

Full Council Meeting 29 July 2025

Mayor's Report

Introduction

The Mayor has two main roles:

1. To take a lead in the *operation* of the Council, including chairing Full Council meetings, attending all other meetings and working with other councillors and staff to ensure the Council operates as efficiently and effectively as possible.
2. To represent the Council *publicly*, including representing it on other bodies (such as the Ryde Neighbourhood Board), attending public events and holding informal meetings with members of the public.

I describe below my main activities under these two headings.

Operational activities

My main operational activity has been to help prepare a new Corporate Plan for the period 2025-29. On Friday 24 June we held a workshop for councillors and senior staff to begin the preparation process. Although some councillors were unable to attend due to other commitments, the workshop was widely regarded as successful. There was much constructive discussion and general agreement was reached on some important issues. Since the workshop I have been helping staff to produce a first draft of the new Plan, which will be discussed at a second workshop to be held after this meeting. The final version will be submitted to the next Full Council meeting on 30 September.

I would like to take this opportunity to welcome our new councillor for Monktonmead ward, Alex Lewington. Alex was officially co-opted to the Council at our last meeting on 24 June and, despite the short notice, attended the workshop four days later.

Public activities

The last month has been busy, due in part to the many public events held in the town during the summer season. My specific activities have included the following:

1. *Ryde Academy*: On Thursday 26 June I visited Ryde Academy. I met the Principal, Will Doyle, and had a tour of the school. I was impressed by Will's pride in his school and his wish for it to play a central role in the local community.
2. *Vernon Square garden party*: On Saturday 28 June I was invited to Vernon Square's annual party. It was very well attended. The weather was perfect, the music excellent and the refreshments superb.
3. *Armed Forces Day*: On Sunday 29 June I attended the Armed Forces Day event on the seafront. I did not have a formal role but I was able to introduce myself to the High Sheriff, Jacqueline Gazzard, and welcome her to Ryde. The event went well and the town was crowded with residents and visitors. The only problem was

the long queues for ice cream! Thanks to my colleague, Ian Dore, for all the effort he put into the event.

4. *Art Exhibition:* On Wednesday 2 July I opened an exhibition by local artist, David Powell, in Ryde Library. Thanks to Jo and other Library staff for helping me organise this.
5. *Specsavers:* On Friday 4 July I was invited to attend an event to celebrate the 21st anniversary of the opening of Specsavers' Ryde branch. I met the director, Tamzila Afzal, and other members of staff, who were giving away cakes and collecting money for Mountbatten Hospice outside the store.
6. *Ryde Neighbourhood Board:* Later that day, I attended my second Board meeting. Members received:
 - An update on steps to establish a new Ryde Business Association;
 - A report by Place Spark on their plans for further public consultation;
 - A presentation by local consultant, Andrew Williams, who will advise the Board on the possible establishment of a charitable body to facilitate its operations; and
 - A presentation by Natasha Dix, the IW Council's Service Director for Environment, Waste and Planning, on her department's activities and challenges in the Ryde area.
7. *Mardi Gras:* On Saturday 5 July I attended Mardi Gras. I took part in the opening events in Simeon Road Recreation Ground, where I again met the High Sheriff, and then followed the parade around the town. Despite the inclement weather, the number and quality of displays was fantastic and public support excellent. Thanks to Gemma and her team at New Carnival for organising another spectacular event.
8. *Ryde Lawn Tennis Club* On Sunday 6 July I was invited to attend the opening of two 'padel courts' at the Club. I had never heard of padel tennis before, so this was a pleasant and informative task! It was also the first (and probably the last) time I have had my picture in the Sports section of a newspaper!
9. *Network Ryde HelpFest:* On Saturday 12 July I attended this free event, which was organised by the young people themselves. It included information about organisations providing help and support, a school uniform swap-shop and a variety of fun activities for children and families. It was very well organised and attended (the uniform swap-shop was particularly popular) and it was good to see Network Ryde's fantastic building open to the general public.
10. *Isle of Wight Pride:* On Saturday 19 July, I attended this annual Ryde event. I have taken part in the Parade many times but this was the first time I have had a chance to ride in the open-top bus! The Parade ended at the Pavilion, where the subsequent entertainment was held. RTC had a stand outside the Pavilion, which was well patronised. Although smaller than in previous years, the event was well attended, particularly the entertainment at the Pavilion. I was sorry to hear that there had been some negative comments in the media before the event.

In conclusion, I would like to invite all councillors and members of the public to contact me if they have any issues or concerns they would like to discuss. My 'door' is always open!

Diana Conyers
July 2025