

MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 5th May 2021 at 5.00pm

The meeting took place in a virtual environment using “Zoom” video conferencing technology and members of the public and press were given the opportunity to observe.

PRESENT: Cllr Tony Ring, Town Mayor (*until 6.26pm*)
Cllr Philip Day, Deputy Mayor
Cllr Andy Briers
Cllr Gareth Deboos
Cllr Hilary Edge (*from 5.07pm until 5.50pm*)
Cllr Rae Frederick
Cllr John Haywood
Cllr Jeremy Heron (*until 6.26pm*)
Cllr Peter Kelleher
Cllr Darren Loose
Cllr Gloria O’Reilly (*from 5.12pm*)
Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine (*until 6.26pm*)
Cllr Glenys Turner

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk
Mrs Jo Hurd, Deputy Town Clerk
Cllr Michael Thierry, Hampshire County Councillor (*until 6.26pm*)
Cllr Joshua Kidd, New Forest District Councillor (*until 6.26pm*)

The Council had not met since the death of HRH Prince Philip and Members observed a minute’s silence in his memory.

There were 2 members of the public present.

C/6592 ELECTION OF TOWN MAYOR

Cllr Ring was nominated for Town Mayor, proposed by Cllr Day and seconded by Cllr Frederick. There were no other nominations. Cllr Ring was duly elected as Town Mayor.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Ring be elected as Town Mayor for the ensuing year.

Cllr Ring took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

C/6593 DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE BY THE TOWN MAYOR

Cllr Ring read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Town Clerk.

C/6594 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence had been received.

C/6595 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None were declared at this time.

C/6596

APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR

Cllr Day was nominated for Deputy Town Mayor, proposed by Cllr Ring and seconded by Cllr Frederick. There were no other nominations. Cllr Day was duly appointed as Deputy Town Mayor.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Day be elected as Deputy Town Mayor for the ensuing year.

C/6597

DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE BY THE DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR

Cllr Day read and signed the Declaration of Acceptance of Office, witnessed by the Town Clerk.

Cllr Edge joined the meeting at 5.07pm.

C/6598

MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES

Members noted the appointment of members to Standing Committees. Standing Orders provide for Councillors to be appointed for a four-year period (2019 to 2023), subject to amendments being possible at each Annual Meeting.

There were no changes to the membership of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee and Planning, Town & Environment Committee. Cllr Turner was appointed to fill the vacancy on the Staffing Committee.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That membership of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee and Planning, Town & Environment Committee be confirmed;
- 2) That Cllr Turner be appointed to the Staffing Committee and its membership be confirmed;
- 3) That it be noted that Cllr Loose and Cllr Briers (deputy) are the Council's representatives on the Sports Development at Long Lane Steering Group.

Cllr O'Reilly joined the meeting at 5.12pm.

C/6599

ADJOURNMENT OF MEETING

At 5.12pm, it was

RESOLVED: That the meeting be adjourned until the end of the individual meetings of Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee and Planning, Town & Environment Committee, in order to allow Members to elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman.

On resumption of the meeting, at 5.20pm;

C/6600

APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Meetings of the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee and Planning, Town & Environment Committee had been held during the adjournment.

At the Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee, Cllr Briers was re-elected as Chairman and Cllr Loose re-elected as Deputy Chairman.

At the Planning, Town & Environment Committee, Cllr Day was re-elected as Chairman and Cllr Frederick re-elected as Deputy Chairman.

The Chairman of both committees were automatically appointed to the Policy & Finance Committee, along with the Town Mayor and Deputy Town Mayor. Cllr Turner expressed an interest in joining the Committee.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That Cllr Turner be appointed to the Policy & Finance Committee and its membership be confirmed;
- 2) That the updated list of Membership of Committees be noted (*Annex A*).

ACTION Nicola Vodden

C/6601

ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING

At 5.22pm, it was:

RESOLVED: That the meeting be adjourned until the end of the meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee, in order to allow the Members to elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman

On resumption of the meeting at 5.23pm:

It was noted that, at the Policy and Finance Committee meeting, during the adjournment, Cllr Heron was re-elected as Chairman and Cllr Rippon-Swaine re-elected as Vice Chairman.

C/6602

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Meeting held on 31st March 2021, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/6603

FUTURE MEETING ARRANGEMENTS

Members received a verbal report and advice from the Town Clerk on the lawfulness of using remote technology to hold meetings after 6th May 2021.

The Town Clerk explained the High Court had ruled that with effect from 6th May 2021 councils can only meet in person for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1972, and therefore remote participation will not qualify as attendance at a meeting. This legal position may change in due course, but government has given no assurance that it will bring legislation forward.

The issue is how the Council will make decisions for the time being, as the main reason for meetings is to make decisions about Council business. One option would be to revert to meeting in person, but this must be in a Covid safe manner. As long as social distancing

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requirements remain in place (expected to be until 21st June 2021) this would rule out use of the Forest Suite as access to it and the size of the room would make it difficult to accommodate meetings. Even after 21st June, assuming social distancing no longer applies, there would still be a need to observe health and safety requirements. The alternative is to effect a postponement of business and an enhanced delegation to staff until such time as it is safe and practical to meet in person. It was noted that some decisions can not be delegated, such as approval of the AGAR and setting of the budget and precept, and also that any Member who does not attend a meeting for 6 months would be automatically disqualified. It would therefore be necessary to arrange for every councillor to have the opportunity to meet in person at some point in the next 6 months.

Following previous discussion on this issue, the Town Clerk recommended a temporary postponement and delegation until 29th September 2021, which he explained in detail. Scheduled meetings would continue as planned, but would be on an informal basis with Members giving guidance to officers. A meeting in person, for a limited number of councillors, would be arranged to approve the AGAR.

It was also noted that government was consulting on future meeting arrangements and that the Town Clerk would be responding with his view that hybrid meetings were the way forward. He had carried out some research into this and, although there would be some cost implications, this could be achieved. He encouraged Members to respond to the consultation.

After some discussion, it was

RESOLVED:

- 1) Save as indicated in paragraph 3 below, to delegate to the Town Clerk until 29th September 2021 the power to make any decision on behalf of the Council which the Council has power to make and may lawfully delegate in this manner (and, for the avoidance of doubt, this shall include the power to delegate the decision to another officer of the Council of his choosing as he shall see fit);
- 2) Save as indicated in paragraph 4 below, with regard to every meeting of the Council or any of its committees or working parties up to and including 28th September 2021 that has already been scheduled or shall hereafter be agreed:
 - a. The meeting shall take place in a virtual environment using video-conferencing technology;
 - b. The meeting shall take effect as an informal gathering of members and officers at which officers will brief and advise members on relevant council business and members shall express their collective wishes with regard thereto rather than as a "meeting" for the purposes of the Local Government Act 1972 at which decisions are made; and
 - c. In all other respects the meeting shall be held as normal and, in particular, summonses and agendas shall be prepared and issued, minutes shall be taken for approval, remote attendances or absences shall be recorded, interests shall be declared and public participation facilitated and encouraged.
- 3) The delegation described in paragraph 1 above shall not apply to the power to comment on planning applications (and similar matters) which shall instead be delegated until 29th September 2021 to the Deputy Clerk and the Chair and Vice-Chair (for the time being) of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee.
- 4) Notwithstanding paragraph 2 above, the Town Clerk shall make special arrangements to enable the Council to meet in person to consider and, if thought fit, approve the Annual Governance and Accountability Return for 2019-2020 before the deadline for filing the same and having due regard to the health and safety of all persons attending.
- 5) To convey to the Town Clerk:



- a. The hope that in exercising delegated powers he will have due regard to the collective wishes of members expressed at meetings held in accordance with paragraph 2 above;
- b. The desire that he will continue to monitor councillors' attendance at meetings and take steps to ensure, so far as he can, that every member will have an opportunity to attend a meeting or meetings as necessary to avoid automatically ceasing to be a member by virtue of Local Government Act 1972, s. 85(1) and (2); and
- c. The expectation that if it reasonably appears to him that a majority of members wish to consider resuming meetings in person (or altering the terms of this resolution in any other respect) before 29th September 2021, he will arrange a meeting in person of the Council to allow this again, having due regard to the health and safety of all persons attending.

Cllr Edge left the meeting at 5.50pm.

ACTION Chris Wilkins

**C/6604
REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

Members noted that representatives to outside bodies had been appointed until the next elections in 2023.

The following changes were agreed:

NFALC – Cllr Heron was appointed as a representative, in addition to Cllr Haywood.

Flood Warden – it was noted that Cllr Deboos had previously been appointed to this role.

HALC – deleted as the Council is no longer a member.

Gateway Project Board – has not met since 2017 but agreed to retain on the list pending enquiries by the Town Clerk.

RESOLVED: That the updated list of representatives on outside bodies be noted (*Annex B*).

ACTION Nicola Vodden

As District Councillors had to leave the meeting to attend the NFDC Council Meeting at 6.30pm, it was agreed to take agenda items 16 and 18 next.

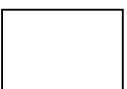
**C/6605
COMMUNICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED**

There was no report from the Town Mayor.

**C/6606
REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

District Cllr Rippon-Swaine reported that NFDC was about to start work on reviewing the Local Plan Part 2, and supporting work would include looking at town centres (including Ringwood). He had asked the Chief Planning Officer to work with Ringwood on preparation of its Neighbourhood Plan. Cllr O'Reilly commented that parking wardens had been very active in the town centre since more businesses had been able to open on 12 April and felt this was not helpful when trying to regenerate the High Street.

District Cllr Heron reported on the appointment of a new Leader and changes in membership of Cabinet.



C/6607

RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Cllr Briers presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 7th April 2021.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 7th April 2021 be received.

C/6608

PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Day presented the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meetings held on 9th and 20th April 2021.

He said that he was pleased to see a greater level of engagement with NFDC officers on development of the strategic sites; initial views had been submitted on land north of Hightown Road but there would be an opportunity to make further observations as the application progressed. He thanked Cllr Deboos for the work that he had done in analysing comments submitted by members of the public.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town and Environment Committee meetings held on 9th and 20th April 2021 be received.

C/6609

POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr Heron presented the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 21st April 2021.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 21st April 2021 be received.

Cllrs Heron, Ring and Rippon-Swaine left the meeting at 6.26pm.

Cllr Day took the Chair for the remainder of the meeting.

C/6610

DELEGATION OF ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REVIEWS

The Town Clerk explained that every council is recommended to review various governance documents, policies and arrangements every year. This Council has previously delegated this task to the Policy & Finance Committee so it can be done progressively and thoroughly through the year rather than under time pressure at the Annual Town Council Meeting.

RESOLVED: That the task of undertaking the annual governance reviews described be delegated to the Policy & Finance Committee as before.

ACTION C Wilkins

C/6611

REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCILLORS AND STUDENT ADVISORS

There were no reports.

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C/6612


FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Planning, Town & Environment	10.00am	Friday 7 th May 2021
Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 12 th May 2021
Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 19 th May 2021
Full Council	7.00pm	Wednesday 26 th May 2021

There being no further business, the Deputy Town Mayor closed the meeting at 6.30pm.

APPROVED
26th May 2021

TOWN MAYOR

	RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL				
	COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2021-22 (updated 6.5.21)				
	FULL COUNCIL	PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT	RECREATION, LEISURE & OPEN SPACES	POLICY & FINANCE	STAFFING COMMITTEE
Chairman	Cllr Tony Ring	Cllr Philip Day	Cllr Andy Briers	Cllr Jeremy Heron	
Vice Chairman	Cllr Philip Day	Cllr Rae Frederick	Cllr Darren Loose	Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine	
Members & Ex officio Members (NB Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor are entitled to be ex officio members of all committees)	Cllr Andrew Briers Cllr Gareth Deboos Cllr Hilary Edge Vacancy (election) Cllr Rae Frederick Cllr John Haywood Cllr Jeremy Heron Cllr Peter Kelleher Cllr Darren Loose Cllr Gloria O'Reilly Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine Cllr Glenys Turner	Cllr Andy Briers Cllr Gareth Deboos Cllr Hilary Edge Cllr Peter Kelleher Cllr Gloria O'Reilly Cllr Tony Ring Cllr Glenys Turner	Cllr Philip Day Cllr Gareth Deboos Cllr Hilary Edge Cllr Rae Frederick Cllr John Haywood Cllr Peter Kelleher Cllr Gloria O'Reilly Cllr Tony Ring Cllr Glenys Turner	Cllr Andy Briers Cllr Philip Day Cllr John Haywood Cllr Peter Kelleher Cllr Gloria O'Reilly Cllr Tony Ring Cllr Glenys Turner	Town Mayor Chairman of P+F Cllr John Haywood Cllr Gloria O'Reilly Cllr Glenys Turner
Ex-Officio Members					
Student Advisors					

RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Representatives on Outside Bodies 2019-23 – From 15th May 2019 – confirmed at AM on 5th May 2021

ORGANISATION / POSITION	Representative	COMMENTS
New Forest Association of Local Councils (NFALC)	Cllr John Haywood Cllr Jeremy Heron	Two councillors needed. Representatives from every town and parish council in New Forest district are invited to meet quarterly to consider reports from NFDC and NFNPA and other issues of mutual interest
Flood Wardens	Cllr Gareth Deboos Cllr Gloria O'Reilly	Two councillors needed to join two co-opted volunteers: Norman Light and Peter Street. Invited to attend meetings of the Flood Action Working Party, held as required (but not usually more than twice a year)
New Forest Business Partnership	Cllr Jeremy Heron Cllr Tony Ring	Appointed at FC 26.6.19, Meeting 11.7.19
New Forest Consultative Panel	Cllr John Haywood	One councillor needed
New Forest National Park Authority - South West Quadrant	Cllr Gareth Deboos	One councillor needed Representatives from every town and parish council in the SW quadrant of the National Park are invited to meet quarterly to consider relevant National Park issues and initiatives
Ringwood Twinning Association	Cllr Tony Ring 2 others required. Deferred until after the Twinning Association AGM on 20Jun19	The Mayor is President <i>ex officio</i> Two other councillors are needed. Organizes exchange visits and fund-raising.
A31 Development meeting/forum	Cllr Philip Day Cllr Tony Ring	Town Mayor and Chairman of PT&E represent the Town Council at meetings with Highways England to consider issues relating to the A31 Improvement Scheme. District and County Councillors also attend.
The Ringwood Society	Cllr Rae Frederick Cllr Glenys Turner	Two councillors needed. Monthly meetings to monitor planning applications and discuss local development issues.
Tree Warden	Cllr Glenys Turner	One councillor needed. Works with Town Clerk and other staff on tree management issues especially those involving members of the public.
Western Escarpment Conservation Area Steering Group	Cllr Gareth Deboos	One councillor needed. Representatives from every town and parish council in this Conservation Area on the edge of the National Park are invited to meet quarterly to consider relevant National Park issues and initiatives
Gateway Project Board	Cllr Andy Briers	One councillor appointed. Last recorded meeting in Jan. 2017.
Ringwood United Charities	Cllr John Haywood Cllr Jeremy Heron Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine	Three councillors have been appointed but their status is unclear. If they are trustees, it is doubtful this is a valid appointment procedure. If financial oversight is still needed, would the annual report to the Town Assembly and/or the P&F committee suffice?

	It was determined at the Annual meeting on 5 th May 2021 that there would no longer be Council representatives appointed to the following bodies:-	
Hampshire Association of Local Councils (HALC)		The Council has not renewed its membership to HALC for 2021/22