

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 30th October 2019 at 7.00pm at Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood.

PRESENT: Cllr Tony Ring, Town Mayor
Cllr Philip Day, Deputy Mayor
Cllr Andy Briers
Cllr Gareth Deboos
Cllr Rae Frederick
Cllr John Haywood
Cllr Jeremy Heron
Cllr Darren Loose
Cllr Gloria O'Reilly
Cllr Glenys Turner

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk
Mrs Jo Hurd, Deputy Town Clerk

ABSENT: Cllr Christine Ford
Cllr Hilary Edge
Cllr Peter Kelleher
Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine

C/6366

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A member of the public wished to address some of the issues raised at the previous Council meeting on the subject of a climate emergency. A concern had been raised about how effective the town could be in addressing what was a global issue. In response, she said that carbon emissions in Ringwood and the New Forest were some of the highest per annum in the UK; emissions had an impact on the food chain, for example, and it was therefore a local issue, not just a global one. She also cited the impact new development, such as that proposed at Snails Lane, could have on local biodiversity, and the need to consider the implications of this, and, for example, how the emerging 5G technology could impact on the environment. She said that every decision the Council makes needs to put the environment first. She referred to a Ringwood climate change action group, which, among other things, was looking at tree planting and the need to have a strategic woodland management plan. The group was looking for sites to plant more trees, and she asked for the Council's support in this. She urged the Council to follow the lead of Hampshire County Council, which had declared a climate emergency, and said that Members should not fear making this a priority.

A student from Ringwood School spoke as a representative of the young people of the town and urged the Council to listen to the community and declare a climate emergency. He said that the School was already involved in several initiatives to help to reduce the carbon footprint, such as being involved with Ringwood Action for Climate Emergency (RACE), and their own recycling and gardening clubs. Young people have the determination and passion to make a big impact, and they were currently brainstorming low-cost ideas such as tree planting; establishing resource and recycling centres; a repair workshop to prevent the throwaway culture; promoting walking and cycling; and water bottle filling stations.

C/6367
APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Edge, Ford, Kelleher and Rippon-Swaine.

C/6368
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none declared at this time.

C/6369
PRESENTATION OF GRANT AID CHEQUE

The Town Mayor presented a grant aid cheque of £1,000 to a representative of Forest Forge, to assist young people with restricted funds to continue to attend the Youth Theatre.

C/6370
NEW FOREST WEST NEIGHBOURHOOD POLICING TEAM

Sergeant Helen Mitchley reported on crime statistics. In the last 12 months there had been a slight increase in reported crime in comparison with the previous year; an additional 222 crimes across the 7 wards of Ringwood, an increase of 12%. The areas of crime that had seen an increase included assault and domestic related disputes; theft from vehicles; and public order. In the last 3 months, there had been a slight increase in assault and domestic related disputes, and a slight reduction in both non-dwelling burglaries and public order.

In response to a question on clear-up rates, she reported that it was not possible to provide statistics specific to Ringwood, but stated that the Force average from April to present was 13.5% of reported crimes resulted in formal action being taken. In the New Forest area, the average was 12.4%, with the most significant outcomes being drug detection at 50%; drug possession 95%; and offensive weapons 55%.

It was noted that there had been no progress on the investigation into the recent spate of graffiti around the town, and that forensics on the spray can were still awaited.

Policing levels in the town currently stood at 1 Sergeant, 4 PCs and 3 PCSOs, although only 2 PCs were currently available to work. One new officer would be joining the Force in November.

Cllr Haywood referred to reports on social media about antisocial behaviour with catapults, and said that he had advised people to report this to the Police. Sergeant Mitchley said that no incidents had been reported, however one catapult had recently been confiscated.

In response to a spate of antisocial behaviour in a local supermarket, community orders had been issued to two offenders and engagement with the youth offending team was ongoing to ensure those orders were maintained.

C/6371
CLIMATE EMERGENCY

Members considered an amended motion proposed by Cllrs Deboos and O'Reilly.

Cllr Deboos thanked Cllr Day for his help in rewording the motion. He explained that, although specific targets had been removed, this did not mean that the Working Party would not push to do as much as possible.

Cllr Day responded to some of the issues that had been raised in the public participation period. He said that design and sustainability issues could be dealt with through the adoption of a Neighbourhood Plan, as specific policies could be formulated to address green and eco issues. He also referred to the Council's Tree Policy and said that all applications for tree works are scrutinised to ensure that trees are not felled without justification. He added that the Council had assisted Transition Ringwood to identify sites for wild flowers.

Cllr Haywood was pleased to see clear actionable points in the motion, but was disappointed that some elements had been removed, particularly the declaration of a climate emergency, as hundreds of councils across the country had already done. He said it was important to listen to the community and therefore proposed an amendment to the first line of the motion "That Ringwood Town Council hereby declares a climate emergency. It further notes that ...". This was seconded by Cllr Turner, who felt it important that a climate emergency is declared and said that this is now a common language that everyone understands.

Members voted on the amendment, with 4 Members voting for and 5 against, with 1 abstention. The amended motion therefore failed.

Members voted on the original motion, which was passed unanimously.

The Town Mayor encouraged anyone wishing to join the Working Party to contact the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED: That Ringwood Town Council note that Hampshire County Council and other Parish/Town Councils within the New Forest have declared there to be a climate emergency.

In consequence, the Town Council resolves to:

1. Build on and inform the efforts of the County Council and the District Council to address the issues associated with climate change and to that end will:
2. Establish a Working Party to consider the issues associated with climate change and other impacts on the environment (to be referred to as Ringwood Environmental Action Leadership Working Party (REAL)) which will report to the Town, Planning and Environment Committee in accordance with the draft Terms of Reference set out below.
3. Ensure that in making any decision regarding the activities of the Town Council, due regard will be had to the effect of the decision on the emission of greenhouse gases and other sustainable issues and do what it reasonably can to mitigate these.
4. To include within the agenda of the Town, Planning and Environment Committee a standing item relating to reports from the working party.

The draft Terms of Reference shall be as follows:

The working party shall consist of a maximum of 10 persons, not less than two (but no more than four) of which shall be Ringwood Town Councillors and the remainder to be co-opted from concerned Parishioners.

It shall elect a Chairperson.

The working party will consider the activities of the Town Council in terms of minimising their impact on the environment and make recommendations accordingly. The working party will make recommendations to the Town Council regarding how it might take the lead in



promoting initiatives intended to reduce carbon emissions within the Parish and to promote sustainable activities and how to promote the same to Parishioners.
To consider and identify the cost of implementing any initiative identified by the working party.

C/6372

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

C/6364: Cllr Frederick requested the following addition to her report “and had passed this information on to the District Council Ward Members.” This amendment was agreed.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Meeting held on 25th September 2019, having been circulated, be amended as above and signed as a correct record.

C/6373

RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Cllr Briers presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 2nd October 2019.

OS/5915: Members were disappointed that the 3D selfie feature would not take place in Gateway Square, but noted that the Gateway building would have a new curtain of lights, and new hanging lights in the trees. Cllr Day invited suggestions for any additional features to be put to the Events Committee.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 2nd October 2019 be received, and that the recommendations therein be approved.

C/6374

PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Day presented the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 4th October 2019.

P/5644: Cllr Day wished to acknowledge the generosity of the Ringwood Carnival Society in contributing to the Market Place improvements, and specifically to the refurbishment of the human sundial.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 4th October 2019 be received.

C/6375

POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr Heron presented the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 16th October 2019.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 16th October 2019 be received.

C/6376**APPROVAL OF STUDENT ADVISORS**

The Town Clerk reported that 5 new Student Advisors had been appointed by Ringwood School, to join 2 existing. Timetabling for students attending Planning, Town & Environment Committee meant it unlikely that they would be able to participate in anything other than planning applications and they had been advised that they could change to another committee if they felt it more relevant. Cllr Day said that the Students' input was welcomed and encouraged them to say if there were any items on the agenda of particular interest, as it might be possible to bring these forward for consideration earlier in the meeting.

RESOLVED: That Ringwood School's nominations for Student Advisors for 2019-20 be approved, as follows:

- i) Policy and Finance Committee: Jonathan Skirton
- ii) Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee: Alana Morris, Ruth Port, Rhys Phillips
- iii) Planning, Town and Environment Committee: Mia Hart, Isaac Thomson, Alex Christison

C/6377**COMMUNICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED**

The Town Mayor reported the following:

- 1) He referred to the New Forest District Council Electoral Review, which was underway, and said that it would be possible for the Town Council to request a similar review in the future. Cllr Heron said this would be highly unusual for a parish that was able to fill all seats, and any reduction in the number of councillors would reduce diversity.
- 2) An initial meeting of a steering committee for businesses had now been arranged and he would report back the outcome.
- 3) It had been suggested that Highways England be approached to update the community at next year's Annual Assembly on the A31 improvement scheme.
- 4) He would be judging The Furlong pumpkin competition.

C/6378**REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCILLORS AND STUDENT ADVISORS**

Cllr Day reported that it might be possible to include improvements to the roundabout underneath the A31 in the schemes to be funded from the Highways England designated funds. He had attended a site meeting to discuss the pedestrian crossings in Christchurch Road, and hoped that both crossings could now be delivered. Both issues would be discussed at the Planning, Town & Environment Committee on 1st November. He said that the Events Team was busy preparing for the fireworks event on 3rd November and tickets would be on sale in town on Saturday.

Cllr O'Reilly had attended a Flood Warden seminar with Cllr Deboos, which had been very informative. They would follow up on ideas at a future meeting.

Cllr Turner reported that she was looking into a tree damaged by fire in Salisbury Road.

Cllr Haywood reported on his attendance at the New Forest Association of Local Councils (NFALC) meeting held on 17 October (*Annex A*). he would be attending the Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) AGM on 9th November.

Cllr Deboos reported that Transition Ringwood had a successful event sowing wild flower seeds on part of The Bickerley.

C/6379
REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

District Councillor Heron reported that items on the agenda for Cabinet on 6th November included the Corporate Plan, Medium Term Financial Plan and Compulsory Purchase and Overriding Easements Policy.

C/6380
FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Planning, Town & Environment	10.00am	Friday 1 st November 2019
Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 6 th November 2019
Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 20 th November 2019
Full Council	7.00pm	Wednesday 27 th November 2019

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.36pm.

APPROVED
27th November 2019

TOWN MAYOR

Report on the New Forest Association of Local Councils (NFALC) meeting

Held at Appletree Court on 17th October 2019.

Cllr John Haywood in attendance

Initial business was two question and answer sessions, one with Glenn Peacey of Hampshire County Council (HCC) Highways and one with Andy Harding of HCC's superfast broadband programme.

Glenn dealt with a variety of questions especially from smaller parishes regarding the repair of roads and verges in the National Park in the face of various constraints placed on materials and road widths etc. Members asked for a possible route of escalation for reporting of highways defects for local councillors that circumvented the standard methods of reporting and recognised that councillors naturally did a degree of triage and prioritisation, but this was said to be impractical.

Andy reported that 94% of New Forest district properties were now on "Fibre to the Cabinet" broadband internet as opposed to 97% in the HCC area. The current focus is on hard-to-access locations e.g. Fritham. There will be a focus on rolling out more "Fibre to the Premises" broadband across the Forest and significant central government funds will be available for this.

The Safer New Forest Partnership - New Forest District Council (NFDC) staff - then introduced themselves and also introduced the new police Chief Inspector for the New Forest, Paul Markham. Paul spoke of the increase in police funding which has allowed for 4 new constables and one Police Community Support Officer to be hired for the district. He encouraged that all crime is reported as he has daily and weekly tasking meetings and the data feeds into those. He mentioned that this crime data has led to resources being moved to Ringwood to counter an increase in non-dwelling thefts - something of which this council is all too well aware. I pointed this out to the meeting and welcomed this.

Barry Rickman (NFDC) gave no update as their only business was on the re-warding which had been dealt with in a separate meeting (see Town Clerk's report).

Steve Avery (New Forest NPA) gave a general update and encouraged submissions of good property development within the park to be nominated for their annual award. The development needs to have taken place over the past three years.

New Website accessibility guidelines, climate change and countryside access/rights of way made up the remaining business. The climate change section focussed on the Local Government Association's work-book for councillors which contains many good suggestions

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of implementable policies, and the New Forest Zero Carbon Alliance, which has a meeting in Brockenhurst Village Hall on the evening of the 8th November.