

**Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly for the Town of Ringwood
held on Wednesday 26th May 2010 at 7.00pm
at NFDC Public Offices, 65 Christchurch Road, Ringwood**

Present: Cllr Christine Ford – Chairman and Town Mayor
Kieran Bull – Mayor's Cadet
12 Councillors
1 Student Advisor
Approximately 10 members of the public and press

In Attendance: Terry Simpson – Town Clerk
Jo Stannard – Deputy Town Clerk
Claire Perrens – Meetings Administrator
District Cllr C Treleven

Apologies were received from Cllr Chambers and Cllr Urwin.

1. To Approve the Minutes of the Last Meeting

The Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on 6th May 2009 were approved.

2. Matters Arising from the Minutes

There were none.

3. Presentation to Town Mayor's Cadet

The Town Mayor had been delighted to appoint Flight Sergeant Kieran Bull of 2515 Squadron Ringwood & Fordingbridge Air Training Corps as the Town Mayor's Cadet. It was the first time that Ringwood had appointed a member of a youth organisation for this role. She paid tribute to Kieran's voluntary contribution in 2009-2010, attending civic events as her escort, when her husband was not available. She presented him with a Certificate and gift and wished him good fortune for a future career in the Royal Air Force.

4. To Receive the Annual Report of the Town Mayor

The Town Mayor presented her Annual Report. She had been privileged to represent the Town Council and people of Ringwood, and had attended more than 80 engagements over the year. She thanked her husband, the Mayor's Cadet, and the Deputy Mayor and his wife for their support. She commented on the very worthy work done by local groups and charities. She also mentioned the continuing strong ties with Ringwood School which included the innovative Student Advisor scheme, where a group of sixth form students were chosen to attend and provide the voice of young people at Town Council meetings.

A number of exciting initiatives during the year had been initiated, many as a result of the Town Plan, including:

- Development of access to the riverside with the new Danny Cracknell Pocket Park;
- Plans for a new tranquil nature reserve dedicated to the late Raymond Brown;

- Improvements to the Southampton Road, from Friday's Cross to Mansfield Road;
- Restoration of the Jubilee Lamp and its surroundings
- Reviving the former twinning links with Pont Audemer, France

There had been many accolades for the Town Cemetery and she thanked Clive Wentworth (Grounds Foreman) and team for excellent maintenance of this and other areas in the Town.

She announced plans to join forces with the District and County Council, in order to create shared offices in a new purpose-built building in the Furlong car park. Known as the 'Gateway Project', the new building would be cost efficient, and provide all Town and District Council services, including tourist information, under one roof, along with the County Council registry service. New public conveniences would be incorporated into the building.

She announced that Ringwood Town Council would appoint its first Honorary Freeman on 16th June. The inaugural honour would be for Cllr Neville Chard, for his long public service to the Town and at Bisterne Football Club.

The full report is attached as *Annex 'A'*.

5. To Receive the Reports of Committee Chairmen

The Committee Chairmen presented their reports:-

Cllr Brian Terry, Chairman of the **Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee**, presented his first report along with a slideshow of photographs relating to the various projects underway.

He commented on the new mini-allotments which had been made available at Hightown Road. These had proved popular with many residents who would have found a full-size plot too much. The mini-allotment scheme had received national publicity, and was helping reduce the waiting list more quickly.

At Carvers Recreation Ground, there had been a number of improvements including:

- Refurbishment of the interior of the Cricket Pavilion;
- Installation of a new improved disabled access from the main gate; and
- Progress with plans to install a new slide and new skate park equipment.

The development work at Danny Cracknell Pocket Park was well underway and would result in quiet, peaceful area for public and wildlife, with, for the first time, access for the disabled right down to the Millstream.

The full report is attached as *Annex 'B'*.

Cllr Heron, Chairman of the **Policy & Finance Committee**, reported on the financial performance of Ringwood Town Council. He commented that it had not been a bad year, considering the global financial crisis. He gave an example of how this had impacted on the Town Council: in 2008/09 the Council received interest of more than £17,000 from investments, and this income was used to provide services without raising the precept. In 2009/10 investment income had reduced dramatically to just £2,946.

The Committee had been pleased to contribute grant aid funds to a number of groups providing benefit to the residents of Ringwood, including those providing services to the elderly, the young, the disadvantaged and the disabled within the community.

The full report is attached as *Annex 'C'*.

Cllr Clarke, Chairman of the **Planning, Town & Environment Committee** presented his report on the work of the Committee. An overview of the Committee's activities had revealed that there had been more planning applications than during the previous year. He thanked Members of the Committee for support and the staff for effective use of the electronic display of planning documents, although the quality of a few applications submitted was poor. In addition to commenting on planning issues, the Committee had been active in responding to consultations and working parties on issues such as Southampton Road Environmental Improvements, Town Access Plan, traffic management, district and national park policy strategies, and A31 improvements.

The full report is attached as *Annex 'D'*.

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

There was none.

The meeting closed at 7.27pm.