

## **MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL**

Held on Wednesday 15<sup>th</sup> December 2021 at 7.00pm at Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood.

**PRESENT:** Cllr Tony Ring, Town Mayor  
Cllr Andy Briers  
Cllr Gareth Deboos  
Cllr Hilary Edge  
Cllr Rae Frederick  
Cllr Jeremy Heron  
Cllr Darren Loose  
Cllr Gloria O'Reilly  
Cllr Derek Scott  
Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine  
Cllr Glenys Turner

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Mr Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk  
Mrs Jo Hurd, Deputy Town Clerk  
Cllr Michael Thierry, Hampshire County Councillor

**ABSENT:** Cllr Philip Day  
Cllr John Haywood  
Cllr Peter Kelleher

### **C/6702 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There were two members of the public present. A resident of The Bickerley said that the Council had agreed two months ago to erect no parking signs to stop illegal parking on The Bickerley and asked why these had not yet been installed. He was concerned that damage was being caused to the Village Green in the meantime. It was noted that options were being investigated and new signs would be installed as soon as practicable.

### **C/6703 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllr Day, Haywood and Kelleher.

### **C/6704 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None were declared at this time.

### **C/6705 MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the meeting held on 24<sup>th</sup> November 2021 be approved and signed as a correct record.

### **C/6706 RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE**

Cllr Briers presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2021 be received, with the exception of OS/6121 which was to be discussed later at the meeting (see C/6709).

**C/6707**

**PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

Cllr Frederick presented the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Planning, Town and Environment Committee meeting held on 3<sup>rd</sup> December 2021 be received.

**C/6708**

**POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Cllr Heron presented the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021.

**RESOLVED:** That the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2021 be received.

**C/6709**

**2021/22 BUDGET - VIREMENT OF FUNDS**

Members considered a recommendation from Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee to approve a virement of £6,000 from the Grounds Department Sheds Replacement budget to the Carvers Strategic Plan (*OS/6121 refers*).

The Town Clerk reported that this matter had been discussed by Policy & Finance Committee and Members had agreed that, as this would be a substantial change to the annual budget, the proposed change should be referred to Full Council.

Cllr Frederick explained a Strategic Plan was proposed for Carvers, to have a scheme ready to proceed should funds become available, or to enable grants to be applied for. Funds would be required to prepare the Plan and she was in the process of obtaining quotes from landscape architects.

Cllr Heron was not in support of allocating funds in this way and was of the opinion that they could be better utilised for greater benefit to the town.

It was noted that the public would be consulted on any proposals for the area, but there was a need to have some options for them to consider, rather than starting from a blank canvas. Cllr Frederick said that she expected quotes to be less than £6,000 and assured members that best value would be achieved.

**RESOLVED:** That a virement of £6,000 from the Grounds Department Sheds Replacement budget to the Carvers Strategic Plan be approved.

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| <b>ACTION</b> R Fitzgerald / C Wilkins |
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**C/6710**

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## ARRANGEMENT FOR FUTURE MEETINGS

The Town Clerk had detected a desire from some Members to discuss future arrangements for meetings in light of the current situation with regard to Covid-19. He presented the options available to the Council, as follows:

1. No change – keep meetings as they are;
2. Keep meeting in person but with additional precautions, such as more rigorous use of hand sanitiser, face-coverings, social-distancing and pedestrian flows; or
3. Temporary return to remote meetings on Zoom.

He said that remote meetings on Zoom had worked previously between May and September 2021 and could be made to work again, although he explained that there were some drawbacks to this arrangement

- i) Staff must be given genuine discretionary power to decide matters in question and perhaps depart from members' decisions. This requires a degree of trust and confidence.
- ii) Members' participation does not qualify as attendance at meetings for the purpose of the Local Government Act. There is a risk of automatic disqualification under the "six-month rule", hence the need for a strict time limit on any arrangements.
- iii) Some decisions cannot be delegated this way, for example the setting of budget and precept, so the Town Council meeting in January would have to proceed in person in any event.
- iv) It is a "work-around" the rules – it is legal and has been used elsewhere but is contrary to the wishes and intentions of the government and the spirit of the current legislation.

It was noted that government advice may change in the near future, but there was no current indication of a change to legislation to allow remote meetings again.

Some members felt strongly that in person meetings should continue, whilst keeping a watching brief on the developing situation. Others felt strongly that meetings should return to Zoom in order to minimise the risk to attendees. It was noted that remote meetings had enabled greater participation from members of the public and those at home unwell or isolating.

Cllr Heron proposed continuing with in person meeting, with additional precautions in place. Cllr Deboos proposed continuing with in person meetings for Full Council only, but returning to remote meetings on Zoom for Committee and other meetings. Members voted on this proposal and it was carried. It was agreed to put these arrangements in place until 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022 at the latest, but to keep them under review.

### RESOLVED:

- 1) That meetings of the full Council shall continue to be held in person in the Forest Suite but with such additional measures to promote the health and safety of those attending as officers shall advise;
- 2) Save as indicated in paragraph 4 below, to delegate to the Town Clerk until 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022 the power to make any decision on behalf of the Council which a Committee of 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);
- 3) With regard to every meeting of a committee or working party of the Council up to and including 24<sup>th</sup> May 2022 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.
- 4) The delegation described in paragraph 2 above shall not apply to the power to comment on planning applications (and similar matters) which shall instead be delegated until 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022 to the Deputy Clerk and the Chair and Vice-Chair (for the time being) of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee.
- 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 3 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 25<sup>th</sup> May 2022, 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.

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| <b>ACTION</b> <b>C Wilkins</b> |
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**C/6711  
GRANT AID AWARDS**

**RESOLVED:** That the Grant Aid award to Ringwood Bowling Club of £300 towards repairs to the drainage in the car park be noted.

**C/6712  
SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AT LONG LANE**

Cllr Loose was delighted to report that the planning application had been approved, and a contractor had now been selected. He hoped that construction would begin in June 2022, subject to funding being in place. Members offered congratulations to the Town Clerk and Cllr Loose for the work carried out to date.

**RESOLVED:** That the verbal update be noted.

**C/6713  
COMMUNICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED**

The Town Mayor reported:

- 1) The Christmas event had been a great success, and he offered congratulations to the Events Coordinator for all the work she had put into it. It was expected that there would be a surplus from the Fireworks and Christmas events combined to return to reserves and a final figure would be reported as soon as possible.

- 2) The Rotary Christmas Eve event had been cancelled, but the toy collection was continuing.
- 3) He had attended Ringwood School when two van loads of food items were collected for distribution to those in need, as part of the Danny Cracknell Christmas appeal.
- 4) He encouraged participation in the Churches Together Love Ringwood survey on wellbeing issues.

**C/6714**

**REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCILLORS**

Cllr O'Reilly noted that the vape shop had been burgled for the third time in six months and they had approached her to ask about police presence in the town. It was noted that the Deputy PCC and Chief Inspector Andrews would be attending Full Council in January.

Cllr Frederick had received positive comments from a parishioner on the Christmas event and lights; it had been a boost at the end of a difficult year and it was good to see many young people attending.

Cllr Loose said that it had been amazing to see so many people and families together at the Christmas event.

**C/6715**

**REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS**

County Councillor Thierry had submitted a written report (Annex A). It was noted that a reversal of flow of traffic direction in Meeting House Lane (between The Furlong and Market Place) had been implemented to alleviate pressure on the town roundabout during the forthcoming works on the A31 – this was a temporary change for a period of one year. Cllr Thierry advised that the Town Council should debate whether or not the current layout was supported prior to the end of the temporary period and a recommendation made to HCC. It was agreed that this should be included on a suitable agenda in March/April 2022.

District Councillor Heron reported that the Boundary Commission had concluded its review of the electoral arrangements for NFDC. This would impact on the Town Council with the east ward losing a seat and the south ward gaining one. The full report can be viewed here: <https://bit.ly/3E4oMWG>.

**C/6716**

**FORTHCOMING MEETINGS**

|                                   |         |   |
|-----------------------------------|---------|---|
| Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces | 7.00pm  | Wednesday 5 <sup>th</sup> January 2022  |
| Planning, Town & Environment      | 10.00am | Friday 7 <sup>th</sup> January 2022     |
| Policy & Finance                  | 7.00pm  | Wednesday 19 <sup>th</sup> January 2022 |
| Full Council                      | 7.00pm  | Wednesday 26 <sup>th</sup> January 2022 |

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.08pm.

APPROVED  
26<sup>th</sup> January 2022

TOWN MAYOR



# County Council December 2021 Report

Councillor Michael Thierry - Ringwood Division

## **Hampshire County Council.**

### **Attended the HCC Culture & Communities Select Committee**

Ringwood Library was high-lighted for praise for stakeholder use of space.

**On Thursday I will attend a meeting of the HCC Audit Committee**

## **New Forest National Park Authority.**

**Next Tuesday I will attend a meeting of the National Park**

**Authority Planning Committee**

## **Police & Crime Commissioner.**

Police and Crime Commissioner Donna Jones has launched her Police and Crime Plan 'More Police, Safer Streets', which sets the strategic direction and priorities for policing across Hampshire and the Isle of Wight for the next three years. The full Plan can be read at [www.morepolicesaferstreets.com](http://www.morepolicesaferstreets.com). If you have any feedback or questions please do not hesitate to contact the Commissioner.

## **Monthly Councillors' Surgery.**

The October MP and Councillor surgery was held. Sir Desmond, Cllr Derek Scott, Cllr Annie Bellow (Fordingbridge) and myself in attendance,

A return visit from a lady who resides in Fordingbridge exercised about intensive development issues.

A Ringwood resident dropped in for a chat, no issues just wanted to talk with the MP.

Another lady from the north of Fordingbridge expressed concern about a planning issue in her area. (National Park Authority).

Finally a Ringwood gentleman wanted to further his notion of Careers receiving special recognition, perhaps a medal or a certificate at Government level.

**I have no further comment to make.**

Cllr Michael Thierry - 01425 479095