

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 28th June 2023 at 7.00pm at Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood.

PRESENT: Cllr Gareth DeBoos (Chairman)
Cllr Rae Frederick (Deputy Chair)
Cllr Andrew Briers
Cllr Philip Day
Cllr Mary DeBoos
Cllr Janet Georgiou
Cllr John Haywood
Cllr Peter Kelleher
Cllr James Swyer
Cllr Michael Thierry
Cllr Glenys Turner

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk
Mrs Jo Hurd, Deputy Town Clerk
District Cllr Jeremy Heron

ABSENT: Cllr Ingrid De Bruyn
Cllr Luke Dadford
Cllr Becci Windsor

C/6983 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were four members of the public present, who did not wish to speak.

C/6984 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Town Clerk reported that apologies had been received from Cllrs Dadford and Windsor.

C/6985 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The Town Clerk reported that the external auditor, BDO LLP, requires confirmation and a resolution that the Council has no conflicts of interest with the firm. It was noted the Council has no dealings with the firm other than for the external audit, and no councillors have an interest.

RESOLVED: That the Council has no conflict of interest in the external audit company BDO LLP.

C/6986 POLICE REPORT

Inspector Darren Ord introduced himself and PCSO Jas Sparshott and talked through the Neighbourhood Policing Team's quarterly report (*Annex A*) including crime statistics, current areas of focus and recent successes.

It was agreed that future reports should include statistics for Ringwood East and Sopley.

He said there had been an increasing number of unauthorised encampments across the Forest this year, and commented that, unlike others locally, the recent encampment on The Bickerley had not led to a rise in criminality; had no economic impact; and the site was left fairly tidy with all rubbish left behind being bagged. He stated that the Police can only use its Section 61 power if there is significant harm to the community, be it economic, damage or disruption.

Recent thefts from allotment sites had been investigated, but there were no forensics available. It was suggested that Operation Hardhome be promoted to the allotment tenants.

He referred to a number of break-ins to Ringwood businesses on one Friday night, which was dealt with by the triage hub sending out no further action letters over the weekend. This was picked up by the Neighbourhood Policing team on the following Monday but unfortunately there were no available forensics as all businesses had cleaned up following receipt of the letters. This has been fed back to prevent a similar occurrence in the future. Although a 999 call had been made, Police did not attend. Inspector Ord explained that attendance always depended on other demands and risks at the time.

The difficulties reporting crimes via 101 were discussed and it was noted that the new Chief Constable was seeking to increase staff numbers in the reporting hub to assist with this. The quickest way to report crimes is online at <https://www.hampshire.police.uk/ro/report/ocr/af/how-to-report-a-crime/>

C/6987

MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Annual Meeting held on 17th May 2023, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/6988

RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Cllr Briers presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meetings on 17th May and 7th June.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meetings on 17th May and 7th June 2023 be received.

C/6989

PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Day presented the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meetings held on 17th May and 2nd June.

He reported that amended plans had been received for land off Moortown Lane (21/11723) and that timescales for responding would be considered at the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meetings held on 17th May and 2nd June 2023 be received.

C/6990

POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr M DeBoos presented the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meetings on 17th May, 24th May and 21st June.

It was noted that the recommendation at F/6197 would be discussed next on the agenda.

F/6203 (June meeting) – Cllr Thierry referred to the legal issue relating to Bickerley land title. He stated the Council had acted within its powers and he was not questioning the democratic decision made by the previous Council. However, the matter had been discussed with the exclusion of public and press and, although it was right to keep some of the information confidential at this stage, it was his opinion there were several elements that were in the public interest and should be included in the public minute. These included the area of land involved and its exaction location; does the public currently have access; what impact would non-action have; were councillors fully briefed and were they all supportive of the action. He asked that the Council be more open in how it conducts its business in future.

The Town Clerk explained that this was a long running matter that had come before the Council and Committees on a number of occasions. He agreed to review all the minutes to determine what further material might be released at this time.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meetings on 17th May, 24th May and 21st June 2023, with the exception of F/6197, be received.

ACTION C Wilkins

C/6991

ANNUAL GOVERNANCE & ACCOUNTABILITY RETURN 2022/23

Members considered a recommendation from Policy & Finance Committee (*F/6097 refers*) to approve the Annual Governance & Accountability return 2022/23 part 3 (*Annex B*) and to approve the Income and Expenditure Account for 2022/23 and the Consolidated Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2023.

It was noted that the internal audit report was very positive, and credit was given to the Finance staff.

RESOLVED: 1) That the Annual Governance Statement 2022/23 be approved.
2) That the Accounting Statements 2022/23 be approved.
3) That the Income and Expenditure Account for 2022/23 be approved.
4) That the Consolidated Balance Sheet as at 31st March 2023 be approved.

ACTION R Fitzgerald

C/6992

STRATEGY REVIEW

The Town Clerk recommended a review of the Council's strategy document (*Annex C*), which was adopted by the previous Council last year, and outlined ways in which this could be undertaken. It was agreed that new councillors need to understand how the strategy came about and that all councillors should be involved in the discussion. Ultimately, the strategy would need to be adopted by a formal meeting of the Council. Some members felt that it was important that the Strategy reflected views of the public, whilst ensuring it was realistic and deliverable.

RESOLVED: That an informal meeting be arranged for all councillors to review the Council's strategy document.

ACTION C Wilkins



C/6993
SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AT LONG LANE

The Town Clerk reported the artificial turf pitch has been in use for some months and work on the pavilion commenced on 5th June. Monthly meetings with the contractors would take place until completion to receive regular updates on progress and manage the finances. Work on the legal formalities is ongoing, and the PWLB loan is now available to draw down when needed.

RESOLVED: That the update be received.

C/6994
COMMUNICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED

The Town Mayor reported:

- 1) He thanked the Deputy Town Clerk and the grounds staff for the way they had dealt with the unauthorised encampment on The Bickerley. He would write on behalf of the Council to thank Brian Byrne at NFDC for his work. He suggested a fundamental review of the Council's open spaces in order to protect them from future incursion.
- 2) He congratulated Trevor Pogson, the new Rotary Club president, and thanked the outgoing president Sandie Trapnell for all the work the Club does in the community.

C/6995
REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Councillor Thierry presented a written report (*Annex D*). He had made representations to officers and the Cabinet member regarding the direction of traffic flow in Meeting House Lane, which was due to revert to one-way northbound this month. The local consensus was that it should stay as it is in the interest of safety and to avoid confusion. He had been informed that the matter is suspended.

District Councillor Rippon-Swaine had given his apologies for the meeting. However, he had reported his re-election as Chairman of the Environment Panel (now the Place & Sustainability Overview and Scrutiny Panel). There has been one meeting of the Panel with discussions considering its Terms of Reference, an update on the ongoing Waste & Recycling Collection Policy (due for completion by the end of 2025) and notice of the Garden Waste Fees and Charges for 2024-25.

District Councillor Heron reported the new Council had been formed and Cabinet selected. The new PSPOs regarding the banning of BBQs and fires and petting and feeding ponies become effective on 1st July. In response to a question about the Shared Prosperity Fund, it was noted that the majority of funds would be spent on a pilot project in Totton, but there would be some smaller projects too. There is no process for putting forward projects, but NFDC is aware of this Council's aspirations in the emerging Neighbourhood Plan.

District Councillor Haywood reported he had been elected to the Appeals Committee. He had been undertaking new councillor induction training and would be attending a Climate Emergency briefing. He was involved in the formation of a community energy cooperative, which was being stewarded by NFDC. He also mentioned a project to develop a cultural strategy, as the New Forest had been identified by the Arts Council as having low cultural investment.

He had recently been co-opted to Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley Parish Council.

C/6996
REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCILLORS

Cllr Frederick offered to coordinate councillors' responses to the Poppy Appeal.

Cllr Georgiou asked if there was anything that could be done to save Ringwood Brewery. It was noted there was no action available to the Town Council.

Cllr Haywood reported that residents were concerned about the remains of the unauthorised camp at Poulner Lanes – the Town Clerk said this would be removed as soon as it's possible to put alternative protection in place. Other rough sleepers in the town had been reported to NFDCs Homelessness team.

Cllr Swyer reported that he and Cllr Dadford has assisted Cllr Deboos to prepare a response to the NFDC Planning for Climate Change SPD.

C/6997
FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Forthcoming Meetings – to note the following dates:

Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 5 th July 2023
Planning, Town & Environment	10.00am	Friday 7 th July 2023
Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 19 th July 2023
Full Council	7.00pm	Wednesday 26 th July 2023

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.43pm.

APPROVED
26th July 2023

TOWN MAYOR



Ringwood Quarterly Report



Ringwood South

	Current 90 days	Previous 90 days	Difference
1b Violence with Injury	18	9	9
1c Violence without Injury	32	45	-13
2a Rape	0	0	0
2b Other Sexual Offences	5	2	3
3a Robbery of Business Property	0	0	0
3b Robbery of Personal Property	0	1	-1
4a1 Burglary Residential (including outbuildings)	6	4	2
4a2 Burglary Business and Community	5	3	2
4b Vehicle Offences	4	17	-13
4c Theft from the Person	1	0	1
4d Bicycle Theft	1	0	1
4e Shoplifting	18	10	9
4f All Other Theft Offences	10	14	-4
5a Criminal Damage	15	16	-1
5b Arson	0	0	0
6a Trafficking of Drugs	1	0	1
6b Possession of Drugs	1	1	0
7 Possession of Weapons Offences	0	0	0
8 Public Order Offences	14	16	-2
TOTAL	131	138	-7

	Current 90 days	Previous 90 days	Difference
Residential Burglary (Excl Sheds/Garages)		1	-1





Ringwood Quarterly Report



Ringwood North (Poulner)

	Current 90 days	Previous 90 days	Difference
1b Violence with Injury	7	6	1
1c Violence without Injury	21	19	2
2a Rape	0	2	-2
2b Other Sexual Offences	1	4	-3
3a Robbery of Business Property	0	0	0
4a1 Burglary Residential	1	1	0
4a2 Burglary Business and Community	0	0	0
4b Vehicle Offences	13	4	9
4c Theft from the Person	0	0	0
4d Bicycle Theft	0	0	0
4e Shoplifting	2	3	-1
4f All Other Theft Offences	5	7	-2
5a Criminal Damage	3	7	-7
5b Arson	0	0	0
6a Trafficking of Drugs	0	1	-1
6b Possession of Drugs	4	0	4
7 Possession of Weapons Offences	0	1	-1
8 Public Order Offences	0	5	-5
TOTAL	57	60	-3

	Current 90 days	Previous 90 days	Difference
Residential Burglary (Excl Sheds/Garages)	1	0	1





Ringwood Quarterly Report



Current Operations/Areas of Focus

Op STOOL is a local operation which aims to target the issue of non-dwelling burglaries in Ringwood & surrounding areas. As part of this operation we are able to utilise additional resources (such as specially trained Roads Policing officers and dog units) in order to respond to live incidents. Locally, as a neighbourhood team, we endeavour to attend all reported incidents of non-dwelling burglaries in order to carry out a CCTV scope of the area and house-to-house if appropriate to do so.

OP Hardhome – Recent purchase of a property marking tool (Police funded). Attended recent Frogham Fayre and plans to attend Ellingham and New Forest Show (awaiting response from Romsey).

Successes/Outcomes

Ringwood Police have had a busy few months across the board as a team. Some of our successes have included:

- Regular Community SpeedWatch sessions have been attended to support volunteers in the Poulner and Hightown areas, which have been well supported, and have a lasting impact by providing a very visible deterrent in the local area, and education towards speeders.
- Barn Meet – Breamore Hulse Hall – well attended event with guest speakers from firearms licensing, CPS, The Farming Community Network and Countrywatch.
- Seizure of a white van containing a stolen digger (returned to owner) – links with Dorset Police around cross border offending.
 - Recovery and return to owners of 2 stolen Land Rovers
- Recovery of £10000 worth of stolen horse tack and 2 local people arrested (currently on Police bail pending enquiries).
- New Priority Crime Team – Sgt and 4 officers to tackle high Harm across the district – supporting local operations/incidents (support on tack thefts and recent seizures of vehicles involved in crime and seizure of large quantity of cash from suspect)
 - Working closely with NFDC around unauthorised encampments around the district.



www.hampshire.police.uk

Deaf? Non-emergency text

07781 480999

For crime and community information

www.hampshirealert.co.uk

**HAMPSHIRE
ALERT**





Ringwood Quarterly Report



Changes in the Neighbourhood Team

Ringwood Town: PCSO 17944 Jas Sparshott & PC Kate Gillingham

Poulner: PCSO 17944 Jas Sparshott & PC 28252 Rob Soutar

Sergeant: PS 1266 Rob Ford – to retire September 2023

Inspector: Insp 1904 Darren Ord

Resignation of PCSO Griffiths-Grozier (move to Dorset safeguarding)

PC Karla Hanley moved to Andover and replaced by PC James Grayling from Southampton response teams



www.hampshire.police.uk

Deaf? Non-emergency text

07781 480999

For crime and community information

www.hampshirealert.co.uk

**HAMPSHIRE
ALERT**



Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23 Form 3

To be completed by Local Councils, Internal Drainage Boards and other Smaller Authorities*:

- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure exceeded £25,000 but did not exceed £6.5 million; or
- where the higher of gross income or gross expenditure was £25,000 or less but that:
 - are unable to certify themselves as exempt (fee payable); or
 - have requested a limited assurance review (fee payable)

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return 2022/23

1. Every smaller authority in England that either received gross income or incurred gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 **must** complete Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return at the end of each financial year in accordance with *Proper Practices*.
2. **The Annual Governance and Accountability Return is made up of three parts, pages 3 to 6:**
 - The **Annual Internal Audit Report must** be completed by the authority's internal auditor.
 - **Sections 1 and 2 must** be completed and approved by the authority.
 - **Section 3** is completed by the external auditor and will be returned to the authority.
3. The authority **must** approve Section 1, Annual Governance Statement, before approving Section 2, Accounting Statements, and both **must** be approved and published on the authority website/webpage **before 1 July 2023**.
4. An authority with either gross income or gross expenditure exceeding £25,000 or an authority with neither income nor expenditure exceeding £25,000, but which is unable to certify itself as exempt, or is requesting a limited assurance review, **must** return to the external auditor by email or post (not both) **no later than 30 June 2023**. Reminder letters will incur a charge of £40 +VAT:
 - the Annual Governance and Accountability Return Sections 1 and 2, together with
 - a bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2023
 - an explanation of any significant year on year variances in the accounting statements
 - notification of the commencement date of the period for the exercise of public rights
 - Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

Unless requested, do not send any additional documents to your external auditor. Your external auditor will ask for any additional documents needed.

Once the external auditor has completed the limited assurance review and is able to give an opinion, the Annual Governance and Accountability **Section 1, Section 2 and Section 3 – External Auditor Report and Certificate** will be returned to the authority by email or post.

Publication Requirements

Under the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, authorities must publish the following information on the authority website/webpage:

Before 1 July 2023 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of the period for the exercise of public rights and a declaration that the accounting statements are as yet unaudited;
- **Section 1 - Annual Governance Statement 2022/23**, approved and signed, page 4
- **Section 2 - Accounting Statements 2022/23**, approved and signed, page 5

Not later than 30 September 2023 authorities **must** publish:

- Notice of conclusion of audit
- **Section 3 - External Auditor Report and Certificate**
- **Sections 1 and 2 of AGAR** including any amendments as a result of the limited assurance review.

It is recommended as best practice, to avoid any potential confusion by local electors and interested parties, that you also publish the Annual Internal Audit Report, page 3.

The Annual Governance and Accountability Return constitutes the annual return referred to in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015. Throughout, the words 'external auditor' have the same meaning as the words 'local auditor' in the Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015.

*for a complete list of bodies that may be smaller authorities refer to schedule 2 to the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014.

Guidance notes on completing Form 3 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return (AGAR) 2022/23

- The authority **must** comply with *Proper Practices* in completing Sections 1 and 2 of this AGAR. *Proper Practices* are found in the *Practitioners' Guide** which is updated from time to time and contains everything needed to prepare successfully for the financial year-end and the subsequent work by the external auditor.
- Make sure that the AGAR is complete (no highlighted boxes left empty) and is properly signed and dated. Any amendments must be approved by the authority and properly initialled.
- The authority **should** receive and note the Annual Internal Audit Report before approving the Annual Governance Statement and the accounts.
- Use the checklist provided below to review the AGAR for completeness before returning it to the external auditor by email or post (not both) no later than 30 June 2023.
- The Annual Governance Statement (Section 1) must be approved on the same day or before the Accounting Statements (Section 2) and evidenced by the agenda or minute references.
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) must certify the accounts (Section 2) before they are presented to the authority for approval. The authority must in this order; consider, approve and sign the accounts.
- The RFO is required to commence the public rights period as soon as practical after the date of the AGAR approval.
- **You must inform your external auditor about any change of Clerk, Responsible Financial Officer or Chairman, and provide relevant authority owned generic email addresses and telephone numbers.**
- Make sure that the copy of the bank reconciliation to be sent to your external auditor with the AGAR covers all the bank accounts. If the authority holds any short-term investments, note their value on the bank reconciliation. The external auditor must be able to agree the bank reconciliation to Box 8 on the accounting statements (**Section 2, page 5**). An explanation **must** be provided of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8. More help on bank reconciliation is available in the *Practitioners' Guide**.
- Explain fully significant variances in the accounting statements on **page 5**. Do not just send a copy of the detailed accounting records instead of this explanation. The external auditor wants to know that you understand the reasons for all variances. Include complete numerical and narrative analysis to support the full variance.
- If the bank reconciliation is incomplete or variances not **fully** explained then additional costs may be incurred.
- Make sure that the accounting statements add up and that the balance carried forward from the previous year (Box 7 of 2022) equals the balance brought forward in the current year (Box 1 of 2023).
- The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO), on behalf of the authority, **must** set the commencement date for the exercise of public rights of 30 consecutive working days which **must** include the first ten working days of July.
- The authority **must** publish on the authority website/webpage the information required by Regulation 15 (2), Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015, including the period for the exercise of public rights and the name and address of the external auditor **before 1 July 2023**.

Completion checklist – 'No' answers mean you may not have met requirements		Yes	No
All sections	Have all highlighted boxes have been completed?		
	Has all additional information requested, including the dates set for the period for the exercise of public rights , been provided for the external auditor?		
Internal Audit Report	Have all highlighted boxes been completed by the internal auditor and explanations provided?		
Section 1	For any statement to which the response is 'no', has an explanation been published?		
Section 2	Has the Responsible Financial Officer signed the accounting statements before presentation to the authority for approval?		
	Has the authority's approval of the accounting statements been confirmed by the signature of the Chairman of the approval meeting?		
	Has an explanation of significant variations been published where required?		
	Has the bank reconciliation as at 31 March 2023 been reconciled to Box 8?		
	Has an explanation of any difference between Box 7 and Box 8 been provided?		
Sections 1 and 2	Trust funds – have all disclosures been made if the authority as a body corporate is a sole managing trustee? NB: do not send trust accounting statements unless requested.		

**Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities in England – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices*, can be downloaded from www.nalc.gov.uk or from www.ada.org.uk

Annual Internal Audit Report 2022/23

Ringwood Town Council

<https://www.ringwood.gov.uk/>

During the financial year ended 31 March 2023, this authority's internal auditor acting independently and on the basis of an assessment of risk, carried out a selective assessment of compliance with the relevant procedures and controls in operation and obtained appropriate evidence from the authority.

The internal audit for 2022/23 has been carried out in accordance with this authority's needs and planned coverage. On the basis of the findings in the areas examined, the internal audit conclusions are summarised in this table. Set out below are the objectives of internal control and alongside are the internal audit conclusions on whether, in all significant respects, the control objectives were being achieved throughout the financial year to a standard adequate to meet the needs of this authority.

Internal control objective	Yes	No*	Not covered**
A. Appropriate accounting records have been properly kept throughout the financial year.	✓		
B. This authority complied with its financial regulations, payments were supported by invoices, all expenditure was approved and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
C. This authority assessed the significant risks to achieving its objectives and reviewed the adequacy of arrangements to manage these.	✓		
D. The precept or rates requirement resulted from an adequate budgetary process; progress against the budget was regularly monitored; and reserves were appropriate.	✓		
E. Expected income was fully received, based on correct prices, properly recorded and promptly banked; and VAT was appropriately accounted for.	✓		
F. Petty cash payments were properly supported by receipts, all petty cash expenditure was approved and VAT appropriately accounted for.	✓		
G. Salaries to employees and allowances to members were paid in accordance with this authority's approvals, and PAYE and NI requirements were properly applied.	✓		
H. Asset and investments registers were complete and accurate and properly maintained.	✓		
I. Periodic bank account reconciliations were properly carried out during the year.	✓		
J. Accounting statements prepared during the year were prepared on the correct accounting basis (receipts and payments or income and expenditure), agreed to the cash book, supported by an adequate audit trail from underlying records and where appropriate debtors and creditors were properly recorded.	✓		
K. If the authority certified itself as exempt from a limited assurance review in 2021/22, it met the exemption criteria and correctly declared itself exempt. (If the authority had a limited assurance review of its 2021/22 AGAR tick "not covered")			✓
L. The authority published the required information on a website/webpage up to date at the time of the internal audit in accordance with the relevant legislation.	✓		
M. In the year covered by this AGAR, the authority correctly provided for a period for the exercise of public rights as required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations (during the 2022-23 AGAR period, were public rights in relation to the 2021-22 AGAR evidenced by a notice on the website and/or authority approved minutes confirming the dates set).	✓		
N. The authority has complied with the publication requirements for 2021/22 AGAR (see AGAR Page 1 Guidance Notes).	✓		
O. (For local councils only) Trust funds (including charitable) – The council met its responsibilities as a trustee.	Yes ✓	No	Not applicable

For any other risk areas identified by this authority adequate controls existed (list any other risk areas on separate sheets if needed).

Date(s) internal audit undertaken

Name of person who carried out the internal audit

24/04/2023

07/06/2023

KAREN ROSS

Signature of person who carried out the internal audit



Date

07/06/2023

***If the response is 'no' please state the implications and action being taken to address any weakness in control identified (add separate sheets if needed).**

****Note:** If the response is 'not covered' please state when the most recent internal audit work was done in this area and when it is next planned; or, if coverage is not required, the annual internal audit report must explain why not (add separate sheets if needed).

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2022/23

We acknowledge as the members of:

Ringwood Town Council

our responsibility for ensuring that there is a sound system of internal control, including arrangements for the preparation of the Accounting Statements. We confirm, to the best of our knowledge and belief, with respect to the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2023, that:

	Agreed		
	Yes	No*	
1. We have put in place arrangements for effective financial management during the year, and for the preparation of the accounting statements.	✓		<i>prepared its accounting statements in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal control including measures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	✓		<i>made proper arrangements and accepted responsibility for safeguarding the public money and resources in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to assure ourselves that there are no matters of actual or potential non-compliance with laws, regulations and Proper Practices that could have a significant financial effect on the ability of this authority to conduct its business or manage its finances.	✓		<i>has only done what it has the legal power to do and has complied with Proper Practices in doing so.</i>
4. We provided proper opportunity during the year for the exercise of electors' rights in accordance with the requirements of the Accounts and Audit Regulations.	✓		<i>during the year gave all persons interested the opportunity to inspect and ask questions about this authority's accounts.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing this authority and took appropriate steps to manage those risks, including the introduction of internal controls and/or external insurance cover where required.	✓		<i>considered and documented the financial and other risks it faces and dealt with them properly.</i>
6. We maintained throughout the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit of the accounting records and control systems.	✓		<i>arranged for a competent person, independent of the financial controls and procedures, to give an objective view on whether internal controls meet the needs of this smaller authority.</i>
7. We took appropriate action on all matters raised in reports from internal and external audit.	✓		<i>responded to matters brought to its attention by internal and external audit.</i>
8. We considered whether any litigation, liabilities or commitments, events or transactions, occurring either during or after the year-end, have a financial impact on this authority and, where appropriate, have included them in the accounting statements.	✓		<i>disclosed everything it should have about its business activity during the year including events taking place after the year end if relevant.</i>
9. (For local councils only) Trust funds including charitable. In our capacity as the sole managing trustee we discharged our accountability responsibilities for the fund(s)/assets, including financial reporting and, if required, independent examination or audit.	Yes	No	N/A
	✓		
			<i>has met all of its responsibilities where, as a body corporate, it is a sole managing trustee of a local trust or trusts.</i>

***Please provide explanations to the external auditor on a separate sheet for each 'No' response and describe how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.**

This Annual Governance Statement was approved at a meeting of the authority on:

and recorded as minute reference:

Signed by the Chairman and Clerk of the meeting where approval was given:

Chairman

Clerk

<https://www.ringwood.gov.uk/>

Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2022/23 for

Ringwood Town Council

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2022 £	31 March 2023 £	
1. Balances brought forward	579,996	618,049	Total balances and reserves at the beginning of the year as recorded in the financial records. Value must agree to Box 7 of previous year.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	531,856	553,949	Total amount of precept (or for IDBs rates and levies) received or receivable in the year. Exclude any grants received.
3. (+) Total other receipts	295,346	1,217,530	Total income or receipts as recorded in the cashbook less the precept or rates/levies received (line 2). Include any grants received.
4. (-) Staff costs	383,644	425,748	Total expenditure or payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Include gross salaries and wages, employers NI contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments.
5. (-) Loan interest/capital repayments	31,546	31,546	Total expenditure or payments of capital and interest made during the year on the authority's borrowings (if any).
6. (-) All other payments	373,959	1,297,773	Total expenditure or payments as recorded in the cashbook less staff costs (line 4) and loan interest/capital repayments (line 5).
7. (=) Balances carried forward	618,049	634,461	Total balances and reserves at the end of the year. Must equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6).
8. Total value of cash and short term investments	639,322	537,023	The sum of all current and deposit bank accounts, cash holdings and short term investments held as at 31 March – To agree with bank reconciliation.
9. Total fixed assets plus long term investments and assets	3,695,684	3,721,632	The value of all the property the authority owns – it is made up of all its fixed assets and long term investments as at 31 March.
10. Total borrowings	329,470	308,383	The outstanding capital balance as at 31 March of all loans from third parties (including PWLB).

For Local Councils Only	Yes	No	N/A	
11a. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			The Council, as a body corporate, acts as sole trustee and is responsible for managing Trust funds or assets.
11b. Disclosure note re Trust funds (including charitable)	✓			The figures in the accounting statements above do not include any Trust transactions.

I certify that for the year ended 31 March 2023 the Accounting Statements in this Annual Governance and Accountability Return have been prepared on either a receipts and payments or income and expenditure basis following the guidance in Governance and Accountability for Smaller Authorities – a Practitioners' Guide to Proper Practices and present fairly the financial position of this authority.

Signed by Responsible Financial Officer before being presented to the authority for approval

Henry Telford
7th June 2023

Date

I confirm that these Accounting Statements were approved by this authority on this date:

as recorded in minute reference:

Signed by Chairman of the meeting where the Accounting Statements were approved

Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2022/23

In respect of

Ringwood Town Council

1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02) as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/> .

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2023; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2022/23

(Except for the matters reported below)* on the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met. (*delete as appropriate).

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2022/23

We certify/do not certify* that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2023.

*We do not certify completion because:

External Auditor Name

External Auditor Signature

Date



Ringwood Town Council – Strategy 2022-2026

VISION

Our Council tightly focussed on helping our market town to thrive by improving the things that matter most to Ringwood residents, businesses and visitors

Y3 – 2025-26

Identify gaps in open space provision and options to fill them

Y2 – 2024-25

Complete new grounds department facility
Agree management plan for every open space

Y1 – 2023-24

Complete football pavilion and other facilities
Complete Columbarium
Agree strategic plan for Carvers
Complete our Neighbourhood Plan

Improving our facilities, services and green spaces

Y3 – 2025-26

Y2 – 2024 -25

Work with NFDC and local businesses to inaugurate a new event specifically to support town centre businesses

Y1 – 2023-24

Recruit local businesses to provide stalls at events in place of businesses from out of town

Using events to support the local economy

Y3 – 2025-26

Y2 – 2024-25

Y1 - 2023-24

Explore options for working with NFDC and other local councils to fund a publicity officer post

Work with NFDC to re-define and communicate the information service

Better serving and communicating with the public

THE FUTURE

- Ringwood Town Council is
- Known for organizing great events, providing oversight of planning applications, Looking after valued green spaces and being a good employer.
 - The first point of contact for all local public services in Ringwood
 - Proactively engaging local people about issues that matter to them
 - providing valued support to Ringwood businesses and the local economy

TODAY

Ringwood Town Council is known for organizing great events, providing oversight of planning applications, looking after valued green spaces and being a good employer

ENABLERS and DISRUPTORS

Skills of councillors and staff - We will encourage more training and improve our performance management processes. **Events Management Subcommittee. Volunteers. Neighbourhood Plan**
Budget pressures and inflation – We will review our budgetary control and management of reserves

County Council - June 2023 Report

Councillor Michael Thierry - Ringwood Division

For further details - email: michael.thierry@icloud.com or telephone 07702 479095

Hampshire County Council

AUDIT COMMITTEE - Attended

Delay in end of year accounts

FULL COUNCIL

An all party motion supporting diversity and the elimination of racism.

Councillor Grant to Sopley Parish Council

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL TRAVELLER SITES

The four local authority caravan sites are run by Hampshire County Council.

These are Bury Brickfields in Totton (New Forest);

Tynefield in Sedgensworth near Fareham (Winchester City Council);

Star Hill in Hartley Wintney (Hart);

Penny Hill in Blackbush (Hart).

New Forest District Council

Report from my Ward colleague Cllr John Haywood

Ringwood Town Council

The issue of Meeting Lane traffic flow referred

Ellingham Parish Council Meeting

 - Attended

Two new Councillors co-oped

Presence at Ellingham Show

Protection of significant trees

Sopley Parish Council Meeting

 - Attended

Renaming of bridge to Coronation Bridge

Scheme to try and deal with village speeding

New Forest National Park Authority

 - Attended

Planning Meeting held in Lymington

Monthly Councillors' Surgery

The usual Councillors' & MP's Surgery was held.

Currently dealing with a number of constituents issues.

Parking on pavements

Inconsiderate parking outside schools

Planning application issues