

**Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly for the Town of Ringwood
held on Wednesday 6th May 2009 at 7.00pm
at Ebenezer Hall, Greyfriars, Ringwood**

Present: Cllr Brian Terry – Chairman and Town Mayor
8 Councillors
3 Student Advisors
Approximately 14 members of the public and press

In Attendance: Terry Simpson – Town Clerk
Claire Perrens – Meetings Administrator
Cllr C Treleaven – NFDC

Apologies were received from Cllr Rippon-Swaine, Cllr Chard, Cllr Steele, Cllr Chambers and Cllr Urwin

1. To Approve the Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on 23rd April 2008 were approved.

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were none.

3. Presentation of Certificate of Recognition

The Town Mayor presented a special Certificate of Recognition to Mr Kevin Morrison, Watch Manager, Officer In Charge at Ringwood Fire Station. The Award is “for outstanding service to the community and, in particular, Ringwood Young Firefighters”.

Ringwood Young Firefighters' project gives young people confidence and the opportunity to develop new skills, as well as a real sense of what firefighting is all about. The project, led by Kevin, is supported by the Station's operational firefighters who volunteer their time to train and support the young firefighters.

Thanking Members for this honour, Mr Morrison said that he accepted the award not only for himself but also on behalf of everyone at the Fire Station.

4. To Receive the Annual Report of the Town Mayor

The Town Mayor presented his second Annual Report as Mayor, noting that under Council rules, he was only allowed to serve for two consecutive years and would therefore stand down. He reflected on the past year when he and his wife Jacqui had endeavoured to attend as many functions and initiatives as possible. This has added up to over 100 events including a resident's 100th birthday, as well as a great deal of work for the Festival and Pedal Car Grand Prix. He commented on the National Park's proposals to introduce new controls within the New Forest through its Management Plan and Recreation Management Strategy. The Town Council had opposed many of the restrictions which these proposals would have introduced, and the National Park is committed to reviewing these proposals. He urged residents to remain vigilant if they wish to continue to freely use and enjoy the National Park. He expressed concerns about the lack of commitment, particularly from the District and County Councils, to enabling economic development to flourish in Ringwood, and to address the lack of affordable housing for young people. He commented on his appreciation for the contribution of the new team of Student Advisors. The full report is attached as *Annex 'A'*.

5. To Receive the Reports of Committee Chairmen

The Committee Chairmen presented their reports:-

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, the Mayor presented the report for the **Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee**. He noted that due to high demand for allotments, and the large size of existing plots, once a plot becomes available it is now being divided in two so that two people acquire a plot. At Carver's Recreation Ground, the refurbishment of the Pavilion will be completed in 2009 and the Drop In Centre, for young people, continues to be successful. In the Bickerley area there is a new seat along the footpath and progress with plans to acquire land to create a riverside footpath. The successful children's entertainment provided twice per week at Carvers during the summer holidays will be repeated in 2009. (*Annex 'B' attached*).

During time for questions, District Councillor Michael Thierry suggested that the renaming of the Pocket Park to Danny Cracknell Pocket Park, to honour the contribution of the late Cllr Danny Cracknell, should be mentioned in relation to this report.

Cllr Clarke, Chairman of the **Planning, Town & Environment Committee** presented his report on the work of the Committee in considering planning lists for Ringwood from both New Forest District Council and the New Forest National Park Authority. The recession has had a negative effect on the number and type of planning applications being submitted. The Committee has also commented on a range of issues that might affect Ringwood, such as the South East Plan and the New Forest Community Strategy. (*Annex 'C' attached*)

Cllr Heron, Chairman of the **Policy & Finance Committee**, reported on the financial performance of Ringwood Town Council. The variance on the revised budget was 0.01% thanks to an excellent financial strategy. The bank balances continue to show a healthy position at the end of the year, with a total bank balance of £347,626 on 31st March 2009. The Committee had been pleased to contribute grant aid funds to a number of groups providing benefit to the residents of Ringwood, including Ringwood & District Community Centre for the Ebenezer Hall in which the evening's meeting was held. (*Annex 'D' attached*)

6. To Receive the Accounts from the Parochial Charity

The accounts were approved (*Annex 'E' attached*).

7. To Consider Any Other Item of Business by Permission of the Town Mayor

The Town Mayor had invited James Fullick, Student Advisor, to comment on his time at the Council, as this will be his second and final year before going to university to study medicine. Two other Student Advisors, Rachel Giles and Henry Barker, also made comments.

James recalled his first day as a Student Advisor at his first Committee meeting, when he was warmly welcomed by Councillors. He described the role of Student Advisor as a fantastic experience which he has enjoyed immensely, in particular seeing how projects have been developed over the past two years. He described the role as a fantastic insight into 'local bureaucracy'! He had made a lot of friends also and would miss everyone when he left.

Cllr Ford said how much she would miss the Student Advisors who were leaving (James and Rachel) and asked them to keep in touch and let the Council know how they got on.

Henry Barker, a new Student Advisor this year, added that he would like to express thanks on behalf of the School to the Council for giving students the opportunity to get involved as Advisors. Ringwood is the first and possibly still the only Council to have the role of Student Advisors.

Rachel Giles endorsed these comments and added that she had enjoyed being able to have a say in issues concerning Ringwood.

The Town Mayor paid tribute to fellow Councillors, Staff and Student Advisors and thanked members of the public and press for attending.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.