



Full Council Meeting - 30 September 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 focus has again been on the preparation of a new Corporate Plan for the period 2025-29. A first draft of the Plan was discussed at a councillor workshop on 29 July, after the Full Council meeting. Councillors raised a number of issues that indicated the need to clarify the objectives and format of the Plan. August was a quiet month, with many councillors and staff on leave. However, in September we recommenced work on the Plan. We now hope to finalise it at the next Full Council meeting in November.

There have been a couple of changes in Council staff during the period. I would like to welcome back Hannah East, our marketing officer, who has been on maternity leave, and to say thank you and good luck to Ilze van der Merwe, our apprentice, who will be leaving us on 30 September. I would also like to welcome Esmee Monaghan, a sixth form student at Ryde School, who will be spending some time with us on Thursday afternoons, as part of the school's work experience and community service programme.

Public Activities

August and September have been quieter than July. However, I undertook a variety of interesting and enjoyable duties, including:

1. *Party on the Green*: On Saturday 2 August I opened the Rotary Club's Party on the Green at Eastern Gardens. This is an annual event, but this year was special because it marked the 100th anniversary of the founding of Ryde Rotary Club.

I was impressed to learn that the Ryde Club is one of the oldest in the country. Although the Party got off to a slow start, it soon livened up – and I had the honour of dancing with Spiderman!

2. *Hovertravel Anniversary Flight*: Two days later, on Monday 4 August, I attended the celebration of another important occasion - the 60th anniversary of the start of Hovertravel's operations between Ryde and the mainland. Despite stormy weather, the event included a special flight along the coast.
3. *Band Concert*: On Sunday 17 August I attended a concert by Abbey Brass in Eastern Gardens. I watched and listened with special interest because our Community Development Officer, Alison Pearce, is a member of the band, playing the tuba!
4. *RTC beach activities*: RTC provided free entertainment for children and families in Eastern Gardens every Wednesday in August. I spent an hour or so at the last two, on 20 and 27 August.
5. *Bank Holiday weekend*: Ryde was packed during the August Bank Holiday weekend – I have never seen the town so busy. There were several different activities going on, including the Children's Carnival on the Saturday, Ticket to Ryde at Eastern Gardens on the Saturday and Sunday – and, of course, the Scooter Rally. I took part in the Children's Carnival and watched some of the other activities. It was good to see everyone enjoying themselves and to know that local businesses, including the Marina, were benefitting from all the activity.
6. *Ryde Main Carnival*: On Thursday 28 August I took part in the Main Carnival. I had offered to help judge the entrants. I was a bit nervous when I learned that I had to judge two groups on my own but one of Network Ryde's youth workers, Gaz Bloomfield, came to my rescue and helped me. We made a good team!
7. *Opening of Aspire's new supported accommodation*: On Friday 29 August I was delighted to attend the opening of Aspire's seven new flats above their shop in the High Street. This is the first completed community-led housing project on the Island. Implementation of the project has not been quick or easy and credit is due to Trevor Nicholas and other members of the Aspire team, and to the IW Council's Community Led Housing Officer, John Prickett, for their perseverance. We desperately need many more such projects in the town – in my view, the shortage of rental housing is the main cause of poverty on the Island.
8. *Ryde Illuminated Carnival*: On Saturday 30 August I attended the Illuminated Carnival. Unfortunately, as most people will remember, the weather was terrible. When we gathered near the canoe lake at 7 pm to judge the entrants, it was pouring with rain and very windy. Unsurprisingly there were relatively few entrants. However, at 8.30 pm, when the parade was due to start, a miracle happened: the rain stopped and lots more entrants, including marching bands and dancing groups, appeared from nowhere! Thanks to all those individuals and groups who braved the elements to take part – and to all the spectators who came out to support them.
9. *Neighbourhood Board*: On Friday 5 September I attended a meeting of the Board. The main issues discussed, and decisions made were:
 - The new Board members, David Langdon, Michelle Legg and Richard May, were welcomed.
 - Following a presentation by Zoe Thomson, it was agreed that she receive some start-up funding to re-establish a Ryde business association.

- Following an update by the consultants, SPARK, it was agreed that the Finance Sub-Committee prepare a timetable of meetings to prepare the 'investment plan', which has to be submitted to the government by the end of November.
 - Following a workshop the previous day, which I also attended, it was agreed to establish a Charitable Incorporated Organisation (CIO) to manage any assets, services or activities set up with the funding.
10. *Garfield Market:* On Saturday 6 September I had a stand at the Saturday market at Garfield Methodist Church. The market was well attended and proved to be a useful venue for meeting residents and explaining what the Council is doing.
 11. *Ryde Society:* On Monday 22 September, I attended a meeting of the Ryde Society at the Esplanade Hotel. The purpose of the meeting was to enable residents to find out more about the Ryde Neighbourhood Board. All Board members were invited, but unfortunately only four attended: the Chair, Steve Holbrook, Councillors Phil Jordan and Karen Lucioni and myself. Steve explained the current status of Board activities and, with the help of the other three members, answered a wide range of questions.
 12. *Steampunk Festival:* I have been invited to open the Steampunk Festival on Saturday 27 September. At the time of writing, I am desperately seeking advice on what to wear!

I was also invited to attend the funeral of John Hrachovec, who was the standard bearer for the Ryde branch of the British Legion for many years and did much for the Ryde community. He sadly passed away on 8 August and his funeral took place on 12 September. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend, but I arranged for some flowers to be sent on behalf of the Council.

On a more cheerful note, I am pleased to see that a number of new businesses have opened in the High Street recently – including the former Montage Place, which has moved from the Depository to 147 High Street under the new name of The Art of Wonder and currently has an exhibition of Steampunk fashion!

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!

Cllr Diana Conyers
September 2025