



RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

ANNUAL REPORT

2013

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TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT 2013

Good evening and welcome to the second Annual Town Assembly in the Gateway – one year on from the start of operations, the people of Ringwood are able to see the immense benefits provided by this 'One Stop Shop' for Town, District and County Council services under one roof. With the completion last summer of the Gateway Square, the furniture and its ground lighting system, Ringwood has a marvellous new community centre and this generation has, at last, added something to the Town.

When I took office in May this municipal year, I predicted a marvellous year for Ringwood; I have been overwhelmed by the enjoyment created by the people of Ringwood.

Everyone took pleasure in the Royal Wedding, but the Queen's Diamond Jubilee was a resounding success in Ringwood with over 40 Town Council Party packs going to street-parties, a lighting of the Beacon and probably one of the best firework displays seen in the Town, which was organised by Ringwood Scouts and Ellingham & Ringwood Rugby Club, supported by the Town Council and funding from local Councillors' budgets.

The Bi-Annual Ringwood Pedal Car Grand Prix followed soon afterwards, on a beautiful sunny day, with hundreds of people lining the route to watch two exhilarating races.

Two months later, Ringwood had one of its most successful Carnivals (and the weather was kind again!).

In October, the Town had the honour of a visit by HRH Duke of Kent to officially open the Ringwood Gateway building, which we know is a unique concept in local government, which was completed by Hampshire County, New Forest District and Ringwood Town Councils.

Finally, in December, the Mayor's Civic Service was a "Celebration of Ringwood"; a brand new event with volunteer and community groups taking part in a Charles Dickens-themed 'show'.

Ringwood is not standing on its laurels. During 2013, well, very shortly, Ringwood will have a 'Fanfare for Spring'; the new continuation of the old Ringwood Festival, but this time organised by local people (in this case, Rotary and ex-Tablers) with funds from the Town Council.

Following long negotiations with the Planners, we have finally obtained approval to our scheme for the full refurbishment of the Jubilee Lamp. Upon completion, we will look at repairs and refurbishment of the Human Sundial in the Market Place.

We are looking forward to developments on the Old Cinema/Furlong site with the opportunity to provide new large commercial properties.

Also, the Greyfriars/Ringwood Musical & Dramatic Society scheme for a new multi-purpose Hall & Arts Centre should begin to take shape with a hoped-for planning consent, once final details are resolved.

In addition, District Councillors and Planners, together with the Town Council and interested bodies, are bringing forward plans for 'Ring 3' – land south of Ringwood to provide much needed housing, recreational facilities and public open space.

The next twelve months look like another exciting year for Ringwood!

But most of this is not possible without the dedication of my fellow Councillors and the work they do, both within their committees and as Town Council representatives on outside bodies – I thank you.

Some of our events are possible because of, and I give thanks to, the sponsors within the Town, such as Raymond Brown, Ringwood Brewery and others, who, by their generosity assist in making certain events in the Town happen.

Last, but clearly, by no means least, I give my deep felt thanks to the Town Clerk, Terry Simpson, and his Staff for all their hard work in making this Council happen! Hard work, long hours and their loyalty has helped produce a marvellous year for Ringwood.

Cllr. Steve Rippon-Swaine FRICS DipGS
Town Mayor of Ringwood

RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN – CLLR BRIAN TERRY

Kids Capers on Carvers, the Council's free holiday play scheme was provided again in August 2012 – its fifth year. The play scheme on Carvers Recreation Ground was again led by the ever popular, Jonathan the Jester of the Table Top Circus. It was based on the former grass tennis courts next to the children's safe play area. A varied programme included games, balloon modelling, fun shops, stilt walkers, entertainers and circus skills, with a chance to show off at the end.

The Council runs three Allotments sites which are very popular. When, rarely, plots become available priority is always given to Town residents. Each year there is an allotment competition and in 2012 the judging was undertaken by members of Ringwood Garden Club and Norman Light. I would like to record our thanks to the Gardening Club and to Norman Light, and congratulate the allotment tenants for their hard work on the plots.

We now have a graffiti wall in Carvers Recreation Ground, thanks to a donation from a local business man. The original idea came from a resident, Rob Moody, who suggested that if a graffiti wall could be provided within the town it would give young people a canvas for their art and this could reduce unwanted graffiti elsewhere. Subject to acquiring sponsorship, the Town Council agreed to provide a wall within the Skate Park at Carvers on the condition that the graffiti art would be controlled by the young people themselves. The Town Council reserved the right to paint over offending material or remove the wall altogether. The graffiti wall was erected on the 8th March in time for the Easter holidays.

The Town Cemetery is provided at a net cost of approximately £20,000 per year. Cemetery fees were reviewed during the last year and compared with fees charged by other councils. As a result it was clear that this Council's fees are relatively low and Members agreed that they should be increased to help to reduce the annual deficit on the service.

Designs and costings have been drawn up for a columbarium at the Cemetery, to provide 295 niches for ashes. The works could be carried out in two phases, the two 100 niche columbarium sides as phase one, with the end 95 niche columbarium as phase two. It is expected that the first phase of the Columbarium could pay for itself within five years and would then generate additional income for the Council.

A considerable amount of funding in the form of developers' contribution monies is available for recreation facilities in Ringwood. The Council has been working with New Forest District Council to progress the purchase of suitable land. The Town Clerk met the two landowners at Long Lane, the Council's preferred location for sports facilities. Although it will be able to purchase around 8 acres, this would not be adequate. The Council is currently working towards acquisition of 2-3 hectares of land available near Crow Lane known as 'Ring 3', an area which has been allocated for residential development. Consultation has been carried out with local sports clubs and with young people via Student Advisor Stavanna Reed. Councillors felt that the 'fine turf' sports, such as cricket and bowls, would be best at 'Ring 3' whilst the Long Lane fields could be used for rugby and football. Carvers Recreation Ground, which is very close to the centre of town, could then be turned into a park.

Thanks to the Town Clerk and his team, especially those involved with the running of allotments and cemeteries, and to the Groundstaff whose brief ranges from the

traditional mowing and maintenance to managing and caring for the flower planters which brighten up the town, and undertaking extra work as needed, such as improving the security of the open spaces through putting in bollards.

Finally, my thanks to my fellow Committee members for their time and contribution to improving recreation in Ringwood. The Committee included two Student Advisors, Charlotte Reid and Stavanna Reed, nominated by Ringwood School. I would like to thank them both for attending meetings, and in particular Stavanna Reed, who has been pro-active on the recreation facilities project.

PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN – CLLR SOPHIE BURGESS-KENAR

I have pleasure in presenting the annual Planning, Town & Environment Committee Report for 2012/2013.

The number of planning submissions this past year are shown below:

STATISTICS 1 APRIL 2012 – 31 MAR 2013

| Summary April 2012 – Mar 2013 | Applications Considered by Ringwood Town Council | 2012- 2013 | Total 2011- 2012 | Total 2010- 2011 |
|--|--|---------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Authority | Type of Application | No. | | |
| New Forest District Council | Full | 76 | | |
| | Tree* | 15 | | |
| | Telecommunications | 0 | | |
| | Amendment | 0 | | |
| | Change of Use | 3 | | |
| | Outline | 0 | | |
| | Lawful Development Certificate | 1 | | |
| | Advertisement | 12 | | |
| | Renewal of Permission | 2 | | |
| | Variation | 1 | | |
| | Listed Building / Conservation Area Consent | 11 | | |
| | Demolition Determination | 1 | | |
| | Total Number | 122 | 201 | 179 |
| New Forest National Park Authority | | | | |
| | Full | 12 | | |
| | Tree* | 17 | | |
| | Listed Building Consent | 0 | | |
| | Lawful Development Certificate | 1 | | |
| | Total Number | 30 | 34 | 37 |
| | | | | |
| <i>Note: Figures include repeat applications if applicable</i> | | | | |
| *Trees | During the year the NFDC and NFNPA Tree teams amalgamated and in future all Tree works applications will be dealt with by NFNPA. | | | |

It has been busy year for this committee and we have been consulted on several documents produced by the District Council.

The New Forest Sites & Development Management Plan was brought before us and we noted one major issue on the plan. This being that any future development was earmarked for our 'long stay car park'. Having been to a workshop on how to keep

our high street alive I am aware that having any development out of the 'town centre' is ultimately detrimental to our high streets. Our comments were put to the District Council who agreed to remove the words 'Long Stay' from the plan. In our eyes this was not quite good enough and myself and Jo Stannard went to the public examination to plead our case to the inspector. After quite a buoyant meeting which involved me tossing aside my beautifully written speech and talking in 'blob' terms on the map with him we were told that the removal of the words 'Long Stay' was sufficient and we were thanked for taking the time to attend.

The Ringwood Local Distinctiveness Supplementary Planning Document which has been put together by a group at the District Council was an impressive piece on our town. We hope that this will be implemented later on this year and aid our committee in its decisions.

Julian Higgins, Policy and Communications team leader from HCC visited us last August to discuss the Street Lighting Private Finance Initiative (PFI), this is a multi million pound scheme which will see our current street lamps replaced or upgraded to white LEDs. These lights will be dimmed between midnight and 5am making them much more energy efficient. It was hoped that Ringwood would have the street lights updated this year, but works have been delayed until May 2014.

We have recently had a presentation by Liz Beckett who is a tree officer with the National Park. As a committee we sometimes find it difficult to comment on tree applications and having Liz come along and explain what she does was very helpful to us.

I would like to thank on behalf of the planning committee Jo Stannard and Claire Perrens for their continued hard work. I would also like to thank Cllr Steele who has guided me through my first year as Chairman; personally without the 3 of you I would have been so nervous I would have had a meltdown.

Our thanks to student advisors Lauren Dickson & Nuala Brothers for their contributions to the meetings and we wish you all the very best with whatever you decide to do after a well earned summer off.

The Planning & Environment Committee will continue to listen to the views and concerns of the local residents and represent them to the best of our ability.

POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN – CLLR JEREMY HERON

Ladies and gentlemen, Mayor and fellow Councillors I have pleasure in presenting the report of the Policy and Finance Committee for the municipal year 2012/13; as ever I have tried to keep the format similar to previous years for ease of comparison.

The precept for 2012/13 was £404,560 against expenditure of £635,808. Income amounted to £117,535 and this gave a net expenditure of £518,273. This expenditure was funded through the precept along with a net transfer from provisions and from reserves being £24,018 and £89,695 respectively.

This budget was once again against the backdrop of these continuing difficult financial times coupled with low returns on investments. Investment income for the year amounted to £3,770, slightly up on last year by £587.

As always I like to report the variance between budget and out-turn and this year there is a net under spend of £30,977 against the revised budget; our thanks as always should go to the Council staff for their continued excellent work.

Net expenditure broken down into committees was:

| | |
|----------------------------------|-----------|
| Policy & Finance | £ 390,336 |
| Recreation, Leisure & Open Space | £ 222,384 |
| Planning, Town & Environment | £ 23,088 |

The town councils bank balance remained healthy although slightly reduced as we have not concluded the sale of the plot to the rear of Greenways.

| | |
|--|-----------|
| Total Balance @ 31/03/12 | £ 439,877 |
| Total Balance @ 31/03/13 | £ 339,155 |
| Public Loans Board (Fixed rate 3.4% over 25 Years) | £-289,314 |

As I am sure you recall the reason for the loan was that, at this advantageous rate, we were able to facilitate the move to the Gateway, retain ownership of the old offices on Christchurch Road and, with full occupancy, show a small profit.

Now I am reminded that when we elected a Mayor we looked to ensure that this did not become an expensive burden on the residence and so the budgeted for civic expenditure was set at a very modest figure of £1,000 per annum and further it was agreed that in the financial report we would detail how this was spent. This year the Mayor was a touch extravagant and exceeded the budget by 1.84% or, in cash terms £18.37. There were six items of expenditure covering the cost of the Poppy Wreath, refreshments for visitors and the largest single expense, accounting for 87.1% of expenditure, was the Christmas Civic Reception which I think could probably go on record as one of the most cost effective Civic Receptions, per head, ever hosted.

Mr Mayor the Town Council accounts, for the year ending 31st March 2013 were presented at the Policy and Finance meeting held on Wednesday 8th May 2013 and are available with the minutes of that meeting being presented to Full Council tonight, they are also available on the Town Councils web site.

At the end of this year our Finance Manager, Martin Townsend retired and he assures me that he intends to devote much more of his time to cataloguing French

wines. This Council cannot adequately express our thanks to Martin for the work that he has put in over the years to keep our finances on a secure footing.

Looking forward we welcome Rory Fitzgerald to Ringwood and he will be taking on Martin's role as the Finance Manager and the Responsible Financial Officer. Rory comes from a local government background having previously worked for Hampshire County Council; we hope that he will enjoy working with us.

Finally, and again looking forward, I would remind you that we have again agreed a zero percent increase in the precept for the year 2013-14 but this is against ever rising costs; we have now been in the Gateway building for a full year and will have actual costings rather than projections. Our challenge in the coming year is to push down overheads whilst maintaining services.

Well it was nearly the final thing but I cannot end my report without mentioning that wonderful group within our town, the younger generation, I hope that you are all aware that there is a proposal, led by the Town Council, that is looking to provide a permanent facility for them, a place that they can call their own. I will end by saying that I hope that we can count on everyone's support for the project and that in this year we can turn the idea into a reality.