

Full Council Meeting 24 June 2025

Mayor's Report

I was honoured and humbled to be elected as Mayor at May's Annual Meeting. As I said at the meeting, my predecessor, Richard, was a fantastic mayor and it will not be easy to follow in his footsteps. However, I will do my best!

My main priorities during my year in office will be to:

- Facilitate the preparation of a new Corporate Plan, in order to ensure that we meet the needs of Ryde residents as efficiently and effectively as possible.
- Strengthen our communication with residents, in order to hear their voices and increase their understanding of the Town Council's role, activities and achievements.
- Streamline our communication with other relevant organisations operating in the town, including the IW Council, the Ryde Neighbourhood Board and the many voluntary organisations, in order to avoid duplication and maximise the use of scarce resources.

During my first six weeks in office, my main aim has been to come to grips with my new role and reorganise my life accordingly. My specific activities have included:

1. *Meeting new councillors:* I have endeavoured to meet all the new councillors individually, in order to get to know them better and find out their main interests and concerns.
2. *Strategic Planning Workshop:* I have been working with the Clerk and Deputy Clerk to organise a workshop for Councillors and senior staff to start the process of preparing the new Corporate Plan. The workshop will be held on Friday 27 June.
3. *Meeting residents:* With the help of Council staff, I organised two 'meet your new Mayor and Deputy Mayor' sessions in Ryde Library. Unfortunately, although well-advertised, only one resident came! However, we are exploring other ways of strengthening our communication with the public, including a Town Council 'Open Day' at 11 St Thomas Square on Saturday 26 July and stands at various events during the summer.
4. *IWALC:* On Thursday 29 May, Cllr Jess Higgins and I attended an IWALC meeting. There were 23 participants, including many new representatives. Following a briefing on the role of IWALC, we worked in groups to identify key priorities for the organisation.
5. *Ryde Neighbourhood Board:* I attended my first Board meeting on Friday 6 June. The main issues discussed at the meeting were:
 - the recruitment of three new Board members to fill identified gaps in interests and expertise;

- further public consultation, which will be undertaken by the previous consultants (Place Spark) and will focus on contacting groups underrepresented in the previous exercise;
- the establishment of a Business Task Force to consult with and provide support to the local business community; and
- a request to the government to extend the southern and western boundaries of the area covered by the Board.

6. *Timebank*: I attended a Ryde Timebank social event on Friday 6 June. The event was held as part of national Volunteers' Week and to commemorate the first anniversary of Ryde Timebank's establishment.

7. *Care Home Open Week*: 16-22 June was national Care Home Open Week. I was made aware of this when I received an invitation to visit Solent Grange care home. Although outside Ryde, I accepted the invitation and will be visiting them on 19 June. I am also contacting care homes in Ryde to see if their residents would like a visit from the Mayor.

In addition to the above activities, I was invited to attend a dinner to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the founding of the Royal Naval Association on 30 May. Unfortunately, I was unable to accept the invitation but Cllr Karen Lucioni, the Deputy Mayor, attended on my behalf. Thank you, Karen!

In conclusion, I would like to urge 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