



MAYOR'S REPORT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

February 2024

A belated Happy New Year - I hope that the time in-between our meetings has been relaxed and healthy, and that 2024 has started with an optimistic flourish. There's certainly much to be positive about in Ryde over the coming year, not least the creation and first steps of the Town Board.

I have spent time since our last meeting supporting the staff, in particular the clerk and deputy, as they have continued to prepare the Town Council's structure, systems and priorities in readiness for the advent of the Board; this will be established by the beginning of April and the current plan is that the Town Council will act as their secretariat, working with the Isle of Wight Council to enable the Board's projects to progress.

From April, the work of preparing a long-term plan for its investment in the town's development, together with a three year detailed spending plan will begin – this has to be submitted by August 1st 2024 – earlier, if possible – so that it can be agreed with the Department of Leveling Up, Housing and Communities, who will then agree the release of funding for projects, via the Isle of Wight Council. It's been a busy time and a steep learning curve; there remains no time to lose if the town is to fully benefit from this investment.

Meanwhile, staff and councillors have continued to work hard to develop and realise a range of projects, and to support other organisations to do so. In particular, the staff team has worked incredibly hard to support residents and to continue moving forward on many fronts, working with partners wherever possible.

I've continued to meet with key stakeholders, all of whom are very positive about the future of Ryde – and all expressed a wish to work together to realise the potential of the town to better support its residents and businesses – and to offer visitors a memorable experience.

Amongst the usual activities, meetings and training in the full and exciting life of a councillor, since my last report/our last full council meeting I've been involved in supporting and attending the following meetings and events -

- Joined the Community Development Officer to meet the Family Liaison Officers from Ryde's primary schools
- Attended the Network Ryde event celebrating the achievements of young people in the Duke of Edinburgh Award programme
- Assisted Quivers in switching on the town's Christmas lights and trying to get the microphone to work

- Attended events to switch on Christmas lights at both St Vincent's Care Home and Highfield Nursing Home
- Supported the very successful Merry and Bright celebrations in Ryde town centre
- Attended the launch of the 2024 Mardi Gras at Quay Arts Centre
- Met with the incoming sergeant and his team alongside Cllr Lucioni
- Attended a celebration evening at Ryde Rowing Club
- Attended a meeting of Creative Ryde/Creative Island
- Supported the 'meet the councillors' session at Network Ryde as part of the social action programme, in preparation for the formation of a youth council
- Attended the opening of the 'Out on an Island' exhibition at Monkton Arts, hosted by StoneCrabs Theatre Company

My thanks to all of the staff team, in particular to Hannah East, who spearheaded Christmas with such aplomb.

Cllr Richard May – Mayor of Ryde

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