

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 27th May 2026 at 7.00pm at Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood.

PRESENT: Cllr Andrew Briers
Cllr Luke Dadford
Cllr Philip Day
Cllr Ingrid De Bruyn
Cllr Gareth DeBoos
Cllr Mary DeBoos
Cllr Rae Frederick
Cllr Janet Georgiou
Cllr John Haywood
Cllr Peter Kelleher
Cllr James Swyer
Cllr Michael Thierry
Cllr Glenys Turner
Cllr Becci Windsor

IN ATTENDANCE: Mrs Charmaine Bennett, Town Clerk
Mrs Jo Hurd, Deputy Town Clerk
District Cllr Jeremy Heron
District Cllr Nigel Linford
District Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine
County Cllr Martin Eyre

ABSENT: All members were present.

There were five members of public present. There is no public participation at the Annual Meeting.

Cllr Rae Frederick welcomed everyone to the Annual Meeting of the Town Council. She took the Chair for the first matter on the agenda.

C/7554

ELECTION OF THE TOWN MAYOR

Nominations for the office of Chairman and Town Mayor were invited. Two nominations were received and a secret ballot was requested and held. Following the vote, Cllr Mary DeBoos was elected.

Members thanked the outgoing Town Mayor for her service during the previous two years and expressed their appreciation with a round of applause.

The outgoing Mayor, Cllr Frederick, said that she had thoroughly enjoyed her time as Town Mayor – she had been working hard to encourage collaboration between local businesses and said she would continue to do so.

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

Cllr M DeBoos took the chair for the remainder of the meeting.

C/7555

DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE BY THE TOWN MAYOR

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

She thanked Cllr Frederick and acknowledged the great work she had done over the last two years.

**C/7556
APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

All members were present.

**C/7557
DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were none.

**C/7558
APPOINTMENT OF DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR**

The Town Mayor thanked Cllr Day for his service as Deputy Town Mayor for over 7 years.

The Town Mayor invited nominations. One candidate was put forward for the position of Deputy Town Mayor, and Cllr Swyer was duly elected.

RESOLVED: That Cllr Swyer be appointed as Deputy Town Mayor for the ensuing year.

**C/7559
DECLARATION OF ACCEPTANCE OF OFFICE BY THE DEPUTY TOWN MAYOR**

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

**C/7560
COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

Members considered appointments to Standing Committees. Standing Orders provide for Councillors to be appointed for a four-year period (2023 to 2027), subject to amendments being possible at each Annual Meeting. It was noted the Mayor and Deputy Mayor are ex-officio members of all Committees.

- RESOLVED:**
- 1) That the following Members be appointed to the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee for the remainder of period of office: Cllrs Briers, Dadford, Day, M DeBoos (ex-officio), Frederick, Georgiou, Haywood, Kelleher, Swyer (ex-officio), Turner and Windsor.
 - 2) That the following Members be appointed to the Planning, Town and Environment Committee for the remainder of period of office: Cllrs Dadford, M DeBoos (ex-officio), Georgiou, Haywood, Kelleher, Swyer (ex-officio) and Turner, and
 - 3) That in addition to the Town Mayor and Chairman of Policy and Finance Committee, the following Members be appointed to the Staffing Committee for the remainder of period of office: Cllrs Dadford, G DeBoos, Frederick, Haywood, Kelleher, Swyer and Turner.

C/7561
ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING

At 7.15pm, 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 and confirm appointments to sub-committees and working parties.

On resumption of the meeting, at 7.20pm:

C/7562
APPOINTMENT OF MEMBERS TO THE POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

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

At the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee, Cllr Briers was elected as Chair and Cllr Swyer elected as Deputy Chair.

At the Planning, Town and Environment Committee, Cllr Dadford was elected as Chair and Cllr M DeBoos elected as Deputy Chair.

The Chair of both Committees were automatically appointed to the Policy & Finance Committee.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the following Members be appointed to the Policy and Finance Committee for the remainder of period of office: Cllrs Briers, Dadford, Day, G DeBoos, M DeBoos (ex-officio), Frederick, Georgiou, Kelleher, Swyer (ex-officio), Thierry, Turner.
- 2) That the updated list of membership of committees be noted (*Annex A*).

C/7563
ADJOURNMENT OF THE MEETING

At 7.22pm, it was

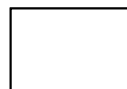
RESOLVED: That the meeting be adjourned until the end of the meeting of the Policy and Finance Committee, in order to allow Members to elect a Chairman and Vice Chairman.

On resumption of the meeting at 7.24pm:

At the Policy and Finance Committee meeting, during the adjournment, Cllr Thierry was elected as Chair and Cllr Kelleher elected as Vice Chair.

C/7564
MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Meeting held on 29th April 2025, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.



**C/7565
REPRESENTATIVES ON OUTSIDE BODIES**

RESOLVED: That Members be appointed as representatives on Outside Bodies as shown in *Annex B*, for the remainder of the period of office.

**C/7566
RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE**

The meeting scheduled for 6th May 2026 had been cancelled.

**C/7567
PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

Cllr Day presented the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 1st May 2026.

It was noted that Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley Parish Council had now agreed and submitted its response to the Snails Lane application (25/10114). However, it was noted the application had been referred to Secretary of State for non-determination and would likely proceed via an inquiry.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 1st May 2026 be received.

**C/7568
POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Cllr M DeBoos presented the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 20th May 2026.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 20th May 2026 be received.

**C/7569
DELEGATION OF ANNUAL GOVERNANCE REVIEWS**

It was proposed to continue the practice of delegating the duty of reviewing annual governance to the Policy and Finance Committee, which undertakes formal reviews spread across the year.

RESOLVED: That annual governance reviews be delegated to the Policy & Finance Committee.

**C/7570
LOCAL GOVERNMENT REORGANISATION**

Members considered the Town Clerk's report regarding a request for Council support for the "New Forest Together" campaign, which seeks to retain the New Forest as a coherent area under Local Government Reorganisation proposals.

It was noted that the campaign's objectives broadly reflect the Council's previously agreed position opposing fragmentation of the New Forest.

Members were advised that New Forest District Council had obtained legal advice indicating that a legal challenge to the Government's proposals would have no realistic prospect of success, with Cabinet due to consider this on 3 June.

In discussion, Members emphasised the need to ensure that any Council involvement remains non-political and compliant with governance requirements, including treating the campaign on the same basis as any other external organisation and avoiding preferential treatment. It was recognised that support could be given to the campaign's objectives without endorsing any specific actions or approaches (including legal action).

Views were expressed both in favour of supporting the campaign's aim of maintaining the New Forest as a coherent area, reflecting local expectation and practical considerations, and caution was raised about the risk of the campaign being perceived as political. A minority view was expressed that the proposals would not necessarily fracture communities and that the campaign should not be supported.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That the Town Council supports the objectives of the "New Forest Together" campaign in seeking to retain the New Forest as a coherent area under Local Government Reorganisation proposals.
- 2) That the Council agrees in principle to support local community engagement activities relating to the campaign; subject to access being provided on an equal basis to any similar campaign.
- 3) That authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to agree practical arrangements.

C/7571

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED

The outgoing Town Mayor wished to congratulate the Town Clerk and working party members Cllrs Turner and Day for the new format of the Annual Assembly, which had been a great success and very well received by residents.

C/7572

REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Cllr Eyre was welcomed to his first meeting following his recent election. He reported that he had been appointed to Health and Adult Social Care Select Committee and Universal Services Select Committee, and would represent HCC at New Forest NPA and Forest Forge.

District Cllr Thierry reported that NFDC had lost four Conservative councillors during the last municipal year.

Members thanked Cllr Thierry for his service to the town as a County councillor.

District Cllr Nigel Linford thanked the Council for supporting the "New Forest Together" campaign. He noted that 97% of residents who responded to the consultation supported keeping the Forest together. Following the resignation of Richard Frampton, a by-election will be held on 18 June for Bransgore, Burley, Sopley and Ringwood East ward.

District Cllr Heron reported that NFDC will consider its position with regards to the government decision on Local Government Reorganisation at Cabinet on 3 June, taking into account legal advice received.

C/7573

REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCILLORS

Cllr Windsor had attended the Ringwood Infant School Fair – she congratulated the PTA and school for a fabulous day.

Cllr Turner was delighted at the success of the Annual Assembly, and suggested that steps be taken to encourage greater attendance from young people at next year's event.

Cllr Kelleher had attended Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley parish Council's Annual Meeting and given a presentation on his role as Flood Warden.

Cllr Briers continued to pursue his query regarding disposal of food waste, and was now in discussion with HCC as the disposal authority (NFDC is the collection authority).

Cllr DeBruyn asked what could be done to mitigate the risk of bins blowing over in high winds into roads, and bins obstructing pavements in some areas. Advice would be sought from NFDC.

Cllr Georgiou has been asked by NFDC to visit businesses in Market Place to discuss the Thriving Market Place project – she had received positive feedback so far.

Cllr Haywood noted there had been recent police and consumer protection action on premises in High Street, and thanked the Neighbourhood Policing Team for all their efforts.

C/7574

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00 pm	Wednesday 3 rd June 2026
Planning, Town & Environment	10.00 am	Friday 5 th June 2026
Policy & Finance	7.00 pm	Wednesday 17 th June 2026
Full Council	7.00 pm	Wednesday 24 th May 2026

C/7575

COMMUNICATIONS

RESOLVED: It was agreed to issue a press release regarding the appointment of Mayor and Deputy Mayor.

C/7576

EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That, in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public were excluded because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted (*Confidential minutes - Annex D*).

C/7577

LEGAL MATTERS

The Town Clerk reported on ongoing legal matters.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk's verbal report be received.

ACTION C Bennett



There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8:29pm.

APPROVED
24th June 2026

TOWN MAYOR

	RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP 2026 - 27 (updated 27.5.26)				A
	FULL COUNCIL	PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT	RECREATION, LEISURE & OPEN SPACES	POLICY & FINANCE	STAFFING COMMITTEE
Chair	Cllr Mary DeBoos	Cllr Luke Dadford	Cllr Andy Briers	Cllr Michael Thierry	
Vice Chair	Cllr James Swyer	Cllr Mary DeBoos	Cllr James Swyer	Cllr Peter Kelleher	
Members & Ex-officio Members (NB Town Mayor and Deputy Mayor are entitled to be ex officio members of all committees)	Cllr Andrew Briers Cllr Luke Dadford Cllr Philip Day Cllr Ingrid De Bruyn Cllr Gareth DeBoos Cllr Rae Frederick Cllr Janet Georgiou Cllr John Haywood Cllr Peter Kelleher Cllr Michael Thierry Cllr Glenys Turner Cllr Becci Windsor	Cllr Janet Georgiou Cllr Peter Kelleher Cllr John Haywood Cllr Glenys Turner	Cllr Luke Dadford Cllr Philip Day Cllr Rae Frederick Cllr Janet Georgiou Cllr John Haywood Cllr Peter Kelleher Cllr Glenys Turner Cllr Becci Windsor	Chair PTE – Cllr Luke Dadford Chair RLOS – Cllr Andy Briers Cllr Gareth DeBoos Cllr Philip Day Cllr Rae Frederick Cllr Janet Georgiou Cllr Glenys Turner	Mayor - Cllr Mary DeBoos Chair P+F - Cllr Michael Thierry Cllr Luke Dadford Cllr G DeBoos Cllr Rae Frederick Cllr John Haywood Cllr Peter Kelleher Cllr Glenys Turner
Ex-Officio Members		Cllr Mary DeBoos Cllr James Swyer	Cllr Mary DeBoos Cllr James Swyer	Cllr Mary DeBoos Cllr James Swyer	Cllr Mary DeBoos Cllr James Swyer

RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL - Representatives on Outside Bodies 2026-27–updated 27.5.26

B

ORGANISATION / POSITION	COMMENTS	REPRESENTATIVE
New Forest Association of Local Councils (NFALC)	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.	Cllr Janet Georgiou Cllr Gareth DeBoos
Flood Wardens	Two councillors needed to join a co-opted volunteer: Peter Street.	Cllr Peter Kelleher Cllr John Haywood
New Forest Business Partnership	Two councillors	Cllr Mary DeBoos Cllr Rae Frederick
*New Forest Consultative Panel	One councillor needed	Cllr Janet Georgiou
New Forest National Park Authority - South West Quadrant	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.	Cllr Gareth DeBoos
Ringwood Twinning Association	The Mayor is President <i>ex officio</i> . Two other councillors are needed. Organizes exchange visits and fund-raising.	Mayor-Cllr Mary DeBoos Cllr Luke Dadford Cllr Becci Windsor
The Ringwood Society	Two councillors needed. Monthly meetings to monitor planning applications and discuss local development issues.	Cllr Glenys Turner Cllr John Haywood
Tree Warden	One councillor needed. Works with Town Clerk and other staff on tree management issues especially those involving members of the public.	Cllr Glenys Turner
*Western Escarpment Conservation Area Steering Group	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	Cllr Janet Georgiou
Ringwood United Charities	Up to six trustees appointed to the role by the Council (this can be anyone with a connection to Ringwood). Legal office with associated duties	Cllr Mary DeBoos Cllr Rae Frederick Cllr Michael Thierry DC Jeremy Heron DC Rippon-Swaine
Sports Development at Long Lane Steering Group	Council representatives	Cllr Andy Briers Cllr James Swyer (deputy)
Thriving Market Place	Council representatives	Cllr Gareth DeBoos Cllr Rae Frederick Cllr Janet Georgiou Cllr John Haywood Cllr Michael Thierry
Ringwood & Fordingbridge Business Community	Council representative (adopted informally)	Cllr Rae Frederick
*Need to establish if these groups still meet as Cllr Georgiou has never been invited to attend.		

FULL COUNCIL**27TH MAY 2026**

Local Government Reorganisation – New Forest Together Request

1. Purpose

1.1 To consider a request from the “New Forest Together” campaign seeking Ringwood Town Council’s support for its objectives relating to Local Government Reorganisation proposals affecting the New Forest.

2. Background information and options

- 2.1 The Council previously submitted a corporate response to the Government consultation on Local Government Reorganisation supporting retention of the New Forest as a coherent area and opposing Option 1A.
- 2.2 The “New Forest Together” campaign reflects similar concerns regarding the fragmentation of the New Forest area under the current proposals.
- 2.3 New Forest District Council has also publicly expressed opposition to the proposed fragmentation of the New Forest and has resolved to explore legal options in relation to the Government’s proposals.
- 2.4 Representatives of the campaign have approached town and parish councils seeking support including:
- (a) passing resolutions of support;
 - (b) assisting with publicity and community engagement;
 - (c) hosting public meetings/roadshows; and
 - (d) supporting petition awareness activity.
- 2.5 Members are therefore asked to consider whether Ringwood Town Council wishes formally to support the objectives of the campaign and, if so, what practical support the Council may wish to provide.
- 2.6 Any Council involvement should remain non-party political and compliant with the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity.

3. Issues for decision and any recommendations

Members are asked to consider whether:

- a) Ringwood Town Council supports the objectives of the ‘New Forest Together’ campaign in seeking to retain the New Forest as a coherent area under Local Government Reorganisation proposals.
- b) the Council agrees in principle to support local community engagement activity relating to the campaign, including:
 - hosting a public meeting/roadshow;
 - permitting campaign information within Council venues; and
 - assisting with factual publicity relating to local engagement events; and
- c) authority be delegated to the Town Clerk to agree practical arrangements.

For further information, contact:

Charmaine Bennett, Town Clerk
Direct Dial: 01425 484720
Email: charmaine.bennett@ringwood.gov.uk



Sanctuary Cottage
Orchard Way
Dibden Purlieu
New Forest
Hampshire
SO45 4AP

Request for Ringwood Town Council Support

21st April 2026

Dear Councillor,

We write on behalf of New Forest Together. We are campaigning for a reversal in the decision by government to adopt 'option 1a' for establishment of unitary councils within Hampshire, under Local Government Reorganisation, which would see Totton and the Waterside parishes split from the New Forest to become part of the Southampton unitary authority, under the name South West Hampshire.

We are opposing the break-up of the New Forest district, which is unnecessary, unjustified, and overwhelmingly rejected by local people. We ask the government to stop this unwarranted, unjustified and unpopular decision.

This decision not only affects the parishes of The Waterside that will be absorbed into the South West Hampshire unitary authority but will have major consequences for the whole New Forest District too.

An assessment showed that the Waterside has 37% of properties, provides 32% of Council Tax revenues, 54% of business rates and 40% of the NFDC's housing stock, also two of the schools providing for SEN services. Moving these to a different authority would leave the remainder of the New Forest area revenue and resource poor. A particular problem with so much of the New Forest being covered by national park development constraints.

In addition to this, a number of serious concerns have been raised by residents, businesses and community groups across the district:

- **Local businesses** operating across the district have expressed deep concern about being split between two separate authorities, with duplicated regulation, business rates, planning regimes and licensing.
- **Residents have raised fears about the social housing register**, and the possibility that New Forest residents could lose access to housing stock across the district if boundaries are redrawn.

- **Concerns have been raised about school funding and catchments**, particularly where children currently attend schools across what would become a hard administrative boundary.
- **The future of the New Forest parking clock scheme** has been repeatedly mentioned by residents and businesses, who fear that splitting the district could undermine a system that supports local commerce and keeps communities connected.
- **Environmental and ecological concerns** have been raised about the level of development likely to take place on the Waterside if placed under an urban-centred authority, and the knock-on effects this would have on the wider Forest.
- **There are also major concerns about the financial viability of the proposed Mid-Hampshire authority**, which do not include Totton, The Waterside, Nursling, Chilworth, Rownhams and parts of East Hampshire, areas with high-density industry and commerce that currently underpin the existing District Councils tax base.

This is an undemocratic decision, 97% of residents who responded to the public consultation opposed these plans. It is Southampton and Eastleigh who proposed this change in order to provide land for growth of the city west of Southampton Water and in other rural areas currently in Test Valley.

The proposal ignores the Forest's special unique historic identity and community cohesion. Parts of The Waterside parishes are within the New Forest National Park. Commoner's rights continue to the water's edge. These lands are part of the New Forest, they have been so for hundreds of years. The people identify with The New Forest, they are not city dwellers.

No evidence has been provided to show that splitting the district would improve services or save money. There will be a particular challenge in Southampton providing services efficiently and cost effectively to a land corridor 12.5 miles long and only 3 miles wide, divided from the city by Southampton Water. It is easy to conclude this is purely a decision driven by politics, not the best interest of affected communities.

We believe that in arriving at this decision the government has breached its own official 'Guidance from Secretary of State for proposals for unitary local government'.

Furthermore, the Government's own criteria stated that existing districts should form the building blocks of any new unitaries. This has not been followed. Hampshire County Council has also expressed grave concern about the financial viability of the proposed new authorities, noting that any net benefit may not be seen for up to ten years.

At their meeting on 13th April, New Forest District Council unanimously approved our motion calling for a formal Counsel Opinion on the Government's Local Government Reorganisation proposals. This means the Council will now seek specialist legal advice, and a Judicial Review is formally on the table as a next step if Counsel confirms there are grounds to proceed.

However, this is just the start. We very much hope that every parish council within the New Forest will support these aims by:

- a) Passing a resolution to support the process commenced by New Forest District Council.

- b) Promoting the objectives with your parishioners, advertising on noticeboards and in your parish magazines, on your websites and on social media to win maximum community engagement.
- c) **Most Importantly** - Get as many people as possible to sign the online petition please. <https://www.change.org/NewForestTogether>

We intend to use the strength of this petition to support our New Forest MPs in securing Westminster Hall time for a parliamentary debate on Local Government Reorganisation. Both Sir Julian Lewis and Sir Desmond Swayne are actively campaigning to overturn this decision.

Finally, we would like to express our sincere thanks to the residents of your parish who have been instrumental in helping this campaign achieve such extraordinary momentum. Their support, engagement and determination have brought us rapidly towards 20,000 petition signatures, and their voices are a vital part of this collective effort to protect the New Forest.

If you would like more information, please get in touch or visit our website. We would be very happy to make time to meet with you or with any of your councillors to discuss these issues in more detail.

Kind Regards,



James Hartley-Binns



Emily Hartley-Binns

Campaign Coordinators - New Forest Together

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Instagram: [New Forest Together](https://www.instagram.com/NewForestTogether)