

**MINUTES OF RYDE TOWN COUNCIL'S FULL COUNCIL MEETING HELD ON MONDAY
5 SEPTEMBER 2022 AT 7.00PM IN THE METHODIST CHURCH, GARFIELD ROAD, RYDE**

Members Present: Cllr M Lilley (Mayor), Cllr Georgie Carter, Cllr S Cooke, Cllr J Higgins, Cllr L Kirkby, Cllr K Lucioni, Cllr J McLagan, Cllr R May, Cllr J Elliott, Cllr M Ross, Cllr Jenna Sabine, Cllr I Stephens.

Also in Attendance: Jon Baker (Committees and Ryde Place Plan Coordinator), Lisa Dyer (Clerk to the Town Council), Chris Fletcher (South Island Sevens Organiser), Tim Wander (Historic Buildings Officer) and Inspector Andy McDonald (Hants and IW Police)

29 Members of the public attended.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The following questions were put to Council by members of the public:

- A question was asked regarding the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Donna Jones. Following an email from the PCC's Support Officer which responded to a public request to reopen Ryde Police Station with a manned desk, it had since come to light that Mrs Jones had visited Ryde with her Head of Estates. Had Ryde Town Council or any councillor's been made aware of the visit?

Response – The mayor and officers had not been aware of the visit. Cllr Lucioni advised that she was surprised she had not been invited in her capacity as the Isle of Wight Council's Cabinet Member responsible for Community Protection, but she would meet Mrs Jones soon and would provide an update in due course.

- Regarding the recent departure of the now former Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) during the summer a resident asked what was the reason behind their leaving?

Response – The mayor responded by stating that staffing matters remain confidential and that their replacement, the deputy RFO, had been appointed by the Personnel Panel via its delegated powers of responsibility.

- A resident of The Strand in Ryde asked why Ryde Town Council had held or supported so many events at Eastern Gardens which he stated was disturbing many residents in the vicinity and could an alternative more appropriate venue be identified for future events?

Response – The mayor responded by stating that Ryde Town Council had listened to the concerns of the residents of The Strand and as a result the 365 day a year licence application had been withdrawn. Any future events would if required, be done so through a Temporary Events Notice (TEN's) application. Eastern Gardens had held events for many years and since the land had been acquired by Ryde Town Council, the intention was to continue with entertainment events for the public.

Any events that did not involve the Town Council selling alcohol would not need a licence, although any third party involved intending to sell alcohol would need to apply to the Isle of Wight Council for a TEN's. Ryde Town Council had continued to monitor the noise levels and all readings had been below the permitted level. However, a meeting with Environmental Health had been arranged to create a Noise Management Plan.

- A resident enquired about the Beach Front Operations which forms part of the Ryde Marina facility and asked how the target of 33% returns on the £50,000 investment had been progressing and why there was no figures published around the fuel costs for the use of the quad bikes.

Response – The mayor responded by stating that a full written response would be provided after the meeting.

- A resident of Lind Street in Ryde enquired about the current position of Ryde Town Council and Ryde Town Hall / Theatre.

Response – Cllr Richard May, a member of Ryde Town Council's Ryde Town Hall Working Group responded by stating that the Working Group continued to explore and research options in bringing the Town Hall back into use. Several discussions had taken place with the current owner and the Isle of Wight Council's Conservation Officer, who had made ongoing visits. Discussions had also taken place with suitable architects about a detailed business / project case that could lead to grant funding. There had also been discussions with property valuers looking to identify a method of valuation which considers the value of the social and community deficit impacting such buildings and Historic England had indicated support for this. The Arts Council had also been in contact and offered advice on avenues of grant funding and the National Lottery Heritage Fund had been approached on potential support. Finally, two separate high-profile individuals had independently visited the building expressing interest in its future. The Working Group would continue to explore all means of bringing the building back into public use.

- The Isle of Wight Councillor for Haylands and Swanmore asked why the Waterside Trusts Splash Park was not regarded as a high priority for Ryde Town Council along with such buildings as St Thomas's Church and Vectis Hall.

Response – The mayor responded by advising that the Splash Park was not a Ryde Town Council facility. It was owned by the Isle of Wight Council and leased to the Waterside Trust. However, members were reminded that in the past, Ryde Town Council had awarded grants annually to the Waterside Trust, but in 2022 no such application was received. Ryde Town Council had no jurisdiction over the Splash Park, but a Working Group had been established to look at possible future options.

- A member of the public asked if Island Roads were cleaning the streets to the correct standard. Litter on the streets coupled with rubbish sacks ready for collection by Amey waste collectors outside properties, left the town looking somewhat untidy.

Response – The mayor stated that Ryde Town Council paid for the services of an Isle of Wight Council Environmental Officer. If Island Roads were not abiding to the standards set by the PFI Contract, then Ryde Town Council would, through the Environmental Officer, chase Island Roads to ensure they do.

- A member of the public asked about the build-up of sand that encroaches on the public footpaths along the Esplanade and what was planned to minimise the problem in the coming months.

Response – The mayor responded by stating that the Town Council had a plan for future dredging of the Marina as well as a Sand Management Plan. Staff had ensured that there had been safe access to the beach for those with mobility problems. It should be noted however that the beach was owned by the Isle of Wight Council, but Ryde Town Council were looking to have better measures in place in the future.

83/22 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllrs Charles Chapman, Phil Jordan, and Ian Dore.

84/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTERESTS

None declared

85/22 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None requested.

86/22 MINUTES TO THE PREVIOUS MEETINGS

The minutes to the meeting of Full Council held on 4 July 2022 were reviewed.

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes to the meeting of Full Council held on 4 July 2022 were agreed.

87/22 UPDATE FROM THE LOCAL POLICE INSPECTOR

Inspector Andy McDonald provided members with an update on the work being carried out by the Police in the Ryde area.

Priorities included:

- Anti-Social Behaviour – An improvement in police visibility to reassure the public more.
- Eastern Gardens Crime – There had been an increase in crime in this area which included criminal damage, burglaries, and violent offences. Specific areas and individuals were being identified and targeted.
- Ryde Police Station – Whilst there were no immediate plans to reopen the station, there were plans to hold beat surgeries in various areas around the town.
- Engage with Key Stakeholders – More engagement would be carried out, discussing long term plans to tackle areas of crime.

- Crime Data – At future updates there would be data provided which monitors progress and areas of concern.

Regarding the Beat Surgeries, it was suggested that members could provide feedback on where best such engagement could take place.

It was noted that there was increasing concern over the dangerous driving of cars and motorcycles. Many residents had highlighted speeding and excessively noisy vehicles disrupting lives.

The mayor wished to place on record his praise for the local PCSO Steve Hull who was always keen to engage with Ryde Town Council and Network Ryde in a professional manner.

88/22 SOUTH ISLAND SEVENS

Chris Fletcher, the organiser of the South Island Sevens multi-sport event which was scheduled to take place predominantly in Ryde on 22 and 23 July 2023 provided members with an overview of the event.

Other sports added, along with the Rugby Sevens Tournament were Netball, Paddleboarding, CrossFit, Skateboarding, Beach Rugby Fives, Mountain Biking and Kite Foiling.

The main centre would be at Ryde School, but other venues in Ryde such as Appley Beach would be utilised for beach sports and places outside of Ryde such as Shorwell and Chale would be venues for the Mountain Biking and Skateboarding events. It would feature elite sports with participants showcasing their talents to the Islands young people, hoping to create future talent and would be unique to the Island.

Members agreed that the event was an exciting and positive prospect for Ryde.

It was noted that there would be a provision in the 2023-2024 budget to donate to the event £10,000, subject to that budget's approval.

Following a proposer and seconder and a vote via a show of hands, it was:

RESOLVED:

THAT the full support in principle of the South Island Seven 2023 event and a budget provision of £10,000 be agreed in the 2023/24 budget.

89/22 MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Cllr Cooke asked if an update on the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between Ryde Town Council and the Isle of Wight Council could be provided?

The mayor advised that Ryde Town Councils members and officers had pushed the Isle of Wight Councils Director of Regeneration on numerous occasions to get the MoU signed, but to no avail. It was therefore proposed and seconded that a formal letter be sent to the Isle of Wight Council to progress the matter and obtain the signed MoU.

Following a proposer and seconder and a vote via a show of hands, it was:

RESOLVED:

THAT the sending of a formal letter, requesting an urgent conclusion to the signing of the MoU between the Ryde Town Council and the Isle of Wight Council, be agreed.

Cllr Kirkby asked why the Town Council was spending more money on various projects and where would it come from? He also asked why were people being allowed into Ryde Town Hall in its current position where there had been health and safety hazards identified?

The mayor responded by stating that all expenditure had been accounted and budgeted for. Any future spending that may be required would need to also be budgeted for and be subject to the appropriate approval. Regarding the Town Hall, members were reminded that whilst it was not owned by Ryde Town Council, the Working Group were looking at options and to his knowledge any visits to it were done so in a safe manner.

Cllr Lucioni asked the option of the Town Hall being acquired by a trust being pursued and why wasn't Town Council Officers providing admin support for the Town Hall Working Group? The mayor responded by stating that all options were being pursued, although Ryde Town Council were not currently able to buy it, they could be a facilitator to anyone who wished to do so. Members agreed that Officer support for the working Group should also be provided for all future RTHWG meetings.

90/22 MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The mayor's report was circulated prior to the meeting and included the following:

- i. Summer Events – It had been an extremely busy year with many events during a very hot and dry summer. The town had really come alive, and the hard work of the Ryde Town Council team had been exceptional. The work of the staff at Ryde Marina, Ryde Beach Front, Eastern Gardens, and the beach Lifeguards was all highlighted and thanks was given by the mayor.

Events had included Ryde Pride, Love Mondays with Derek Sandy and The Island Has Talent show on the Eastern Gardens. Whilst the summer season was nearly over, there was still Ryde Carnival and the Classic Car Show to look forward to.

- ii. Ryde's Young Residents - Network Ryde had over the summer engaged with many of Ryde's young residents and a record number of Duke of Edinburgh Award expeditions had taken place. There was also progress on the development of St. Thomas's and Ryde's Youth service (Network Ryde) locating there.
- iii. Cost-of-Living Crisis and Mayor's Campaign 2022/23 – There would a proposal later in the meeting to establish a warm bank / community Pop-Up support HUB to provide support for local charities and community organisations in a Ryde Unite Mayoral fundraising campaign with the Isle of Wight High Sheriff. All monies raised would go directly to charities such as Tidal Family Support etc.

91/22 CLERKS UPDATE

The Deputy Clerk provided members with an update on the following:

Tour of Britain - Stage 8 would be held on the Isle of Wight on Sunday 11 September 2022 and it would bring an international spotlight to the Island and particularly on Ryde as the starting point of the stage. Ryde Town Council had worked in collaboration with the Isle of Wight Council, Visit Isle of Wight, and a host of local organisations to ensure that Ryde was fully recognised as a key component in the success of the day.

Eastern Gardens Licensing Application – The Premises License application had been withdrawn for Eastern Gardens as Ryde Town Council had been advised that most activity was permitted under Section 182 of the Licensing Act because Ryde Town Council was a Local Authority.

Operations and Human Resources – Three new part-time members of staff had started recently. One in Facilities department, one managing RTC's projects and assisting the RFO undertaking a paid work experience placement, assisting with various financial administration duties.

St Thomas's Church – An architect had been appointed for the final stages of the project. It was noted that there was no lightning conductor on the Church, which was an essential safety feature for any tall building. There would therefore be an authorised installation at a minimal cost. There had also been an asbestos survey undertaken and no issues had been reported.

92/22 NOTICE OF VACANCY – RYDE APPLEY AND ELMFIELD.

Members noted that owing to personal circumstances, Lisa Carter had offered her resignation to the mayor which he duly accepted. Members also noted that should a by-election be required, Polling Cards would be issued by the Isle of Wight Councils Election and Land Charges Department and the costs would be met by Ryde Town Council. Such budget provision was always in place to cover such eventualities.

The mayor wished to place on record his thanks to Lisa Carter for her hard work as a councillor and wished her well for the future.

93/22 GRANTS

Members considered the following two grant applications:

i. Youth Innovation Fund

The grant application would be for the refurbishment of the former St Thomas' Church Building which would become the new base for Ryde Town Councils Youth Service, Network Ryde. The various aspects of the project would be carried out by Town Council Officers. Following a proposer and seconder and a vote via a show of hands, it was:

RESOLVED:

- I. **THAT the Grant Application by the Youth Innovation Fund for the refurbishment of the former St Thomas' Church building be agreed.**

II. THAT the delegation of authority to Ryde Town Council Officers to deliver all aspects of the project, be agreed.

ii. South Western Railway Fund

Members considered a proposal which would look to put in place improvement of the access to Ryde Beach for wheelchair users and people who struggle with mobility in general. The application was for a total of £10,000 match funding, which would equate to 30% of the whole project.

Members noted that South Western Railway were welcoming applications from local authorities for projects promoting Accessibility and Inclusion. The deadline for bids was 16 September 2022 and match funded applications would be favoured.

It was noted that Ryde Town Council had a lot of enquiries about such accessibility.

Following a proposer and seconder and a vote via a show of hands, it was:

RESOLVED:

THAT the following be agreed:

- i. **To pursue 'Access for All' on Ryde beaches**
- ii. **To apply for South Western railway fund**
- iii. **To agree to match funding contribution if required**
- iv. **To delegate authority to officers to develop the grant application and deliver all aspects of the project.**

94/22 LOCAL COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME CONSULTATION

As a major precepting authority, Ryde Town Council had been requested by the Isle of Wight Council to formally consider the preparation of the Council Tax Reduction Scheme.

Decisions about changes to the scheme needed to be considered alongside the wider challenges being faced by local authorities.

The four options would be:

- Option 1 – Increase the maximum level of support from 65 per cent to 70 per cent.
- Option 2 – Increase the earnings disregard to £30 from the current £25.
- Option 3 – Decrease the non-dependent deduction rate to £1 per week.
- Option 4 – Adding a local welfare payment disregard to mirror Housing Benefit

Following a proposer and seconder and a vote via a show of hands, it was:

RESOLVED:

THAT Option 1 - Increase the maximum level of support from 65 per cent to 70 per cent be agreed and recommended to the Isle of Wight Council.

95/22 CIVILITY AND RESPECT PLEDGE

Ryde Town Council members were requested to pass a resolution to sign up to the Civility and Respect Pledge as well as adopt the Dignity at Work Policy.

Following a proposer and seconder and a vote via a show of hands, it was:

RESOLVED:

- i. **THAT the signing up to the Civility and Respect Pledge be agreed.**
- ii. **THAT the adoption of the Dignity at Work Policy be agreed.**

96/22 MOTION 03/22 - COST OF LIVING CRISIS

Cllr Lilley presented to members a motion that requested approval for a two-pronged approach to supporting the Ryde community and residents through the current cost-of-living crisis as well as work on a long-term solution to reduce energy costs in the future, meeting net carbon targets as commitment to climate change and biosphere as outlined in the Corporate Plan.

The mayor stated that the cost-of-living crises, which was set to intensify in the coming winter and beyond was a great cause of worry and anxiety to residents. People who were struggling needed to have access to important support and information.

There were two elements to the motion:

- i. The establishment of a Ryde Warm Bank / Welcoming Place and Community Pop-Up cost-of-living crisis HUB in the Town Centre to help Ryde residents with the crisis from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023. This Warm Bank would include a centre of advice and information to residents and organisations about energy efficiency, how to insulate homes, make savings on energy bills along with providing a warm place with a range of assistance through the cost-of-living crisis.
- ii. Work with Wight Community Energy, Basingstoke Energy Services and University of Portsmouth in gaining funding for an Audit and Action Research/Consultancy Town approach project that establishes the Town's energy needs, how much energy can be generated in the Town through solar, develop an action plan within the Ryde Place Plan, establish the cost and savings, and identify sources of future funding.

Regarding budget implications, it was noted that there was £18,000 remaining under grant funding. Regarding future challenges, other means of grant funding would also be explored

Following a proposer and seconder and a vote via a show of hands, it was:

RESOLVED:

THAT motion 03/22, be agreed.

97/22 MOTION 04/22 - ST JOHNS PARK

Cllr Lilley presented to members a motion which requested approval for the following:

- i. Support a funding application by University of Portsmouth Architecture Department to establish a community-led/engagement project to establish a sustainable plan for St. John's Park and Woodland.
- ii. Support the Ryde Town Council St. John's Park Working Group to work with residents, Ward Councillors, Natural Enterprise, St. John's Trust, and the University of Portsmouth in leading on the development and implementation of the plan.

Following a proposer and seconder and a vote via a show of hands, it was:

RESOLVED:

THAT Motion 04/22 be agreed.

98/22 PLACE, NEIGHBOURHOOD AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

The minutes to the Place, Neighbourhood and Planning Committee meetings held on 7 June, 28 June and 19 July were noted.

99/22 ASSETS AND FACILITIES SUB-COMMITTEE

At the meeting of the Assets and Facilities Sub Committee held on 16 August 2022 the following recommendations to Full Council were agreed:

- i. Public Toilet Cleansing Services

A report was presented which sought approval, following a robust tender process, on the award of a contract for the provision of cleansing services to a directly employed service team, which would be managed by Ryde Town Council's Facilities Team. The report outlined that a vehicle and machinery would need to be sourced in order to commence the service. Following a proposer and seconder and a vote via a show of hands, it was:

RESOLVED:

THAT provision for the cleansing services directly for Ryde Public Conveniences from 1 October 2022 using a directly employed team be agreed. That the associated mobilisation costs for vehicles and machinery be approved.

- ii. Town Planting and Watering Contract 2023-2026

Owing to the planting and watering contract due to end in April 2023 (and which had already been extended for a year), the Sub-Committee the following was recommended to Full Council. Following a proposer and seconder and a vote via a show of hands, it was:

RESOLVED:

THAT the following be agreed:

- a) **That the contract for planting and watering should not be retendered and instead alternatives for more sustainable planting be investigated and reported back to the Assets and Facilities sub-committee.**
 - b) **That a Working Party be formed to explore and oversee the possible transfer of hanging baskets to individual shopkeepers.**
- iii. Festive Lighting and Christmas Tree provision December 2022.

The Sub-Committee discussed plans for the upcoming Christmas festive lighting decorations. It had come to light that many of the motifs owned by the town council were in poor condition and therefore unusable.

A proposal was considered on how best to utilise the existing functional ones, and also consider ideas on providing a floodlight display at St Thomas Church as well as plans to concentrate lighting down Union Street and along Cross Street. Following a proposer and seconder and a vote via a show of hands, it was:

RESOLVED:

THAT the following be agreed:

- a) **THAT the number of Christmas trees be reduced this year.**
 - b) **THAT a working group be formed to explore new ways of delivering festive lighting and report back with recommendations.**
- iv. St Johns Road Public Toilet Block

One of the reasons for considering closing the toilets was because of the frequent high readings of legionella. There were also constant incidents of anti-social behaviour being reported with indications of drug abuse. The Sub-Committee discussed the need for the public toilets at St Johns Road to be relocated more centrally with investment concentrated more in an area where modern toilets which would be easier to maintain and clean can be placed.

It was noted that an elderly member of the public had used the toilets regularly and would be disadvantaged should they be relocated.

It was agreed that the matter would return to the Assets and Facilities Sub Committee for further investigation and discussion before any formal proposal could be returned to all members on the toilet's future. Following a proposer and seconder and a vote via a show of hands, it was:

RESOLVED:

THAT the future of St Johns Public Toilet block returns to the Assets and Facilities Sub Committee for further investigation on options for its future location.

100/22 SPLASH PARK WORKING GROUP TERMS OF REFERENCE

Following request from a councillor to convene the first meeting of the Splash Park Working group, which was established at the Annual Council Meeting on 9 May 2022, the Terms of Reference for the Working Group was considered by members.

Following a proposer and seconder and a vote via a show of hands, it was:

RESOLVED:

THAT the Terms of Reference for the Splash Park Working Group be agreed.

101/22 MARINA PROCUREMENT

As identified in the Ryde Marina Business Plan, the pontoon decking had fallen into in a poor state of repair and needed immediate replacement. The Isle of Wight Council had underinvested for many years, only purchasing small amounts of timber when it was essential to replace the very worst areas.

The proposal was for a modern alternative, which would outperform hardwood in terms of slip resistance and durability. Of the three quotations received, the one from Fibregrid who were also the least expensive, but still offered best value, was the recommended option.

Funding would be made available through a Public Works Loan Board loan (PWLB) and was ready to finance the work. There would be no implications to Ryde Town Councils budget as the work would be subsidised entirely through the income of the Marina which would service the PWLB loan.

Following a proposer and seconder and a vote via a show of hands, it was:

RESOLVED:

THAT the award of the contract for the supply of new decking for Ryde Marina to Fibregrid be agreed.

102/22 APPOINTMENT OF VACANCIES

Following the resignation from Lisa Carter as a councillor, it was necessary to appoint positions to the following:

i. Grants Sub Committee – 1 Vacancy

Cllr Karen Lucioni was nominated and seconded and following a vote via a show of hands it was:

RESOLVED

THAT the appointment of Cllr Karen Lucioni to the Grants Sub Committee be agreed.

ii. Splash Park Working Group – 1 Vacancy

Cllr Georgie Carter was nominated and seconded and following a vote via a show of hands it was:

RESOLVED

THAT the appointment of Cllr Georgie Carter to the Splash Park Working Group be agreed.

iii. St Johns Park Working Group – 2 Vacancies

Cllrs John McLagan and Malcolm Ross was nominated and seconded and following a vote via a show of hands it was:

RESOLVED

THAT the appointments of Cllr John McLagan and Cllr Malcolm Ross to the St John Park Working Group be agreed.

103/22 DATE OF NEXT MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL

RESOLVED:

THAT the next ordinary meeting of Full Council will be held on Monday, 7 November 2022 at the Methodist Church, Garfield Road, Ryde.

Meeting closed at 9.30pm

Signed.....

Michael Lilley – Mayor of Ryde Town Council, 7 November 2022