

2019-2020

Mayor's Annual Report

RYDE TOWN COUNCIL

In May 2019, when I was elected Mayor of Ryde, I could not have envisaged that by the end of my year in office the country would be facing the biggest crisis since the Second World War. This report highlights some of Ryde Town Council's achievements in this eventful year.



Supporting the Community and Voluntary Sector

In the course of this year, I have learnt that what I love most about our 'Town on the Beach' is the wonderful sense of community. The Council has supported this in various ways. We have:

- Provided more than £250,000 in grants and support to over 30 Ryde community organisations
- Co-funded with the IW Council a post of Community Connector, based at Aspire Ryde, to strengthen community services, especially for the town's most vulnerable residents
- Facilitated the establishment of Ryde Unite, a group of community organisations who are now working together to support the town's community and voluntary sector.

Promoting our Arts and Culture

One of the Council's roles is to support and promote our arts and cultural activities. Ryde is a Carnival Town and we love a street parade. In 2019:

- Ryde Carnival was voted the most popular carnival in the UK
- Our Mardi Gras festival celebrated the Island's award of UNESCO Biosphere status
- The town hosted many other events, including IW Pride, the Scooter Rally, a Beach Sports Festival and the Vintage Car Extravaganza.

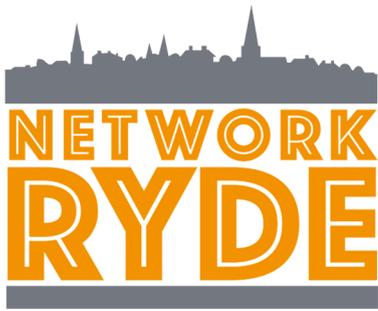
Regenerating our Town Centre and Saving our Historic Buildings

Ryde also has a rich architectural heritage. In late 2019 the Council, with support from IW Council, Ryde Business Association and other community organisations, won a prestigious award from Historic England to regenerate the High Street. This is the start of a radical programme to regenerate our town centre. We are also working with Natural Enterprise to reopen Appley Tower and exploring ways of bringing the Ryde Theatre/Town Hall back into community ownership.

Taking over Ryde Harbour and Rejuvenating the Esplanade

The Council is finalising negotiations with IW Council to take over the ownership and management of Ryde Harbour and adjacent parts of Eastern Gardens for £1. The Town Council has plans to invest in the Harbour over the next 5 years to improve facilities for both permanent berth holders and visiting yachtsmen. The plans for improvement include, adding additional berths, installing WIFI and electrical hook ups on the pontoons. The IW Council would otherwise have sold the Harbour to a private buyer.





Supporting the Next Generation

The Council has continued to run its award-winning youth service, Network Ryde. My 2019-20 Mayoral Appeal was to raise funds for the emotional well-being of young people in the Town and monies raised have gone initially to Network Ryde projects.

Responding to the Covid-19 Emergency

- During the Covid-19 outbreak, the Council has worked with Aspire Ryde, other local organisations and the IW Council to support vulnerable residents and the community as a whole. We have:
- Enrolled 151 volunteers, who have supported 160 vulnerable people
- Delivered about 700 prescriptions, 600 food parcels and 620 frozen meals
- Provided regular emotional wellbeing support by phone to 30 people
- Run a virtual youth club
- Liaised with the IW Council and Ryde Business Association to ensure the safe reopening of the town.

Organisational Change to Manage Change in Ryde

There have been a number of organisational and staffing changes during the year. We have:

- Appointed a new Town Clerk, Lisa Dyer, to lead our committed and enthusiastic staff team
- Recruited new staff, reorganised the staffing structure and made efficiency savings
- Held a strategic planning workshop and begun the preparation of a Corporate Plan
- Operated as many of our services as possible remotely during the Covid-19 crisis

Ryde Place Plan

In consultation with other local organisations and the general public, the Council has produced the Ryde Place Plan. The Plan (available on our website) provides a vision of our town's future and a road map for achieving this vision. It has recently been updated to take account of the implications of Covid-19.

The Year Ahead – 2020-21 Investment and Growth

Due to the Covid-19 crisis, the Council had to postpone its 2020 AGM until May next year, which means that I am continuing as Mayor for another year. We have an exciting year ahead. Thanks to the restructuring made in 2019/20, we have approved an ambitious budget for 2020/21 without any increase in the precept, and we have adequate reserves and an energised staff team. We are therefore well placed to continue implementing the projects begun in the last year and to achieve the vision set out in the Ryde Place Plan.

Thank you all

I have been honoured to be Mayor in the past tumultuous and dramatic year and I wish to thank all the Ryde Town Council staff, councillors, all the Covid-19 local volunteers, community organisations, faith groups, businesses and most importantly Ryde's residents. You all make Ryde the wonderful and special place it is and will make it great in the future. My 2020-21 Mayoral Appeal will raise funds to support Ryde Residents of all ages recovering from Covid19 and experiencing post-traumatic stress and depression or anxiety caused by the crisis.

Cllr Michael Lilley

Mayor of Ryde

