

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 23rd February 2022 at 7.00pm at Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood.

PRESENT: Cllr Tony Ring, Town Mayor
Cllr Philip Day
Cllr Gareth Deboos
Cllr Hilary Edge
Cllr Rae Frederick
Cllr John Haywood
Cllr Jeremy Heron
Cllr Darren Loose
Cllr Gloria O'Reilly
Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine
Cllr Derek Scott

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk
Mrs Jo Hurd, Deputy Town Clerk
Cllr Michael Thierry, Hampshire County Councillor

ABSENT: Cllr Andy Briers
Cllr Peter Kelleher
Cllr Glenys Turner

The Town Mayor mourned the passing of Lyn Wickens, who had been a previous employee of the Council and an active member of the community. On behalf of the Council, he offered condolences to her husband Jeff and family.

C/6733

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were 2 members of public present.

A resident of Riverside thanked the Council for arranging no parking signs on The Bickerley. He said these had been effective for 3 days, but then the usual offenders had returned. When challenged by him, an offender said he believed the signs held no legal status. The resident asked for signs to be put on windscreens requesting that drivers do not park here; these had been effective in the past and had been previously agreed by the Council. The Town Mayor agreed to liaise with the Town Clerk on this matter.

The Acting Chairman of the Twinning Association addressed the Council. The Twinning Association was established in 1986 when a Charter was agreed between Ringwood and Pont Audemer in France. The Association had been very successful in the past with many cultural and social links formed, but interest had waned over the past few years. He explained that a new Committee had been formed, membership had almost doubled in the past year, and it was hoped that the relationship could be regenerated. The Association was fully self-funding and monthly fundraising activities would resume. It was hoped to arrange a visit to Pont Audemer in March, with a reciprocal visit the following year. On behalf of the Association, he asked for the Council's support for the following:

- Organisation of a bi-annual Civic Event in the Forest Suite;
- Use of a meeting room at Gateway for Committee meetings; and
- Assistance when French visitors are in Ringwood, possibly by funding a coach every other year to enable attendance at an event out of town.



It was agreed that the Council would continue to assist with organisation of a bi-annual Civic Event, and the possibility of providing a room for Committee meetings would be considered during office hours. The Town Mayor would discuss the requests further with the Town Clerk and report back.

C/6734
APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Briers, Kelleher and Turner.

C/6735
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none were declared at this time.

C/6736
MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

C/6721 The Town Mayor reported that he had written to the Deputy PCC summarising the commitments made at the meeting and invited him to attend Full Council in September to provide an update. He had attended a meeting with the Police Inspector when it had been agreed that a beat surgery would be held in Gateway on a trial basis.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 26th January 2022 be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/6737
RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Cllr Loose presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 2nd February 2022.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 2nd February 2022 be received.

C/6738
PLANNING, TOWN AND ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Day presented the minutes of the Planning, Town and Environment Committee meeting held on 4th February 2022.

He updated as follows:

P/5954 Councillors and members of the public had attended a briefing by Crest Nicholson on development proposals for land off Moortown Lane. A date for a briefing from NFDC planning officers was awaited, after which a special meeting of the Committee would be arranged to hear local views prior to considering the Council's response.

It was noted that Crest Nicholson had advised that the sewage works would need to be upgraded to cope with demand from development of the strategic sites.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town and Environment Committee meeting held on 4th February 2022 be received.

C/6739
POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr Heron presented the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 16th February 2022.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 16th February 2022 be received, with the exception of F/6006.

C/6740
FINANCIAL RISK ASSESSMENT

Members considered a recommendation from Policy and Finance Committee to note the updated Financial Risk Assessment (*F/6006 refers*).

Under Financial Regulations, Full Council must formally approve the annual Risk Assessment. This had been updated and discussed at length by Policy and Finance Committee.

RESOLVED: That the updated Financial Risk Assessment be approved.

ACTION R Fitzgerald / C Wilkins
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C/6741
COUNCIL MEETINGS

Members considered a motion put forward by Cllrs Briers, Day, Heron and Ring to reconsider the resolution made by Council on 15th December 2021 with regards to the management of Council meetings (*C/6710 refers*) (*Report A*).

Members had mixed feelings about resuming all meetings in person. It was felt that virtual meetings had worked well and had enabled greater public participation and transparency, as well as requiring less resources to manage.

The decision in December to continue operating in this way had been taken when there was concern about a worsening situation with Covid. This had not transpired, and the government was now talking about living with Covid, rather than adapting. However, caution was still urged.

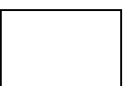
It was noted that decisions could not lawfully be made at virtual meetings, rather that Members agreed their collective views and decisions were delegated to the Town Clerk. This had worked effectively since it was introduced and there was no doubt about the integrity of officers in carrying out Members wishes.

The arrangement agreed in December was time limited and must be reviewed at or before the Annual Meeting on 25th May in any event.

Cllr Heron proposed that all meetings return to in person meetings at Gateway. This was seconded by Cllr Loose, and Members voted 4 in favour and 7 against.

RESOLVED: That there be no change to the way in which Council meetings are managed, as agreed by Council on 15th December 2021.

ACTION C Wilkins



C/6742
SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AT LONG LANE

The Town Clerk reported that he didn't feel it appropriate to call a meeting of the newly formed Scrutiny Panel until a budget, plan, and risk assessment have been prepared for approval. He was waiting on information from the project architect and others, and would arrange this meeting as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

ACTION C Wilkins

C/6743
COMMUNICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED

The Town Mayor reported:

- i) He had attended a meeting of the Ringwood Business Association;
- ii) He continued to liaise with Post Office regarding the possibility of bringing a mobile service to the town on Market days;
- iii) A Twinning Association fundraising event Comedy Night would be held at Braeside Village Hall on 26th March.

C/6744
REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCILLORS

Cllr Haywood had attended a NFALC meeting, when a motion to lobby to give powers to town and parish councils to apply 20mph limits on certain roads was carried. This would now go forward to HALC.

Cllr Edge had recently noticed a proliferation of 30mph speed aware signs around Poulner. She was of the opinion that there were too many, which gave the impression of urbanising the area.

Cllr Frederick said she would be seeking support from Councillors to assist with the Greening Ringwood campaign. The next step was to hold a public meeting, prior to a formal launch later in the year.

Cllr O'Reilly commented on a sign in Kent Lane advising it was unsuitable for diverted traffic. It was noted that this was a very narrow road in places and there had been significant verge damage due to increased use during the A31 road works.

Following a concern raised by Ellingham, Harbridge and Ibsley Parish Council, County Cllr Thierry had been advised by HCC Highways that traffic using Kent Lane was doing so lawfully and was easing pressure elsewhere on the network. The nature of the road makes it undesirable for significant volumes of traffic, but it is still a preferred route as an alternative.

C/6745
REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Councillor Thierry presented a written report (*Annex B*). On behalf of RACE, Cllr Deboos thanked him for his much-appreciated contribution to fund a new community fridge.

District Councillor Heron reported that NFDC had now set the Council Tax for 2022/23. The total amount for a Band D property in Ringwood would be £1,992.47, which represented an increase of £63.36 on last year or £1.22 per week. He noted that government would be giving

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a rebate of £150 for Band D properties and below, meaning that those householders would therefore pay less Council Tax this year.
It was noted that Cabinet approved a range of measures to support the Council's Climate Change and Nature Emergency Action Plan, including allocating funds and appointing a dedicated climate change officer.

District Councillor Rippon-Swaine reported that HCC's Regulatory Committee had refused planning permission for a proposed incinerator near Alton. This would have a significant impact on the Waste Strategy currently being prepared.

**C/6746
FORTHCOMING MEETINGS**

Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 2 nd March 2022
Planning, Town & Environment	10.00am	Friday 4 th March 2022
Staffing Committee	7.00pm	Wednesday 16 th March 2022
Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 23 rd March 2022
Full Council	7.00pm	Wednesday 30 th March 2022

**C/6747
EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: That, in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public were excluded because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature.

**C/6748
COMMUNITY AWARDS**

Members considered nominations for community awards and discussed how recipients should be honoured. It was agreed that professionally produced parchments scrolls should be awarded and that the Town Clerk should investigate provision of a commemorative book to record the honours.

RESOLVED: That community awards as agreed be presented at the Annual Town Assembly, and that each recipient be awarded with a parchment scroll.

ACTION C Wilkins

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.35pm.

APPROVED
30th March 2022

TOWN MAYOR

SPECIAL MOTION

To The Clerk, Ringwood Town Council

Pursuant to Standing Order 7(a) we, the undersigned councillors, desire that the following motion may be considered as a special motion at the next meeting of the Council:

That the Council reconsider the resolution made by the Council on 15th December 2021 as follows:

- 1) *That meetings of the full Council shall continue to be held in person in the Forest Suite but with such additional measures to promote the health and safety of those attending as officers shall advise;*
- 2) *Save as indicated in paragraph 4 below, to delegate to the Town Clerk until 25th May 2022 the power to make any decision on behalf of the Council which a Committee of the Council has power to make and may lawfully delegate in this manner (and, for the avoidance of doubt, this shall include the power to delegate the decision to another officer of the Council of his choosing as he shall see fit);*
- 3) *With regard to every meeting of a committee or working party of the Council up to and including 24th May 2022 that has already been scheduled or shall hereafter be agreed:*
 - a. *The meeting shall take place in a virtual environment using video-conferencing technology;*
 - b. *The meeting shall take effect as an informal gathering of members and Officers at which officers will brief and advise members on relevant council business and members shall express their collective wishes with regard thereto rather than as a "meeting" for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1972 at which decisions are made; and*
 - c. *In all other respects the meeting shall be held as normal and, in particular, summonses and agendas shall be prepared and issued, minutes shall be taken for approval, remote attendances or absences shall be recorded, interests shall be declared and public participation facilitated and encouraged.*
- 4) *The delegation described in paragraph 2 above shall not apply to the power to comment on planning applications (and similar matters) which shall instead be delegated until 25th May 2022 to the Deputy Clerk and the Chair and Vice-Chair (for the time being) of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee.*
- 5) *To convey to the Town Clerk:*
 - a. *The hope that in exercising delegated powers he will have due regard to the collective wishes of members expressed at meetings held in accordance with paragraph 3 above;*
 - b. *The desire that he will continue to monitor councillors' attendance at meetings and take steps to ensure, so far as he can, that every member will have an opportunity to attend a meeting or meetings as necessary to avoid automatically ceasing to be a member by virtue of Local Government Act 1972, s. 85(1) and (2); and*
 - c. *The expectation that if it reasonably appears to him that a majority of members wish to consider resuming meetings in person (or altering the terms of this resolution in any other respect) before 25th May 2022, he will arrange a meeting*

in person of the Council to allow this again, having due regard to the health and safety of all persons attending.

and make such provision for future meetings of the Council's committees as members shall think fit.

Dated: 11th February 2022

Signed: A. BRIEKS A. BRIEKS

Philip James Dan PHILIP JAMES DAN

Tony Ring TONY RING

Jeremy Heron JEREMY HERON

County Council February 2022 Report

Councillor Michael Thierry - Ringwood Division

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Mrs Lyn Wickens

Mrs Lyn Wickens

With immense sadness, I received the news that Mrs Lyn Wickens had died.

Mrs Wickens was a member of staff of the Town Council in the days of Greenways.

Mrs Wickens was greatly respected and appreciated by staff and councillors.

I extend my condolences to Jeff and the other member of his family.

County Council Councillors' Grants.

The entire Grants budget has been allocated - all fund being ascribed to Ringwood.

New Forest National Park Authority.

I attended the January meeting of the National Park Authority

Hampshire County Council & New Forest District Council

I attended and took part in both debates on the budget proposals.

Both council leaders have announced they intend to stand down this year.

Monthly Councillors' Surgery.

The February MP and Councillor surgery was held. Sir Desmond, Cllr Ann Savier (Fordingbridge) and myself in attendance,

It was a very busy morning with a varied range of topics raised

A number of personal issues were addressed.

I have no further comment to make.

Cllr Michael Thierry - 01425 479095