



# Ringwood Town Council

Annual Report 2015

## CONTENTS

- Page 2 - 3 Introduction by the Town Mayor
- Page 4 - 5 Policy & Finance Committee – Report by the Chairman
- Page 6 - 8 Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee – Report by the Chairman
- Page 9 - 10 Planning, Town & Environment Committee – Report by the Chairman

## COMMITTEE CHAIRMEN'S ANNUAL REPORTS FOR TOWN ASSEMBLY 29<sup>th</sup> APRIL 2015

### TOWN MAYOR'S REPORT 2015

Welcome this evening to what will be my first and last Annual meeting as Mayor of Ringwood as I stand down to spend time with family and meet the demands of my business, all of which is a very positive step for me. I am very proud and privileged to have served as Mayor during this period which has seen the town council take on some very new and exciting activities to further improve the quality of life for local residents. If I could remind you of events during 2014 to 15, we have seen a new Christmas Lights event which has been hailed as a great success by those who live and work here and to which thousands of residents came throughout the day. This was an event made possible not only through the organisation of our dedicated staff but also the support of community groups and organisations within the town and especially local business. Through working together we were able to treble the size of the available budget through sponsorship and grants which has allowed us to replace the aging lights and provide us with new lights we can feel proud of and which will continue to be added to each year.

After many years of trying and with the support of fellow councillors and colleagues from Ringwood Town Council, Hampshire County Council and New Forest District Council we have secured £540,000 of funding to build our new youth facility 'The Place' which will be complete in the next few months. I would like to give special thanks to councillors Steve Rippon-Swaine and Jeremy Heron who made particular efforts in helping us secure funding for this project. The young people of this town have shown themselves to be stalwart and resourceful members of the community through their continual campaigning for a facility but also in raising over £5000 to help equip the new building. I know other towns would be envious of the relationship we have between the town council and our young people. But it doesn't stop there and earlier this month tenders were approved for the new Skatepark to be built at Carvers Playing Field at a cost of £150,000.

I am very pleased to say that another group of young people calling themselves 'Campaign 4 Carvers Skate Park' have carried out fundraising and are edging close to a similar target of £5000 for this facility. We believe our young people are worthy of investment and we have planned projects at Long Lane, where the town council will purchase more space for playing fields and is looking to provide a full size All Weather Pitch for football and rugby. These are projects that will benefit the whole community and meet the needs of the town for the future.

The town council has recently launched the Ringwood Business Partnership which will look at re-energising the centre of town and help to support new and existing businesses in the future. We have a number of local businesses supporting the project and we are working with the District Council to promote Ringwood as a place to visit which will help sustain those businesses. This has seen a larger development of the old

Wellworthy site now providing more employment in the town and filling this brown field site. While helping to keep the character of the town the Town Council continues to work to ensure the town stays vibrant and attractive to visitors through supporting local events and activities. Finally my nominated charity for this year was the Stable Family Home Trust which does outstanding work and I would like to thank everyone who has contributed so generously to my fund raising efforts in supporting them. I know that I leave the Town Council in the capable hands of staff and fellow councillors who will support its residents well into the future.

Cllr Barbara Woodifield  
Town Mayor of Ringwood 2014 - 2015

## POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE

### REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN CLLR JEREMY HERON

Ladies and gentlemen, Madam Mayor and fellow Councillors, I have pleasure in presenting the report of the Policy and Finance Committee for the municipal year 2014/15. Year on year I say this, however, I have tried to keep the format similar to previous years for ease of comparison.

The Precept for 2014/15 was £445,233 against expenditure of £750,271. Income amounted to £321,380 and this gave a net expenditure of £428,891. This expenditure was funded through the Precept, along with a net transfer to reserves of £46,325. For those who have done some quick maths, the balancing figure is the transitional grant from New Forest District Council, dropping from £40,341 in the previous year to £29,983.

Investment income for the year remains low, at £1,242, down again on the previous year by £36. Whilst investment returns remain low, the Council continues to hold the asset of the building plot at the rear of Greenways, and it would currently appear to be prudent to retain this.

This year there is a net underspend of £5,812 against the original budget. This outturn can, in a large part, be attributed to the staff and I would like to offer them our most sincere thanks for all their hard work.

Net expenditure broken down into committees was:

Policy & Finance	£ 353,936
Recreation, Leisure & Open Space	£ 143,172
Planning, Town & Environment	£ 42,098

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 at 31/03/14	£ 305,799
Total Balance at 31/03/15	£ 341,833
Public Loans Board (Fixed rate 3.4% over 25 Years) [Balance at end of last year £-278,261]	£-266,830

Reporting on the Mayor's allowance of £1,028; following last year's overspend of £18.37, this year is has come in on budget. However, my suspicion is that the Mayor has, as with previous incumbents of the post, covered some of the expenditure from her own funds.

Accounts, for the year ending 31<sup>st</sup> March 2015 are due to be presented at the Policy and Finance Committee meeting to be held on Wednesday 17<sup>th</sup> June 2015, and will then be available with the minutes of that meeting

being presented to the following Full Council. They will also be available on the Town Council's web site. A delay in the presentation of the accounts this year is due to the May elections.

Madam Mayor, having dealt with last year it is my habit to mention some points connected with the current year and on this occasion it is with a great deal of pride that I can say that this coming year will see the opening of the youth drop-in building on Carvers. The whole Council, and indeed the people of Ringwood, should be proud of this achievement, a project that has been some time in coming to fruition but which will, I trust, have been well worth the wait. This project was extremely ambitious for a town of this size but as a former Mayor was fond of saying "the youth represents 25 percent of the population but 100 percent of our future" and we have, quite rightly, invested in that future. Madam Mayor, we must thank our partners in this project, both Hampshire County Council and New Forest District Council, for both the money that they have invested in the project and the support that they have given.

As this Council goes forward into a new administration we can be assured that we do not have to leave a note to any successor and that the Council is in good financial order, that our budget is balanced and that our reserves are at a prudent level.

## RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES

### REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN CLLR BRIAN TERRY

May 2014 - April 2015

A number of events and activities were either supported or organised by Ringwood Town Council and is something the Town Council is hoping to support more in the future. As an example of some events, we provided activities for First World War Centenary. This included the installation of a commemorative seat, which has been placed in the memorial gardens and was supported by funding from Hampshire County Council and the Rotary Club of Ringwood. We provided a Lantern of remembrance ceremony which was the idea of Cllr Michael Thierry and again was supported by the Rotary Club and Town Council working in partnership. We arranged for WW1 songs to be sung in the Crown Tap for the afternoon along with BBQ and bouncy castle and had a WW1 re-enactor walking around the town and talking to people, as well as providing photo opportunities. This was made possible by funding obtained from the Ministry of Defence and has led to a much bigger event being planned for this June, with another grant from the MOD and plans for a very large event in 2018 to commemorate the end of WW1.

The Council provided organised activities for young people for the summer of 2014 with our own Youth Workers working alongside TUFF (Turn up for Fun) to provide Arts and Crafts and Sports. Funding was obtained through the Safety Partnership at New Forest District Council, to enhance the provision being made by us and is just another example of how we are working smarter and in partnership, to make our funding stretch a little further.

We have supported 'Fanfare for Spring', which is a very well organised and very well supported event in the towns calendar organised by the Rotary Club of Ringwood. Last year saw over 100 performers around the town, who thrilled and entertained visitors and residents alike. We are all looking forward to this years event and hope that the lovely weather we are currently enjoying will continue for this event and draw more people to Ringwood. In May, we will see the return of the Family Fun Day organised by Churches Together who in 2014 gave away 1000 hot dogs, 500 burgers and 500 cream scones and teas. The whole event was free of charge and attracted an estimated 4000 visitors, with organisers bracing themselves and preparing for an estimated 8000 visitors for 2015. I don't know of any other town that can boast such an event and I hope local business and residents will help sustain the event for the future.

Our Carnival and Pedal Car Grandprix Race have been established for many years now and we will continue to support Carnival and Rotary in sustaining these events but would urge more residents and business to get involved in actual participation. It's quite simple to enter either event and

is great fun for everyone that participates or watches. Why not make 2015 a family entry, even if it's just to collect money?

We are all very much looking forward to the summer of 2015 which will see our new purpose built Youth Facility completed ('The Place') at a cost of around £540,000, with funding coming from Hampshire County Council (£400,000), New Forest District Council (£70,000), Ringwood Town Council (£70,000) and Ringwood School (£5,000). The new facility will be run by a CIO (Community Interest Organisation), as a charitable group recruited from local residents, with an interest in supporting the activities of young people and we expect the facility to be self-sustaining within a short period of time. We will be arranging a launch party for the new facility and open day, so people can come along and see what the building looks like and get to understand the various types of service that will be provided for our young people.

Carvers Playing Field has always been at the centre of community life in the town and this will be further enhanced in 2015 by the provision of a brand new concrete skatepark costing £150,000 and fully funded through developers contributions and fund raising from young people of £5,000. More significantly, the young people who call themselves 'Campaign 4 Carvers Skatepark' have also undertaken to organise an annual fund raising event, to help pay the maintenance costs of the park, will help to keep the park clean and will be helping teach newcomers to the sport how to improve their skills. I am personally very proud of the efforts being made by the young people, who live here, to improve their own facilities and help others at the same time, so it pleases me that the Town Council has invested time and resources in the provision of facilities for them.

We are in the process of securing additional land for playing fields and have set aside £500,000 of Developers Contributions to look at the possibility of providing a Full Size All Weather Pitch, suitable for Football and Rugby to be played on.

In July, the Allotment Competition was judged and we give our thanks to members of Ringwood Garden Club and former Councillor Norman Light. The winning allotment holders were awarded prizes at Full Council last September. There remains some availability for allotments so, if it's something you have considered, why not contact Christine Smith at our Council Office's and check what's left.

We have invested funds in additional CCTV at Carvers and the Cemetery to safeguard users and to safeguard our property there from those who would commit crime. These systems are now monitored 24/7 from the New Forest District Councils operations room, which is providing real time cover across the town.

The Town Council recently approved the use of lamp post banners around the town, to be used in support of local charitable groups and raising awareness of their activities. Being strictly controlled, we hope it will

improve the look of the town, by eliminating street level banners, which are often put up in a quite ad hoc way.

We look forward to our new Armed Forces Day event on 27<sup>th</sup> June at the Bickerley, which is being organised by our staff and to our second Christmas event, which was so well supported by local business and residents in 2014. We hope both events will continue to grow in size and popularity and we hope to add new lights each year to cover the town centre, as well as providing a days entertainment for the whole family.

Many thanks to Committee Members, to all our staff and to our two Student Advisors, Sarah Senior and Annabella Meech, for your input to the Committee.

## 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 2014/2015.

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

#### STATISTICS 1 APRIL 2014 – 31 MAR 2015

Summary April 2014 – Mar 2015	Applications Considered by Ringwood Town Council	2013- 2014	2014- 2015
Authority	Type of Application	No.	No.
New Forest District Council	Full	94	123
	Telecommunications	0	1
	Amendment	1	0
	Change of Use	1	0
	Outline	2	3
	Lawful Development Certificate	5	15
	Advertisement	12	9
	Renewal of Permission	3	0
	Variation	1	4
	Listed Building / Conservation Area Consent	10	6
	Demolition Determination	1	0
	Hampshire Co Council	2	1
	Reserved Matters	2	1
	<b>Total Number</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>163</b>
New Forest National Park Authority			
	Full	13	26
	Tree*	34	43
	Listed Building Consent	0	1
	Lawful Development Certificate	1	2
	Change of Use	1	0
		<b>Total Number</b>	<b>49</b>
<i>Note: Figures include repeat applications if applicable</i>			

As you can see from the statistics we have had hundreds of applications come before us over the last 12 months.

Churchill Retirement Living have demolished the old council building on Christchurch Road and have started building their 25 1 & 2 bedroom retirement apartments.

After the terrible flooding we experienced we established a Flood Action Working Party which brought together various authorities and agencies with support from knowledgeable local residents. This has achieved the widening and clearance of streams and ditches from The Elm Tree down to Sandford, unblocking the drains and culverts. The stream is now flowing well, with increased capacity, and should reduce the frequency and severity of flooding in the area.

The first phase of a scheme to formalise parking on the grass verge on Christchurch Road, north of Willow Drive is nearing completion and the roundabout at the entrance to the New Forest Gate Business Park has now been completed.

I am pleased to report that the A31 Signage Strategy has now been implemented.

Finally, a Town Centre Working Party has been established and I have been lucky enough to have been a member of this. We have had several meetings and we have had our first meeting with local businesses, which was very positive. The working party now hopes to form a Ringwood Business Partnership with first focus on revitalising our High Street.

Our thanks to student advisors Lucinda Murley and Natalie Harris 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.

I would like to thank on behalf of the planning committee Jo Hurd and Nicki Vodden for their continued hard work. I would also like to thank Cllr Steele for his continued support, which is as ever invaluable.