



**MINUTES OF RYDE TOWN COUNCIL'S MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY
27 NOVEMBER 2023 AT 7.00PM IN THE GEORGE STREET CENTRE,
BAPTIST CHURCH, RYDE.**

Members Present: Cllr Richard May (Mayor), Cllr Georgie Carter, Cllr Simon Cooke, Cllr Ian Dore, Cllr Diana Conyers, Cllr Jo Elliott (Deputy Mayor), Cllr Tom Hanley, Cllr Jess Higgins, Cllr Phil Jordan, Cllr Les Kirkby, Cllr Karen Lucioni, Cllr Malcolm Ross, and Cllr Ian Stephens

Also in Attendance: Jon Baker (Committees and Ryde Place Plan Coordinator), Reg Barry (Seaview Yacht Club) Jon Curtis (Seaview Yacht Club), Lisa Dyer (Clerk of Ryde Town Council), and Chris Turvey (Place, Neighbourhood and Planning Officer).

13 Members of the public attended.

PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

- A question was asked as to why since a request was made in November 2019 to Ryde Town Council to collectively agree to issue a robust statement calling upon the Isle of Wight Council to commit to producing and adopting a detailed infrastructure plan for the whole of Ryde, there had been no progress. With the recent announcement of the award to Ryde of the £20million 'Levelling Up' funding, such a plan was essential, particularly with the approval of large-scale planning applications taken place, roads becoming more and more congested and utility companies struggling to cope with added demand. The recent flooding and large discharges of foul water along with torrential rain had also resulted in sewer and drainage systems being unable to cope with the additional strain.

Additionally, the traffic lights at Westridge Cross had been out of action for over a week with four-way temporary lights in place and the inbound slip road closed, leading to major congestion and there had been no sign of such works being carried out on the Island Roads or Ryde Town Council websites. Therefore, would Ryde Town Council finally get behind an Infrastructure Plan and actively and robustly pursue the Isle of Wight Council into adopting one?

The Mayor agreed that such a plan was necessary and urgently needed. Members were advised that the Town Council had made such requests to the Isle of Wight Council in the past but had not had any successful response. The Isle of Wight Councils lead Cabinet Member for Highways, who was also the Leader of the Isle of Wight Council as well as a Ryde Town Council member stated that a further request would be welcomed for consideration by the Isle of Wight Council.

- A question was asked around the Interim Audit Report and when the recommendation for a Reserves and Investment Policy which should be introduced to ensure the financial security of the Town Council, would be implemented.

The Chair of the Finance and Community Resources Committee confirmed that Ryde Town Council was working on the policy.

- A member of the public enquired whether the Town Council was committed to ensuring that the incoming Levelling Up funding would be utilised to help ensure Ryde gets the investment it needed. Various projects had been discussed at the Isle of Wight Council run Ryde Regeneration Working Group meetings and that the soon to be established Ryde Town Board needed to be effective in supporting Ryde's future requirements.

The mayor agreed that the Town Board would look to prioritise Ryde's interests and requirements and that hopefully there would be less bureaucracy. Ryde Town Council are developing proposals to ensure that Ryde prospered from the funding.

- A question was then asked around when the pavement would be reinstated to its original condition at the bottom of Union Street following works carried out by WightFibre.

Members were advised that WightFibre should reinstate all pavements to their previous condition within six months, however this appeared to be longer than that period and the matter would therefore be investigated.

- A member of the public asked why the new Ryde Pier footpath was closed and what was the reason for the pier works.

It was noted that the pathway needed to be temporarily closed in order for Wightlink to allow for the pathway to connect into the new train station at the bottom of the pier. The pier works had been widely reported in the local media.

107/23 APOLOGIES

Apologies were received from Cllr Charles Chapman, Cllr Michael Lilley, and Cllr Jenna Sabine.

108/23 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS

None declared.

109/23 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION

None requested.

110/23 MINUTES TO THE PREVIOUS MEETING

The minutes to the previous meeting held on 2 October 2023 were reviewed.

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

RESOLVED:

THAT the minutes to the meeting of Full Council held on 2 October 2023 be agreed.

111/23 SEAVIEW SAILING TRUST

Mr Reg Barry and Mr Jon Curtis gave a presentation to members on the Trust.

The Seaview Sailing Trust was a Charitable Incorporated Organisation for the purpose of the advancement of education and training for the public benefit of children, in particular but not exclusively from Isle of Wight primary schools. Primary School children from Year 5 would take part in sailing, water sports and land-based activities, in order to enhance their physical and mental development skills and self-confidence.

Taught by qualified instructors, the children were provided with excellent training facilities at the club and each child would receive a term's worth of sailing lessons and complete their course with an official Royal Yachting Association Dinghy Level 1 or 2 certificate.

Whilst the funding for the sailing lessons themselves were covered by various private funding streams, there was a shortage of finance for transporting the children to and from the training.

There were several primary schools within Ryde which required such transport as well as many across the Island. As the training courses were curriculum based it was crucial in getting the children to them on time.

The Trust was therefore requesting that Ryde Town Council considers in principle in making a donation in order to help fund the transport for Ryde's Year 5 Primary School Children. It was noted that other Town and Parish Councils around the Island would be approached for such requests for schools relevant to them.

As the former Head Teacher of Greenmount Primary School, the mayor agreed that the benefits were significant. All members would also be welcome to visit the club and view the courses when they re-start during Easter 2024.

Members agreed that Ryde Town Council would consider making a donation to Seaview Sailing Trust and that any decision would need to be brought back to a future meeting of Full Council.

112/23 MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The mayor circulated his report ahead of the meeting which all members had read and noted. The mayors full report can be accessed [HERE](#).

113/23 OFFICER REPORTS

Members received the following officer reports:

- [Clerks Update Report](#)

The Clerk provided a report which was circulated ahead of the meeting and was noted. The full report can be accessed [HERE](#).

- [Written Report from the Community Development Officer](#)

Members noted a report from the Community Development Officer which was circulated ahead of the meeting and was noted. The full report can be accessed [HERE](#).

114/23 MEMBERS REPORTS

Cllr Lucioni advised that she had recently attended an online meeting for the Merry and Bright Christmas event to discuss licencing issues.

Cllr Dore had attended meetings regarding the recent floods in Ryde with Southern Water and the Environment Agency, and it was noted that they would be looking at having a Topographical Survey carried out to look at the natural and manufactured features around various areas vulnerable to flooding.

Cllr Cooke advised that he had recently attended an Isle of Wight Association of Local Councils (IWALC) meeting to discuss better collaborative working with the Isle of Wight Council. It was also noted that the Isle of Wight Councils Director of community services had indicated that they would consider looking at the proposed Memorandum of Understanding between them and Ryde Town Council.

Cllr Conyers had recently attended an IWALC Finance training course was delivered by Ryde Town Councils Responsible Finance Officer (RFO) which had been very well received.

Cllr Elliott reported that she, along with Cllrs Higgins and Lucioni had attended a meeting regarding Johns club in Oakfield, Ryde. The opening up of the club to more members of the public was discussed and a follow up meeting had been arranged.

Cllr May reported that he had attended a recent Ryde Carnival Committee meeting and reminded all members that the hard work of Ryde Carnival Association carried on throughout the year and that they were currently busy working on the upcoming Merry and Bright Christmas event.

115/23 FINANCE AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES COMMITTEE

- i. To note the approved minutes of the meeting held on the 18 July 2023

The approved minutes of the meeting held on 18 July 2023 were noted. There were no recommendations arising from the meeting held on 17 October 2023.

- ii. To appoint a member to the Finance and Community Resources Committee.

Cllr Karen Lucioni was nominated and seconded for the position of member of the Finance and Community Resources Committee. Following a vote via a show of hands the following was:

RESOLVED:

THAT the appointment of Cllr Karen Lucioni to the Finance and Community Resources Committee be agreed.

116/23 BANKING MATTERS

Members noted the following:

- i. The closure of the Natwest Bank Account.

ii. The signatories of the Ryde Town Councils bank accounts, which are:

- Unity Trust Bank – Ryde Town Council
 - Tara Bloomfield – RFO
 - Lisa Dyer – Clerk
 - Cllr Phil Jordan – Chair of Finance and Community Resources Committee
 - Cllr Richard May – Mayor
 - Cllr Jo Elliot – Deputy Mayor

- Unity Trust Bank – Network Ryde
 - Tara Bloomfield – RFO
 - Lisa Dyer – Clerk
 - Rebecca Edmonds – Youth Work Manager
 - Cllr Phil Jordan – Chair of Finance and Community Resources Committee
 - Cllr Richard May – Mayor
 - Cllr Jo Elliot – Deputy Mayor
 - Cllr Malcolm Ross – Chair of Network Ryde Management Sub Committee

- NatWest – Mayors Funds
 - Tara Bloomfield – RFO
 - Lisa Dyer – Clerk
 - Cllr Phil Jordan – Chair of Finance and Community Resources Committee
 - Cllr Richard May – Mayor
 - Cllr Jo Elliot – Deputy Mayor

- CCLA Investment Bank
 - Tara Bloomfield – RFO
 - Lisa Dyer – Clerk
 - Cllr Phil Jordan – Chair of Finance and Community Resources Committee
 - Cllr Richard May – Mayor

117/23 INTERIM INTERNAL AUDIT REPORT

Members considered for noting the Interim Report of the Town Councils Internal Auditor.

The Accounts and Audit (England) Regulations 2015 (as amended) requires all Town and Parish Councils to undertake an effective internal audit to evaluate the effectiveness of their risk management, control, and governance processes, taking into account public sector internal auditing standards or guidance.

There was some concern raised by a member with regard to reference to the potential move to alternative accommodation in order to meet the Town Councils staffing requirements. It recommended that Ryde Town Council should be mindful to consider all options for any future move of premises which cannot be funded through income streams or current Reserves. The Town Council held Public Working Loans Board (PWLB) loans to the value of £643,095.67 and the repayment periods would not be completed until 2050.

The concerns were that should additional money be required to fund Vectis Hall, a higher rise in the precept may be required.

The Clerk advised that council reserves had increased and on the day after the meeting (28 November 2023) there would be an informal pre-budget setting meeting where the RFO would provide more information around the council's finances and future spending plans.

Members then noted the report.

118/23 RYDE INTERCHANGE TOILETS

Members considered a report which proposed a way forward for Ryde Town Council position on the Esplanade Train Station public toilets.

The Clerk reminded members that Ryde Town Council had informed The Isle of Wight Council that should they take over the responsibility of the toilets they would be uncomfortable to do so if they would be required to undertake anything more than cleaning (such as maintenance).

Regrettably, Ryde Town Council was then only offered a repairing lease meaning it would be responsible for all repairs to any of the fixtures and fittings which was not seen as acceptable by officers. South Western Railways had only committed to operating the minimum toilets required, which was one easy access accessible toilet.

A copy of the proposed lease which demanded that Ryde Town Council contributed to the legal costs of both South Western Railway and Network Rail £1,500 plus VAT to the former and £1,062 plus VAT to the latter had since been sent to the Clerk (and circulated to members). They had also requested a contribution towards insurance and other matters which Officers were also uncomfortable with.

Members were advised that an alternative option would be for the Isle of Wight Council to take on the lease and then sub-let to Ryde Town Council. Officer advice was to explore both options before making any commitment, however it was not recommended that Ryde Town Council agrees to the lease as presented.

Members agreed that whilst toilets would be required at the site to provide the public with a much-needed facility and ease the burden on an already overstretched Eastern Gardens toilet facility, this must not be at any unnecessary liability to precept payers. Further negotiations would therefore be required to ensure the Town Council's interests would be protected.

Members were also disappointed that the original perceived intentions of South Western Railways taking full responsibility of the toilets had not been met. Members also questioned why Ryde Town Council should take on such responsibilities for the toilets at a Network Rail train station when many stations across the country have no such arrangements with other local Town and Parish Councils.

Members were also requested to consider that the new toilets were designed to be vandal proof wherever possible with modern fixtures and fittings that were purpose built as well as the high foot fall area with the toilet block overlooked by a café with a public walkway passing outside the doors. The block would also be situated inside the train station and secured by vandal proof shutters every evening.

Following the debate, members agreed to an amendment to the recommendation which took into account the concerns raised by them. After a proposer, seconder, and a vote via a show of hands, the following was:

RESOLVED:

THAT Ryde Town Council negotiates further with regards to the lease arrangements and the terms of the lease with the final decision to be made by a meeting of Ryde Town Councils Full Council (and if necessary, by calling an Extraordinary Meeting of Full Council).

119/23 PLACE , NEIGHBOURHOOD AND PLANNING COMMITTEE

i. Minutes of the Place, Neighbourhood and Planning Committee

The approved minutes to the meetings held on 3 and 24 October 2023 were noted.

ii. High Street Heritage Action Zone (HSHAZ) Update Report.

The HSHAZ Update report dated 5 October 2023 was noted.

iii. Minutes of the HSHAZ Steering Group

The approved minutes of the meeting held on 18 May 2023 were noted.

120/23 MEMBERS QUESTIONS

None.

121/23 EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

In view of the confidential nature of the business to be discussed members were advised that it was in the public interest that the public and press be excluded for the following two items, and they were instructed to withdraw – in accordance with Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 S1 (2). After a proposer, seconder, and a vote via a show of hands, the following was:

RESOLVED:

THAT the removal of the public and press to be withdrawn from the meeting (in accordance with Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960 S1 (2) be agreed

122/23 OFFICE ACCOMODATION

Members discussed and considered the following items regarding proposed alternative office accommodation.

- i. To Consider and Agree the Business Case Prepared for the Purchase of Office Accommodation.
- ii. To Agree the Heads of Terms.

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

RESOLVED:

THAT the following be agreed.

- i. The Business Case and the Heads of Terms, as presented.**
- ii. To delegate to the Clerk the commencement of work on the purchase process to include legal work, surveys, and detailed costs and to bring back to Full Council for a decision once due diligence had been completed.**

123/23 DATE OF NEXT MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL

The next scheduled ordinary meeting of Full Council would be held on Monday, 5 February 2024.

Meeting closed at 8.40pm

Signed.....

Cllr Richard May
Mayor of Ryde Town Council, 5 February 2024