



MINUTES OF RYDE TOWN COUNCIL'S FINANCE AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES COMMITTEE
HELD ON TUESDAY, 17 JANUARY 2023 AT 7.00PM
IN RYDE BAPTIST CHURCH, GEORGE STREET, RYDE

Members Present: Cllr Phil Jordan (Chair), Cllr Georgie Carter, Cllr Simon Cooke, Cllr Tom Hanley (sitting in for Cllr Jo Elliott), Cllr Jess Higgins, Cllr Michael Lilley, and Cllr Jenna Sabine.

Also in Attendance: Jon Baker (Committees Coordinator), Tara Bloomfield (Responsible Finance Officer), Allan Bridges (Business Development Manager and Deputy Clerk), Robert Clark (Financial Assistant), Lisa Dyer (Town Clerk), Cllr Les Kirkby

6 Members of the public in attendance.

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

A member of the public asked a question regarding the public budget consultation and why in light of 53% of the public being in favour of Ryde Town Council (RTC) investing in a concrete skatepark with an approximate cost of £200,000 (funded by a loan), were councillors being recommended to adopt the option of providing funds for one final year of maintenance on the skatepark with a maximum cost of £7,500 with the skatepark closing once the funds had been exhausted until another suitable alternative was found.

The Chair responded by saying that a written response would be provided after the meeting.

Another member of the public asked a question around the report on the Help Centre and in light of the increasing essential need for such a facility during the cost-of-living crises, had the Memorandum of Understanding (MoU) between the Isle of Wight Council and RTC been established.

A further question was asked by the same member of the public in relation to the Ryde Community Developer Worker and whether their salary was budgeted under RTC staffing.

The Chair responded by stating that the MoU had still not been agreed and in relation to the second question, a written response would be provided after the meeting.

A member of the public asked a question around Ryde Marina and noted that the 2023 - 2024 budget showed that the Marina Income would increase by 53% (from £85,550 to £130,895). Therefore, could the Town Council provide details to back up the predicted increase?

The Chair responded by saying that a written response would be provided after the meeting.

1/23 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Charles Chapman, Cllr Jo Elliott, and Cllr Richard May.

2/23 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None declared

3/23 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATIONS

None requested.

4/23 MINUTES

The minutes to the previous meeting held on 15 December 2022 were reviewed.

RESOLVED:

THAT, the minutes to the meeting held on 15 December 2022 were approved as a true and accurate record and were signed off by the Chair.

5/23 MEMBERS QUESTION TIME

Cllr Lilley asked if an annual pension update could be provided in the future by the Finance and Community Resources Committee. The Chair agreed to the request.

6/23 LIST OF PAYMENTS

The list of payments for 1 - 31 December 2022 were presented and noted.

7/23 BANK RECONCILIATION

The bank reconciliations dated 31 December 2022 were presented and noted.

8/23 RYDE HELP CENTRE

Members were presented with a report by the Isle of Wight Council (IWC) who, following a proposal from them to close the Ryde Help Centre and make savings of £16,000 per annum were requesting funding from RTC to keep the facility open.

The committee agreed that whilst it was unfortunate that the IWC needed to take such action, the facility did provide a service which was becoming more vital for residents as the cost-of-living crises continued to affect more and more people. Members also noted that whilst the facility was based in Ryde, it did offer a service to residents Islandwide and as such other Town and Parish Councils, such as surrounding ones should be asked to make a contribution.

After a proposal, seconder, and a vote via a show of hands, the following was:

RESOLVED:

THAT Ryde Town Council agrees to the proposed Option 1, namely:

To retain the current service at £16,000 per annum.

9/23 LOCALITY MEMBERSHIP

A proposal was submitted which requested approval for RTC to become an 'Essentials' Member of Locality, a national network which supported local community organisations in accessing important resources. As Ryde Town Council moves forward, grant funding would be required more often and as a member of Locality, would receive valuable support for any future applications.

After a proposal, seconder, and a vote via a show of hands, the following was:

RESOLVED:

THAT the following be agreed:

- i. Ryde Town Council joins the Locality as an essential member, at a cost of £250 per annum, giving RTC access to the services offered.**

10/23 DECORATIVE LIGHTING

It was noted that the Facilities and Assets Subcommittee recommended to members of the Finance and Community Resources Committee an increase of the current Festive Decorative Lighting budget to a £30,000 annual contract.

As the figure exceeded the limit of the committee's remit, it was necessary for this recommendation to be referred to all members of Full Council for approval.

After a proposal, seconder, and a vote via a show of hands, the following was:

RESOLVED:

THAT the Finance and community Resources Committee recommends to Full Council the following:

- Increase the current budget to £30,000 a year for the Decorative Lighting annual contract.**

11/23 9 + 3 FORECAST

The committee was presented with the actual 2022-2023 first nine months of budget completed, and the remaining three months forecast.

Increased variances included those for the Interim Audit carried out during summer 2022, Health and Safety advice for legal costs, out of contract HR Service and Ryde Marina, which was due to reduced visitor income and increased overheads due to poor financial information from the IWC. Moving forward RTC would press for more details around any future assets that may be taken over from the IWC.

12/23 BUDGET CONSULTATION REPORT

Ahead of the 2023-2024 budget and precept setting, RTC launched an online consultation survey for Ryde residents to provide feedback on their views on where resources should be directed.

Overall, residents were largely in support of the proposed expenditure. However there were two areas, the level of funding for the 2023 Ryde Pride event to support their site infrastructure and site safety costs and the taking over the ownership of Ryde Splash Park. On both proposals, 52% were against funding.

It was noted that regarding future consultation, Ryde's younger population could be targeted more to contribute to the survey, which could provide a more balanced view on events such as Pride.

Members received and noted the results and thanked staff for a well responded survey.

13/23 2023-2024 BUDGET REPORT

Ahead of the budget being presented, members were reminded that it was the committee's job to recommend approval to all members of Full Council at its meeting on 30 January 2023.

The Chair advised that the budget setting for 2023-2024 had been challenging owing to the 40-year high rate of inflation as well as the agreed national salaries for local government workers.

Regarding the precept setting, the Chair emphasised the need to equate any percentage rise in monetary terms. The proposed option in the report would mean a 26 pence per week increase for a Band C property. This would help to ensure that services would be maintained at their current level and future investment in the town is possible.

Regarding the Marina, members noted that whilst there had been a loss in the first year, it was important to remember that the facility had a five-year business plan in place, and that investment had just started. Long term there was a very encouraging outlook. RTC should always look for long term gains and not adopt a short-term view.

On receiving the report, members thanked the RFO, who was appointed midway through the period, for the levels of detail provided in the paper as well as all other financial reports the committee had received.

After a proposal, seconder, and a vote via a show of hands, the following was:

RESOLVED:

THAT the following be recommended to Full Council for approval:

- **Option 1 which provides for General Reserves of £260,264 as at the 31st March 2024 and a Band C Council Tax of £148.43 (an increase of 26p per week based on the current years taxbase).**

(The taxbase for the 2023-24 financial year has yet to be announced but should be available by the time of the Full Council budget consideration. Any changes would have a minor impact on the Band C Council Tax figure).

14/23 HSHAZ (HSHAZ) CONTRACT WAIVER

The committee considered a request for a waiver from the requirements of the Town Councils Contract Standing Orders.

The purpose of the waiver was to enable procurement and delivery of the HSHAZ Shop Front Grants before the deadline of 31st March 2023 and to ensure committed funds from Historic England were utilised within the defined timeframe. Historic England had committed £65,000 for shop front grants for the financial year 2022-23 and the monies needed to be spent by 31 March 2023.

After a proposal, seconder, and a vote via a show of hands, the following was:

RESOLVED:

THAT Contract waiver for the delivery of the HSHAZ Shop Front Grants be agreed.

15/23 DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

RESOLVED:

THAT the next meeting being held on Tuesday, 28 February 2023 in Ryde Baptist Church, George Street, Ryde at 7.00pm.