that correct?

Answer 2 – Director Sustainable Development: That is correct.

Question 3: And nobody was asked regarding their opinions with the neighbours because it is the personal landowners right to be able to build that home without consulting with the neighbours?

Answer 3 – Director Sustainable Development: On one occasion there was a requirement to refer as there was some overlooking issues. Those overlooking issue were resolved through the design mechanism of changing the position of the height of windows. If there is a trigger that requires the need for it to be referred to an adjoining neighbour because it doesn't comply with the design provisions of the R-Codes, the Shire has the ability to do so.

Question 4: That issue was resolved?

Answer 4 – Director Sustainable Development: Yes, it was.

Mr. Booth continued with his questions:

Question 12: Behind Jenny's, between the Radio Station and Kevin's Meat Shop, there is a carpark. Yesterday morning I watched all the trees be removed from that carpark. Are there rules about people removing trees?

Answer 12 – Director Sustainable Development: If there is native vegetation then it is an action that triggers the need for a clearing permit. On land that is generally zoned commercial or residential there is no ability to preclude someone from removing their trees, unless they are a declared native vegetation. The ability for the Shire to stop people from clearing trees on their own residential block is limited.

The Shire will investigate this question further and provide more details.

Question 13: There was one "Meet the Councillors" meeting held at the Community Resource Centre in Harvey, which was attended by quite a few people. The Shire President and Deputy Shire President attended, and it was the last one held. A social media post by the Shire of Harvey asked residents how they would like to be kept informed. These "Meet the Councillors" meetings are fantastic because they are face-to-face, questions can be asked and prevents members of the public having to come to Council which can be intimidating for some. Why were these meetings stopped?

Answer 13 – Shire President: These meetings were an initiative by the Harvey Community Resource Centre. There was an initial agreement that all Councillors would be invited to the CRC's first Sundowner which they called "Meet the Councillors" and it was determined then that maybe it was a difficult situation for all Councillors to attend. It was then decided that there are several other mechanisms that the community could use to contact Councillors. The CRC then decided not to run any further Sundowners for Councillors.

Question 14: Is this something you would consider initiating again?

Answer 14 – Shire President: It depends on what Councillors wish to do. In that circumstance the invitation was extended to all Councillors, and it was attended by two. I acknowledge where you are going with this one and that you see it as a great mechanism for the community to contact and speak to Councillors face-to-face, however there are several other ways community members can contact Councillors.

Question 15: And they are?

Answer 15 – Shire President: Email, phone, request a meeting with all Councillors or just a specific Councillor.

Statement – Cr. Boylan: I would like to say that Councillors do work, and some of us do have very busy jobs which requires us to travel, as well as running families and committing to the community,

which is a great passion. Unfortunately, whilst this meeting time is good for you and good for us tonight, there are other times that don't always adequately suit everybody. That said, my personal details and personal phone number, not a Council phone or a public phone that I use just for Council work, but my personal number and email address is on the website, along with all the other Councillors here. We welcome the public to reach out to us, to connect with us and share any community concerns to advocate for, which they do. As the President did mention the meetings you are referring to, were at the request of the CRC, it was not a Shire event.

Statement – Mr. Booth: I am on the Harvey Community Radio three mornings a week, Monday, Thursdays and Fridays from 7.30am through to 10am. I try to get as many local voices on the radio as I possibly can. The Shire President does a radio chat with David Marshall each week running through specific matters; however, it is not an opportunity for members of the public to ask questions. I would like to invite any other Councillors that haven't been on or anyone that would like to be on to have a chat to me and accept some text questions from the public on the show. I would like to see this be a regular segment so that the public can ask questions. I have lived here for three years and the word on the street is that communication from the Shire is not good.

Statement – Cr. Dickinson: I would like to comment that as Councillors we have to abide by legislation as well and as Councillors, we are unable to always comment on things. Only the Shire President has the authority to answer questions in relation to Council matters. If we were to attend anything or if someone were to contact us, we must be mindful about how we respond, whether it is appropriate or not for us to respond. I think that that needs to be kept in mind in all instances.

Statement – Mr. Booth: It is, and I have had two Councillors on where the conversation has always been that there are certain things that I may not be able to talk about so if it is then I will just say so.

Question 16: I would like to know what the ratio of the Shire of Harvey residents are, in maybe five-year increments, in relation to Shire Officers, to see how that has changed over the years.

Answer 16 – Chief Executive Officer: Taken on Notice

Ms. Sheila Ferguson put forth the following Motion:

In view of the cost to rate payers of incoming visits by delegates from our Sister City Moka, and that an unknown number of staff, councillor and others might take part. I move that Council consider requiring that a Budget for incoming visits be presented to Council in the same way that a Budget is required for outgoing visits.

Moved: Ms. Ferguson

Seconded: Mrs. McGregor

Lost 4-8

Statement – Ms. Ferguson: I would like to comment in relation to expenses that when my husband retired after 37 years with the Education Department, his colleagues collected money to provide an afternoon tea and get him a gift. The Education Department gave him a plastic medallion such as kids get on sports day. In public service, I don't believe it's common for celebrations, farewell gifts to be provided out of the public purse.

In relation to the last speaker about the lack of community consultation, I think the refusal to adequately inform the community about the Australind Community Precinct is an example of why the community feels that communication is inadequate. There was lots of publicity where the precinct should go and the master plan and now the community is left to guess.

Mr. Booth put forth the following motion:

That Council consider including a specific line item for "Alcohol" within the Budget.

Moved: Mr. Booth

Seconded: Ms. Lofthouse

Cr. Carbone foreshadowed the following motion:

That an “entertainment” line item be kept in the Annual Budget at the discretion of the Shire President and Chief Executive Officer.

The Shire President put Mr. Booth’s motion to the vote.

Lost 2-10

The Shire President proceeded with the Foreshadowed Motion

Moved: Cr. Carbone

Seconded: Cr. Boylan

Carried 10-0

Cr. Krispyn asked the following question:

Question 1: Is it possible to have a template created for AGM’s with areas to put Budget Items or EFT numbers to better help members of the public when asking their questions.

Answer 1 – Chief Executive Officer: This can be arranged.

Ms. Lofthouse asked the following questions:

Question 1: The CEO claims we only paid a rise of 6%, however she is not aware of all our properties.

Answer 1 – Chief Executive Officer: Officers advised on multiple properties and the Coordinator Rates and Customer Service checked the information to ensure that the rate rise was correct. As detailed it was 6.3%, though as mentioned, there is the ability to contact the Coordinator to cross reference your figures.

Statement – Ms. Lofthouse: I have checked what we did pay to the Shire and it was a rise of 10.36%

6. Closure of Meeting

The Shire President closed the meeting at 8.35pm.