



MAYOR'S REPORT AND ANNOUNCEMENTS

SEPTEMBER 2024

Since our last Full Council meeting in June, much has happened in Ryde. The town has been busy throughout the summer season, making the most of the good weather we've had - and bearing with remarkable fortitude the poor weather that has broken up those blue skies.

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 have worked incredibly hard to prepare and deliver a summer packed with activities, both run directly by the town council – Network Ryde's ever-expanding youth service offer and Ryde Marina/beachfront operation, amongst other things – or supported by us. All of these have helped to bring the town alive, enhancing life for both residents and visitors.

As always, it's an exciting time to be in Ryde; there is much to celebrate, but there remain many opportunities for improvement. The key improvement that is most discussed and at the forefront of the Council's agenda is the addition of public toilets in the centre of town. Plans are advancing for this to be part of the former Nat West building's use and we should soon have a timescale for these to open. The building is in use; it was the hub for the Town Board's consultation work in June/July and has hosted activities and the school uniform swap shop throughout the summer. It is also used by RTC for meeting space, as the RTC chambers in Lind Street are at capacity as offices. We hope soon to be able to host public meetings in the downstairs space, although the current lack of heating may be an issue over winter.

I have continued to support the staff, in particular the clerk and other managers as they have continued to develop and streamline systems and priorities in readiness for the full implementation of the Ryde Town Board. However, this work is all on hold for the moment as we await clarity from the new Government on likely timescales and levels of funding. Meanwhile, the consultation exercise has been enormously useful and will undoubtedly inform the forward journey of the town's development and growth.

I've continued to meet with key stakeholders, all of whom are very positive about the future of Ryde – and all continue to express a wish to work together to realise the potential of the town and its ability to better support its residents and businesses, as well as offering visitors a memorable experience – and a reason to return.

Amongst the usual activities, meetings and training in the full and thrilling role of a councillor, since our last full council meeting, I've been involved in supporting and attending the following meetings and events.

- Supported RTC initiatives for the Biosphere Weekend
- Represented RTC at Armed Forces Day
- Continued to meet with the primary school Family Liaison Officers, alongside the Community Development Officer
- Visited Christopher Hayden's extraordinary garden and presented a certificate, thanking him for all of his work and commitment
- Represented RTC at the Mardi Gras parade
- Attended the University of Portsmouth/RTC Memorandum of Understanding steering group meeting
- Officially opened Network Ryde's new youth provision
- Attended the IW Chamber of Commerce Business Expo
- Attended Town Board meetings
- Attended the Vernon Square Society's Summer Garden Party
- Attended Community Forum meetings hosted by the Community Development Officer
- Represented RTC at Pride events
- Attended the official launch of the Beach Accessibility scheme
- Attended the official opening of the renovated Appley Tower
- Attended the Party on the Green (Ryde Carnival Association/Ryde Rotary)
- Along with other councillors, attended the councillor drop in on Children's Carnival Day
- Represented RTC at both the Main and Illuminated carnivals in Ryde
- Attended the opening of a touring print exhibition at Appley Tower

Between now and our next meeting, there's more to look forward to, including the Steam Punk Festival (September 21st/22nd), The Wight Ryder Weekend (October 12th/13th) and the Soul and Reggae Weekend (October 18th, 19th and 20th)

I hope to see you at many of the above events.

My thanks, as always, to staff and councillors for their continued dedication and work to improve the town and support its residents.

One of the many highlights of my summer was being shaken by the hand by a visitor from Bishop Auckland at the end of the Main Carnival. She said that Ryde was the best town she'd ever visited (and she'd been to many). I couldn't disagree.

Cllr Richard May – Mayor of Ryde

September 2024