



# RYDE

## TOWNCOUNCIL

### Annual Report 2016-17

This Annual Report aims to provide some brief background information about Ryde Town Council and then will set out in more detail some of the successes that the Council has had during 2016-2017 and outline some of the challenges it, and Ryde, faces in the coming year.

Ryde Town Council is entirely independent of the Isle of Wight Council. It has 16 councillors representing 7 wards across Ryde, Binstead and Haylands. In 2016-17 the Town Council raised a precept (or local council tax) of £643,642 representing a Band D Council Tax of £83.17. Using this precept, the Town Council has provided a range of directly delivered services, contributed funding to ensure the continuation of many Isle of Wight Council led services and has undertaken preparatory works to start some entirely new services for the benefit of Ryde residents in the coming year.

The Town Council has used the precept to directly provide:

- A skatepark,
- Decorative lighting and Christmas trees
- Funding support to a range of local events, such as Ryde Carnival
- Marketing projects such as the Town Map that promote Ryde as a unique tourist destination
- A beach safety and first aid service in the summer months.
- Funding support towards countryside sites
- Summer and winter planting schemes
- The management of 5 allotment sites
- Support for the town in the local, regional and national 'In Bloom' competitions.

As mentioned, the Town Council has also for a number of years supplied funding to enable the Isle of Wight Council to continue provide a range of local services for the town that would otherwise have been lost. These include:

- A dedicated Environment Officer to deal with dog fouling, litter, fly posting and other environmental crimes – and we thank Sophia for all her hard work in this area.
- Funding for the maintenance of, and planting in, parks and community gardens.
- Funding for repairs and replacement of play equipment in the town's play areas.

Without all this funding the public realm in Ryde, our public parks and our children's play areas would be visibly deteriorating.

The Town Council listened to the community this year and has offered funding support to the Isle of Wight Council to undertake enforcement activities at the town's 'eyesore' properties and has been investigating the most effective way in which to improve safety and access in the lower part of the High Street. The Council's Planning Committee has been an influential voice representing the community on a range of planning, licensing and highways matters.

Last but not least this year also saw the Town Council take on the management responsibility for the town's 4 public toilets – and staff have worked exceptionally hard to deal with the challenges this new services presents – which are many!

The Town Council has also continued to work hard in the past year to build on the Council's role in, and links to, the local community. Councillors have approved the awarding of around £15,000 of community grant funding to diverse groups such as Foal Arts, Oakfield Football Club, VIVA Carnival Group and Vectis Boating and Fishing Club and also offer support to a vast range of organisations by the use of ward allocations – small sums of money that can make a difference in a big way in the community.

The Council has also continued to be a key player in keeping the Waterside Pool and the nearby children's water park open. We have secured external funding for public realm projects such as the replacement of the railway fences at the rear of the Rose Gardens along Ryde Esplanade and a new access path across the Eastern Gardens.

The Council's public face can be found at Town Hall Chambers in Lind Street. Following a much needed refurbishment the Council is now able to assist residents with a range of enquiries and to undertake projects and initiatives aimed at improving Ryde and maintaining its status as benefits the Island's largest town. We are also developing a role as a community hub so that residents can access a range of local advice and support services. We will shortly be becoming the local community locality lead for the My Life A Full Life project, which aims to ensure all agencies work together to ease the pressures on acute services via early intervention.

Town Councillors themselves undertake a range of ward work and sit on many local groups such as the Age Friendly Island Initiative, the Community Safety Partnership, Ryde Carnival Association, the Business Association, Action Groups and Residents' Associations. Councillors have also attended the PACT groups set up by the police aimed at working with residents to reduce crime in our town.

As the Town Council looks to the future the challenges continue to be many as the public sector continues to be squeezed and budgets need to be stretched even further. At this local level the Town Council is well placed to make every pound go further and to demonstrate its commitment to the town we will providing a new exciting youth café in the heart of the town and will be directly undertaking beach cleaning for the first time. We would all agree that our young people need to be offered as many opportunities as possible and Ryde's marvellous beaches must be a priority so that we remain a tourist town at the top of our game.

A highlight of the year for the Town Council was the awarding the Freedom of Ryde to Mr Eddie Minghella – a much deserved recognition of a gentleman that has done so much for our town.

The Town Council comes to the end of 2016/17 believing that we all have much to be proud of in Ryde and that the Town Council will continue to do all it can for the town, its residents, businesses and visitors.

Councillor Henry Adams  
Mayor, Ryde Town Council