

**Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly for the Town of Ringwood  
held on Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> May 2006 at 7.30pm  
at Greyfriars Hall, Ringwood**

**Present:** Cllr N J Chard – Chairman and Deputy Town Mayor  
8 Councillors  
Approximately 20 members of the public

**In Attendance:** Mr T R Simpson – Town Clerk  
Mrs J Stannard – Deputy Town Clerk  
Mrs L Wickens – Personal Assistant  
Mrs C Smith – Support Service Assistant

**1. To Approve the Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on 11<sup>th</sup> May 2005 were approved.

**2. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

There were none.

**3. The Receive the Accounts from the Parochial Charity**

Mr Peter Crutcher presented the accounts for the Ringwood United Charities and APT James Memorial Trust for year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2006. He reported that maintenance work to the East Wing had been completed during the year and that ongoing maintenance had been undertaken as necessary. All eight apartments continued to be occupied with no change of almspersons during the year. It was noted that no payments had been made from the Apprenticeship account or the APT James Trust and one payment had been made from the Poor's Account. Mr Crutcher concluded by thanking his fellow trustees.

The accounts were approved.

**3. To Receive the Annual Report of the Town Mayor**

The Deputy Mayor, Cllr N J Chard, gave the Mayor's Annual Report, in which he apologised for not being present himself but said that it had been a great honour to have been Mayor once again of the wonderful town of Ringwood, and thanked his fellow councillors for their support and the dedicated Town Council staff for their hard work and commitment.

The Deputy Mayor added that Council was trying to concentrate more on how it could balance the need to improve the economic vibrancy and viability of the town without undermining its wonderful character, and was introducing more consultation with the public.

**4. Presentations from Students of Ringwood School**

**The Future Shape of Ringwood**

Students of Ringwood School staged a newsroom scene and focussed on the concerns of young people for the future of the town, what they liked and disliked and how they wanted to see the town develop. There were concerns about affordable transport, the availability of employment in the town, the lack of affordable housing forcing young people out of the town and creating an ageing population and environmental issues.

**Establishing Ringwood as a Fair Trade Town – a partnership project with Ringwood Town Council**

Students of Ringwood School gave an enlightening presentation on the importance of Fair Trade, which ensures that disadvantaged producers in the developing world are given a fair deal. Students were working on a project, in partnership with the Town Council, to apply for Fair Trade status for the town and were trying to get the support of commercial premises, including shops, asking them to stock or supply to their

staff Fair Trade products. Businesses that agreed to support the initiative would be included in a free Directory being designed and prepared by the students.

## **5. To Receive the Reports of Committee Chairmen**

The Committee Chairmen presented their reports.

Cllr Chambers, Chairman of the Policy & Finance Committee, reported on the transition to a new financial system, which had involved a new IT system and the revision of the financial reporting system. The upshot of this was that the Council could now make more efficient use of funds and the accounts were now more readable and transparent.

Cllr Light, Chairman of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee, included the following in his report:

- The temporary Health Centre would soon be leaving Carvers and the grass would be reinstated. Members of sports clubs that have always used Carvers Recreation Ground would once again be allowed to park on this area. However, residents were assured that there were no proposals to increase car parking on the site.
- Acquisition of land adjoining Pocket Park – subject to application for a lottery grant, this area would be improved and made into a tranquil park area with direct access to the Millstream.
- Access to Poulner Lakes – still working on getting HM Land Registry to agree that the Council owns the whole of the access road.
- Refurbishment of the War Memorial and new pathway into the gardens.
- The hope that the shortage of playing pitches in the town could be rectified by 2012.

Cllr Clarke, Chairman of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee, reported on the number and type of planning applications that the committee had commented on during the year and responses to consultations. He also spoke of improvements to footways and cycleways in the town, which were well underway, and plans for improved traffic management in Bickerley Road and the High Street. He urged members of the public to get involved in the Town Plan process as responses would be used to shape new land-use policies for inclusion in the Local Development Framework.

Cllr Terry, Chairman of the Town Plan Co-ordinating Committee, spoke of the Council's aim to produce a Town Plan to show how Ringwood should look in 5, 10 and 20 years time and what should be done to make the town a better place in which to live, work and play. This would involve a major exercise in public consultation and Cllr Terry encouraged the whole community to become involved and have an input. There were five main topic areas: young people, environment, transport, economy and social & community and members of the public were asked to contact the Project Officer, Ros Bowles, if they wished to be involved.

In response to a question on how the public would be consulted, it was noted that all residents would be circulated with a questionnaire in July and that the Project Officer would be talking to groups in the town, particularly those who were hard to reach.

There was also a question about the possibility of having a cinema in the town. The Town Clerk replied that there was evidence that a town the size of Ringwood could not sustain a cinema. However, one possibility was to build a new multi-use community centre, which could be used for a cinema on a part-time basis.

## **6. To Consider Any Other Item of Business by Permission of the Deputy Town Mayor**

June Edwards of Ringwood Tourism Group said that there was great concern at the lack of signage to the High Street. The Town Clerk replied that this issue would be addressed through the Town Plan process, as it was evident from a recent report carried out for the District Council on the commercial viability of the town centre that the general look of the town needed improvement. However, it was noted that, although the Town Plan would include the public's hopes and aspirations for the future, it would not be a shopping list of things to be delivered by the Town Council. In fact, it was hoped that the Council would be able to facilitate external partnership funding for many of the projects.

The Chamber of Trade had concerns about the market and the impact it had on shops in the Market Place, particularly as the stalls faced into the street and not onto the pavement. The Town Clerk reported that the Council had asked the District and County Councils to research the extent of the Market Charter so that he could be sure of the market operator's rights before entering into further discussions.

## **7. Presentation of Community Awards**

The Deputy Mayor invited Lyn Wickens to announce the Community Awards, giving a profile of each winner. Certificates were awarded to Chris Johnson, Kevin Morrison and Phil & Jenny Critchlow. The overall winners were Phil & Jenny Critchlow who were presented with the Ringwood Town Council cut glass bowl.

The meeting closed at 8.45pm.