

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 28th November 2018 at 7.00pm at Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood.

PRESENT: Cllr Tony Ring, Town Mayor
Cllr Philip Day, Deputy Mayor
Cllr Andrew Briers
Cllr Hilary Edge
Cllr Jeremy Heron
Cllr Darren Loose (*until 8.15pm*)
Cllr Anne Murphy
Cllr Gloria O'Reilly
Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine
Cllr Michael Thierry
Cllr Christopher Treleaven
Cllr Tim Ward
Cllr Angela Wiseman

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk
Miss Nicola Vodden, Meetings Administrator
Tom Weetman, Student Advisors
Finn Rowden, Student Advisor

ABSENT: Cllr Christine Ford

C/6219 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

A resident and business owner raised three issues with Members.

Increasing number of rats

Speaking on behalf of a number of people, particularly in the Lynes Lane /Bickerley area she indicated that there had been an increase in the number of rats seen recently in the town and asked what the Council could do about this.

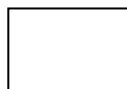
It was acknowledged that this is a worsening problem, everyone has a role to play and there needs to be some education for householders and businesses to encourage the secure storage of rubbish. Particular issues can also be reported to Customer Service at NFDC and officers will investigate. This service is free to residents, however businesses will be charged.

Cllr Heron indicated that he would report back to the District Council and the Town Mayor wished to add his support. In addition, Members asked that the Town Clerk to investigate the issuing of some form of advice to increase public awareness.

Wednesday Charter Market

Members were asked what steps were being taken by the Council to keep the Wednesday Charter Market going.

The Town Mayor indicated that a number of Councillors were working with the Market Charter Holder to try and see if there is a way of improving the market. This is subject to further discussion and he wished to assure residents that they were actively working on improving its prospects.



Extension of the Christmas Lights to Fridays Cross area of town

Speaking on behalf of a number of businesses in the Fridays Cross area of town, it was suggested that the Christmas Lights be extended, in future years, to include all of the town centre.

It was explained that whilst this is an aspiration that the Council also share, the lights are very costly and are funded by the Town Council (through Council Tax and not through business rates, which the District and County Council benefit from). The current contract for the Christmas lights will expire next year and tenders will be invited.

C/6220

APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Town Clerk reported that apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Ford.

C/6221

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

C/6222

GRANT AID CERTIFICATE

The Town Mayor presented a Grant Aid award of £500 to a representative for Avon Valley Concerts. The award was made to assist with the cost of organising this year's programme of concerts and providing transport for some audience members, who have requested assistance. The Council was thanked for the award, which was gratefully received.

C/6223

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Meeting held on 31st October 2018, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/6224

RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Cllr Briers presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 7th November 2018.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 7th November 2018 be received.

C/6225

PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Treleaven presented the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 2nd November 2018.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 2nd November 2018 be received.

C/6226

POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE



Cllr Heron presented the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 21st November 2018.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 21st November 2018 be received.

C/6227

NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

Members considered a motion put forward by Cllrs Day and Treleaven in respect of a Neighbourhood Plan (NP) in the following terms:-

Provided that this motion is supported by a minimum of two-thirds of the Councillors present and voting at the meeting, that the Council implements its previous decision (C/6198) to proceed towards adopting a Neighbourhood Plan by:

- (i) Instructing the Clerk to prepare draft terms of reference for consultants to prepare an initial report and to advise generally (such draft to be considered at the next available meeting of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee); and
- (ii) Approving the use of the existing budget for the engagement of consultants on such terms as are approved (effectively limiting the immediate financial commitment to £3,000).

Cllr Treleaven addressed Members indicating that this was the time to make a decision on taking the proposal of a Neighbourhood Plan forward. He outlined the benefit of having the Council's wishes embedded in planning law, with a NP forming an integral part of the future development of Ringwood and the increased proportion of Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) which would result. He added that there would be a limit to what could be included, as it could not challenge the Local Plan, infrastructure improvements would require working with the appropriate authorities, to bring about those changes and it would take time and money.

The next step was to identify the best way to get maximum benefit from a NP, for the cost involved, and this would require expert help. There would also be guidance from interested groups to take into consideration, gathering of evidence and the need for a steering committee. If the decision was to not proceed with a NP, NFDC's Local Plan would be the document of reference that determines what happens in Ringwood in the future.

The Town Clerk outlined the context of the matter in light of the failing of the 2008 Town Plan, with overdependence on other parties and under resourcing, and the existence of issues of local concern. Issues for Members consideration included the aims (what was to be achieved, was this achievable and involvement of the community), cost (consultants costs, availability of skilled volunteers, ongoing costs, increase in CIL receipts), time (estimated timeframe 3 years) and commitment to the plan.

He advised, in respect of the motion that there was a need for committed support from Members from the start of the process, with clarity over what information was required from consultants, should they be instructed. Any decision needed to be backed up with a plan and a commitment to resourcing it appropriately.



Using New Milton Town Council as an example, the cost of its NP was £40,000, however on further examination an additional member of staff was recruited, so adding payroll costs, a more realistic figure was £70,000 - £100,000. The Deputy Town Clerk had calculated the potential additional CIL receipts, should all of the development proposed in the Local Plan happen and the CIL rates remain unchanged, as in the region of £300,000. This is money that would be spent in Ringwood, unlike the CIL receipts held at NFDC, which can be spent in any area.

It was proposed that two-thirds of Members would need to support the motion for it to succeed. This would reflect committed support from Councillors with a desire to see through, what would be a difficult process, however a discussion followed as to whether this approach was in order.

Cllr Thierry proposed an amendment to the motion that the wording be changed from 'supported by a minimum of two-thirds of the Councillors' to 'decided by a simple majority'. This was seconded by Cllr Heron. The amendment was carried by majority.

A further discussion followed and included comments in relation to:-

-National Policy – central government policy promotes the adoption of NP's.

-Timeliness – some felt that now was the appropriate time to act and get the desires and aspirations for Ringwood embedded in planning law. If this did not happen in the next year or two, this opportunity would be lost. Others felt that it would not be appropriate to make a decision to embark on this lengthy process before the elections in May 2019.

-Importance – there have been instances where the Council's views have been ignored and some felt that it is important for the Council to have the legal backing of a NP and a greater say in the future development of the town, others felt that the Council does and would continue to have an input, without a NP. A consultation on the Local Plan Part 2 would follow Part 1, in 2019, where the Council has an opportunity to influence the strategy in relation to development of smaller sites (of under 100 dwellings). The Council also has the backing of four District Councillors who are also Town Councillors. If the new Council (in May 2019) felt a NP was important, it would be for it to make that decision.

-Commitment – that to take on a project of this significance the Council would have to be committed to it, be involved in the process and confident that it could deliver it aims from the start

-Extent - the NP could be limited to, for example, the Market Place or the Conservation Area, and this should be investigated when consultants looked at best value

-Finance – some felt that the next step should be taken. A budget had been allocated and consultants should be instructed so that Members are better informed to consider further steps towards adopting a NP or not. Others did not wish to proceed without considering how the total budget for a NP would be financed and the impact on the budget setting process for 2019/20. Grant funding is available and can be applied for.

-CIL receipts - CIL receipts would increase and there would be a greater say in how this money is spent. This would be dependent on the limit of the NP.



-Local Plan – Another Council’s NP has stalled until the Local Plan is adopted (early 2019) and the parameters are known. This would likely be the case for other towns embarking on NP’s.

-Level of involvement – the NP process would involve Councillors, officers, organisations, community groups, consultants. There would need to be consultations, gathering of evidence, data analysis, expert opinion etc.

Cllr Loose left the meeting at 8:15pm.

Cllr Thierry proposed that a decision on the motion to be deferred until the first Full Council meeting following the elections in May 2019. This was seconded by Cllr O’Reilly. The proposal was agreed by majority.

RESOLVED: 1) That the wording of the motion be amended from ‘supported by a minimum of two-thirds of the Councillors’ to ‘decided by a simple majority’.
‘ 2) That the motion on Neighbourhood Planning be deferred until the first Full Council meeting, following the Town Council elections, in May 2019.

ACTION C Wilkins / J Hurd

**C/6228
LEAVE OF ABSENCE REQUEST**

The Town Clerk indicated that a letter had been received from Cllr Christine Ford requesting a leave of absence for a period of 3 months, for health reasons. Members agreed that a leave of absence be granted. They wished her a speedy recovery and requested that a letter be sent conveying their support and best wishes.

RESOLVED: That a Leave of Absence be granted to Cllr Christine Ford for a period of 3 months.

ACTION C Wilkins

**C/6229
COMMUNICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED**

The Town Mayor reported that the Twinning Association event had taken place, but sadly had not been well attended. He asked for Members support, particularly with the visit planned from Pont-Audemer in May 2019.

Early stage negotiations were taking place with the Charter Market Holder and other parties about options to assist the Wednesday market, which is seen to be in decline. Suggestions are being brought forward, such as the possibility of a ‘re-launch’ in the Spring, in order to attract new traders and introduce other items for sale, with the aim of increasing footfall. Members input was invited.

**C/6230
REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCILLORS AND STUDENT ADVISORS**

Cllr Day reported:-

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- The Fireworks event was a huge success with over 4,000 people attending and a greater turnover than last year. He thanked all those involved, particularly the Events Team and Ringwood Rotary Club, who provided stewards.
- Remembrance Service was attended by around 2,500 people. Thanks were extended to Ringwood Rotary Club and the Scouts for their help on the day.
- The Christmas Market and Light 'switch-on' event on 2nd December will include a Santa's grotto and more than 40 traders, entertainment, etc. any offers of help would be appreciated.
- Arrangements are progressing for Fanfare for Spring.
- He reported that organisers of events in the town were beginning to work together to co-ordinate efforts and share resources.
- He also commented on enhancements at Fridays Cross, with the clock restoration and the more recent sign-painting, which was achieved with the help of Ringwood Society.

Cllr Murphy attended the 71st AGM of Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC). A presentation was received from the Police Crime Commissioner for Hampshire, Isle of Wight, Southampton and Portsmouth, who reported on underfunding of £43 million. She also reported on a fund held by Hampshire County Council, which could be bid for by Town and Parish Council to fund local projects.

Cllr Treleven congratulated the Events Team and all its helpers for the recent events and the enjoyment had by local people. He said that this shows that when the Council has the power to act, what is done is done well.

Cllr O'Reilly commented on the ongoing rat infestation in the town and the difficulties experienced with the bait being ineffective. She was interested to find out how other towns are managing.

Cllr Edge reported on some flooding on Eastfield Lane and puddles forming near the new speed bumps on Southampton Road. She was pleased to see that overhanging trees had been cut back at Toad Corner and Stillwater Park. She also suggested that concrete table tennis table would be a better option for outside Carvers Clubhouse.

Cllr Briers wished to extend the thanks of the Event Team to the Events Co-Ordinator for all her support and efforts with the recent and upcoming events.

Cllr Ward had been in contact with Radian, the shared equity provider on the Linden Homes development, at Crow, who have indicated that the release of this type of housing has been put back from November to January 2019.

Tom Weetman, Student Advisor, reported that in his view drug use and anti-social behaviour was an escalating problem, which he felt were not reflected in the Police statistics, which show this to be 16% of all reported crime. He asked if this could be raised with the Neighbourhood Policing Team.

C/6231

REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

District Councillor Heron commented on the new Lantern of Remembrance project, which he described as a 'stunning result'. He informed Members of the Cabinet meeting on 5th December, where agenda items would include:-

- Draft allocation policy for housing (this would involve major changes to the current system and a consultation document would follow)



- Setting of the Council Tax base, the proposal would result in an increase to the Council's precept
- Strategies in relation to increased building of council housing
- Investment strategy

With the agreement of all Members, Standing Orders were suspended to allow the meeting to continue past 9.00pm.

District Councillor Rippon-Swaine indicated that the District Council were looking to identify partners to assist in the running of the five leisure centres, following considerable work by the 'Task and Finish' project group. There will be no transfer of assets or sell out to the private sector, but a better running of the centres by a group who specialise in this field.

County Councillor Thierry commented on:-

- Pothole filling of roads in the town undertaken by the County Council
- The purchase of 4 additional gritting machines and arrangements with farmers to clear some roads, in the event of bad weather, with the aim of keeping traffic moving
- The Executive Member to Recreation and Heritage, Sean Woodward's visit to Ringwood Library, Citizen Advice New Forest, with board members of Forest Forge present.
- This year would be the last year that revenue funding will be part of the system for awarding grants by the County Council. Capital grants can still be applied for.

C/6232

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 5 th December 2018
Planning, Town & Environment	10.00am	Friday 7 th December 2018
Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 12 th December 2018
Full Council	7.00pm	Wednesday 19 th December 2018

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 9.07pm.

APPROVED

19th December 2018

TOWN MAYOR

