

**Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly for the Town of Ringwood  
held on Wednesday 6<sup>th</sup> May 2009 at 7.00pm  
at Ebenezer Hall, Greyfriars, Ringwood**

**Present:** Cllr Brian Terry – Chairman and Town Mayor  
8 Councillors  
3 Student Advisors  
Approximately 14 members of the public and press

**In Attendance:** Terry Simpson – Town Clerk  
Claire Perrens – Meetings Administrator  
Cllr C Treleaven – NFDC

*Apologies were received from Cllr Rippon-Swaine, Cllr Chard, Cllr Steele, Cllr Chambers and Cllr Urwin*

**1. To Approve the Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The Minutes of the Annual Town Assembly held on 23<sup>rd</sup> April 2008 were approved.

**2. Matters Arising from the Minutes**

There were none.

**3. Presentation of Certificate of Recognition**

The Town Mayor presented a special Certificate of Recognition to Mr Kevin Morrison, Watch Manager, Officer In Charge at Ringwood Fire Station. The Award is “for outstanding service to the community and, in particular, Ringwood Young Firefighters”.

Ringwood Young Firefighters' project gives young people confidence and the opportunity to develop new skills, as well as a real sense of what firefighting is all about. The project, led by Kevin, is supported by the Station's operational firefighters who volunteer their time to train and support the young firefighters.

Thanking Members for this honour, Mr Morrison said that he accepted the award not only for himself but also on behalf of everyone at the Fire Station.

**4. To Receive the Annual Report of the Town Mayor**

The Town Mayor presented his second Annual Report as Mayor, noting that under Council rules, he was only allowed to serve for two consecutive years and would therefore stand down. He reflected on the past year when he and his wife Jacqui had endeavoured to attend as many functions and initiatives as possible. This has added up to over 100 events including a resident's 100<sup>th</sup> birthday, as well as a great deal of work for the Festival and Pedal Car Grand Prix. He commented on the National Park's proposals to introduce new controls within the New Forest through its Management Plan and Recreation Management Strategy. The Town Council had opposed many of the restrictions which these proposals would have introduced, and the National Park is committed to reviewing these proposals. He urged residents to remain vigilant if they wish to continue to freely use and enjoy the National Park. He expressed concerns about the lack of commitment, particularly from the District and County Councils, to enabling economic development to flourish in Ringwood, and to address the lack of affordable housing for young people. He commented on his appreciation for the contribution of the new team of Student Advisors. The full report is attached as *Annex 'A'*.

**5. To Receive the Reports of Committee Chairmen**

The Committee Chairmen presented their reports:-

In the absence of the Chairman and Vice Chairman, the Mayor presented the report for the **Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces Committee**. He noted that due to high demand for allotments, and the large size of existing plots, once a plot becomes available it is now being divided in two so that two people acquire a plot. At Carver's Recreation Ground, the refurbishment of the Pavilion will be completed in 2009 and the Drop In Centre, for young people, continues to be successful. In the Bickerley area there is a new seat along the footpath and progress with plans to acquire land to create a riverside footpath. The successful children's entertainment provided twice per week at Carvers during the summer holidays will be repeated in 2009. (*Annex 'B' attached*).

During time for questions, District Councillor Michael Thierry suggested that the renaming of the Pocket Park to Danny Cracknell Pocket Park, to honour the contribution of the late Cllr Danny Cracknell, should be mentioned in relation to this report.

Cllr Clarke, Chairman of the **Planning, Town & Environment Committee** presented his report on the work of the Committee in considering planning lists for Ringwood from both New Forest District Council and the New Forest National Park Authority. The recession has had a negative effect on the number and type of planning applications being submitted. The Committee has also commented on a range of issues that might affect Ringwood, such as the South East Plan and the New Forest Community Strategy. (*Annex 'C' attached*)

Cllr Heron, Chairman of the **Policy & Finance Committee**, reported on the financial performance of Ringwood Town Council. The variance on the revised budget was 0.01% thanks to an excellent financial strategy. The bank balances continue to show a healthy position at the end of the year, with a total bank balance of £347,626 on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009. The Committee had been pleased to contribute grant aid funds to a number of groups providing benefit to the residents of Ringwood, including Ringwood & District Community Centre for the Ebenezer Hall in which the evening's meeting was held. (*Annex 'D' attached*)

## **6. To Receive the Accounts from the Parochial Charity**

The accounts were approved (*Annex 'E' attached*).

## **7. To Consider Any Other Item of Business by Permission of the Town Mayor**

The Town Mayor had invited James Fullick, Student Advisor, to comment on his time at the Council, as this will be his second and final year before going to university to study medicine. Two other Student Advisors, Rachel Giles and Henry Barker, also made comments.

James recalled his first day as a Student Advisor at his first Committee meeting, when he was warmly welcomed by Councillors. He described the role of Student Advisor as a fantastic experience which he has enjoyed immensely, in particular seeing how projects have been developed over the past two years. He described the role as a fantastic insight into 'local bureaucracy'! He had made a lot of friends also and would miss everyone when he left.

Cllr Ford said how much she would miss the Student Advisors who were leaving (James and Rachel) and asked them to keep in touch and let the Council know how they got on.

Henry Barker, a new Student Advisor this year, added that he would like to express thanks on behalf of the School to the Council for giving students the opportunity to get involved as Advisors. Ringwood is the first and possibly still the only Council to have the role of Student Advisors.

Rachel Giles endorsed these comments and added that she had enjoyed being able to have a say in issues concerning Ringwood.

The Town Mayor paid tribute to fellow Councillors, Staff and Student Advisors and thanked members of the public and press for attending.

The meeting closed at 7.30pm.

**RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2009**  
**REPORT BY THE TOWN MAYOR**

In my first year as Town Mayor I had the very sad task of reporting on the deaths of Danny Cracknell and Malcolm Daly, two wonderful servants of the town. Their deaths overshadowed everything that I and the Town Council had done during the previous twelve months.

In this, my second year, and under Council rules, I can only serve two years at any one time, I have tried very hard to get out and about in the town and support as many local functions and events as I am possibly able to do.

I believe that the Town Mayor, as the Civic Head for the town, should be seen and should do everything he or she can to promote the town and support new ventures and initiatives at any time of the day or night. Most of the time, my wife Jacqui, who is also a Town Councillor, has been able to come with me on my official duties. It was only when I was reflecting on the year and looking back on the number of events that I had attended, that I realized how busy we had been. We have opened shops, celebrated residents' 100<sup>th</sup> Birthdays, represented the Council in my long forgotten art of golf and, of course, was heavily involved in the Festival and Pedal Car Grand Prix. In all, I attended over 100 events.

As I said last year, it is not my place to talk about the achievements of the Council. You will hear all about them from the Chairmen of our respective Committees. However, there are two items on which I would like to make a personal comment. I think my views are shared by the majority of Councillors, although as in every democracy, others have a slightly different view on some of the issues.

Firstly, the National Park. During last year, we were consulted on and, indeed, commented on the New Forest National Park's Management Plan and Local Development Framework and also its Recreation Management Strategy. Both documents sought to impose new stringent controls on the use of the Park by the public. The New Forest was designated as a National Park because of its uniqueness built up over many years as a result of the way in which local people had both developed and controlled its use. The two documents issued by the National Park Authority sought to change the very things that had made the New Forest unique. As your representatives, the Town Council responded by reminding the National Park Authority that it was introducing new management controls which were both unproven and ill considered and took little or no account of the historic practices built up over many years by the people who live here. I am pleased to say that the National Park Authority has committed itself to reviewing both of these documents, but I do urge everyone to be vigilant and just make sure that that special character of this area that made legislators deem it

sufficiently unique to receive National Park status, is not undermined by the those outsiders who think they know better than our forebears.

Secondly, I have become increasingly concerned about the way in which some people, and in particular the District and County Councils, are seeking to preserve Ringwood. Their policies seem to encourage a view that Ringwood does not need to change with the times and that its economic vitality will not be affected by the outside world. Remember, our grandparents tried to make the world better for us all, as did our parents. One of my fellow Councillors commented at a meeting recently that we are likely to be the first generation that has not looked to provide adequately for our children. By that, I believe that he meant that we were not providing housing for them, that we were not providing employment opportunities for them and that we were not improving the infrastructure generally by the construction of new roads, sewers and means of providing energy without detriment to the environment. Most of us of my generation quite naturally do not want to see change, but if we are absolutely honest, do we really want to tell our children and grandchildren that no change means no housing and no jobs for them, because holding the lid on any development in Ringwood means exactly that. It means to me that we do not value our children and grandchildren. I would never, ever, promote development of Ringwood to such an extent that it became a mini Totton or a mini Basingstoke, but we do need to be realistic and we do need to provide for our young people. The sooner my generation accept that, then the better the future for our children and grandchildren.

Finally, can I thank you for listening. I know some of the comments I have made will be, at the very least, thought provoking and I would ask you to take those thoughts away with you and consider them and consider whether we are doing the right thing for our successors.

I would like to thank all my fellow Councillors for the support they have given to me throughout the year and, particularly, to my wife Jacqui who has given me absolutely fabulous support throughout my period of office as Town Mayor.

I would like to set on record my appreciation for the contribution made by our team of Student Advisors and lastly, I must give my grateful thanks to the Town Clerk and all of the staff for their support throughout the year.

Thank you.

Cllr Brian Terry  
Town Mayor

**RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2009**

**RECREATION, LEISURE & OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE**

**REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN**

It is only when one sits down and reflects on the last year that you realize how much work has been done by Councillors and staff in both maintaining and improving recreational facilities in the town. It is on that note that I would like to express my very great thanks to my fellow Councillors and also to all of the staff who have worked so hard to keep your recreation, leisure and open spaces in such good condition.

They have done so much that I can only draw out a few of the most notable ones to mention this evening.

**ALLOTMENTS AND CEMETERIES**

Work is progressing with the design for the roadway into the cemetery extension. There has been a little delay. This is largely due to some new environmental protection legislation that requires us to have certain short surveys carried out before the site can be used as a cemetery. Hopefully, we will get the green light on the site and we can commence the work in the not too distant future.

We have a high demand for allotments. Unfortunately, the price of land is such that we just cannot afford to buy more land to meet that demand. We have, therefore, completely reviewed our Allotment Waiting List and this has resulted in twenty people being taken off that list simply because they no longer needed an allotment or failed to reply from three letters from us. Our allotments are very large by modern standards. Many working people find it difficult to properly maintain a large allotment to the standard they would hope to achieve. In some cases, that has led to the Council terminating the tenancy. In order to overcome this problem, and also to help us reduce the size of the waiting list and accommodate more applicants, we have decided to halve the size of all allotments. They are still large and are big enough to provide ample produce for a family's own use. When one of the large allotments becomes vacant, it is automatically reduced in size to allow us to take two people off the waiting list.

**LONG LANE**

The provision of the sports pitches on the ten acre field have been an outstanding success. We are still trying to buy additional land in that area so that we can provide new bowls facilities, perhaps an all-weather area and tennis courts and netball facilities and also an outdoor exercise trail. These are commonly known as 'outside gyms.'

**CARVER'S RECREATION CENTRE**

This continues to be one of the two main green areas in or near the town centre. The transfer of the football pitches to Long Lane has enabled us to improve the outfield of the cricket square and, indeed, provide a few extra wickets within the main square. During this year, the refurbishment of the Pavilion will be complete.

The Drop In Centre, established only last year, also continues to be exceedingly successful. I am grateful to the County Councillor Nigel Clarke and to District Councillors Jeremy Heron and Steve Rippon-Swaine for allocating monies towards the further improvement of this facility. I know that the youth workers who run the Drop In on a voluntarily basis, and the young people who attend, are really grateful for the support the Town Council and the Councillors are providing for them on this very informal facility.

### **THE BICKERLEY**

We continue to quietly improve this area. Firstly, I would like to express my thanks to District Councillor Christine Ford, who has allocated her personal allowance for facilities for the provision of the new seat along the footpath of the Bickerley. I know that the seat and the footpath are very well used and my guess is that this seat is the first of more than one. All the way along the Bickerley you will see improvements from those of five or six years ago. We are trying to maintain the grass just that little bit better and also are trying to restore the embankments up to the old railway line to the condition they were in when the railway ran through the town. Some of the old self set saplings and the wild undergrowth are being removed. At the same time, areas of natural habitat, of birds and insects, are being preserved. At the western end of the Bickerley and including Pocket Park, some further enhancement works have been carried out and we hope to implement a major scheme to give better footpath access adjoining the Millstream and views over the meadows to the south of the Bickerley. For the first time, disabled people will be able to get close to the Millstream in their wheelchairs. As an extension to the Bickerley, we were hoping to provide a footpath alongside the Millstream through to West Street. We have agreed terms with the Scouts, who own the first piece of land affected, but have been unable to agree terms with the Social Club who own the next piece. We are continuing to try to negotiate with the Social Club and hope that it will not be necessary to promote a Compulsory Purchase Order in order to achieve a long lasting and beneficial facility for the people of the town, which is currently being blocked by a pretty small number of people. It is hoped, however, that it will be possible to resolve this issue and next year report good progress on the provision of this footpath.

### **CHILDREN'S ENTERTAINMENT**

We tried, with not a little trepidation, introducing a Summer holiday play scheme at Carvers last year. I am pleased to say that it was an outstanding success and we will be providing similar entertainment in this year's school Summer holidays. This year we hope that we will also be able to arrange to have an ice-cream van on the site to provide refreshments to the young children during the course of their activities on Carvers.

Finally, can I reiterate my thanks to my fellow Councillors, the Town Clerk and the staff for their wonderful support throughout my term of office and for the hard work they have all put in to deliver recreational facilities for the people of Ringwood.

Cllr Neville Chard  
Chairman

## ANNUAL REPORT 2009

### PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Firstly, I would like to thank the members of the Committee for their part in ensuring that every planning application and consultation gets the consideration it deserves and in particular Jo Stannard and Claire Perrens for their support, advice and persevering with the electronic format of presenting planning applications.

To put our role into context we have considered:

**New Forest District Council** – 186 No applications (142 No full, 17 No Tree, 10 No Listed Buildings & 17 No others)

**New Forest National Park** - 36 No (29 No full, 6 No Tree & 1 No amendment).

We have also commented on range of issues that might affect Ringwood, for instance the South East Plan, the New Forest Community Strategy and the various plans by the National Park for their Recreation Strategy and Local Development Framework Core Strategy to cite a few. Our duty, as I see it, is to consider and comment on any land use policy that has an impact on the Ringwood of to-day and tomorrow.

Which leads nicely onto my second point and to misquote a 'Coleman's Balls – see Private Eye, the flow of planning application has been in two phases. Up-to the 3<sup>rd</sup> Quarter we were considering up to 3 pages of applications, the last Quarter has seen a marked fall in the number of applications including some that I think fall within the new category of Permitted Development. The recession has come to Ringwood and from the planning list we can see the nature and volume of future additions to our housing and commercial stock, and the outlook is not optimistic.

Lastly, the planning system is complex, quasi legal and is framed by the evolving Local Development Plan and therefore confuses many an applicant.

May I make two suggestions if you are considering altering or extending your home or business: speak to Jo or me and we will do our best to advise you; or given the fact that you have now certain Permitted Rights that are not widely publicised, go to the Government Planning Portal [www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/hhg/housholdguide.html](http://www.planningportal.gov.uk/uploads/hhg/housholdguide.html) and persevere as it may well meet your needs.

Nigel Clarke, Chairman

**RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL**  
**ANNUAL REPORT 2009**  
**POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE**  
**REPORT BY THE CHAIRMAN**

Once again it gives me pleasure to present the report of the Policy & Finance Committee and I have tried to keep the format similar to last years for ease of comparison.

The precept for 2008/9 was £350,080 and this was against expenditure for the year amounted to £468,717. Breaking this down we had a further income of £131,679 making a net expenditure of £337,038. The net expenditure was funded by the precept and a transfer to reserves of £13,042. The variance on the revised budget was 0.01% and for this we must thank the members of councils finance staff for their exceptional work in taking Councillors aspirations and distilling them in to a logical financial strategy.

Net expenditure broken down to committees was:

Policy & Finance	£ 207,092
Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	£ 243,287
Planning, Town & Environment	£ 18,338

It is also important for you to know that the Town Councils bank balance is still healthy and that we, as a Council, are in a position to take the town forward and to fund projects as an when they present themselves; too often I hear of town councils that are fettered by financial constraints and I am please that Ringwood does not have that issue:

Total Bank Balances @ 31/03/08	£ 330,202
Total Bank Balances @ 31/03/09	£ 347,626

As the Policy & Finance Committee it is our responsibility to ensure that other committees have the financial resources necessary to carry out their functions and to provide support to outside bodies when they have a project that will provide benefits for the people of Ringwood.

In the past year we have contributed funds to a number of small groups operating within the town and to projects that benefit the residents. Developers contribution was released to assist Ringwood Junior School and Ellingham & Ringwood Rugby Club to carry out their ambitious project of building facilities on the School grounds; we have also provided grant funding, over two years, to the Ringwood & District Community Centre towards the cost of their building work; support has been given to the Meeting House in their bid to gain lottery funding and smaller grants have been given to organisations such as New Forest Citizens Advice, Ringwood Rotary Club and Forest Forge to name but a few.

Some projects have not been achieved in the year such as the expansion of the cemetery and the increase in recreation facilities, both costly projects, but we are in a sound financial position from which we can take the town forward and begin to deliver on those issues identified by the residents in the town plan.

Cllr Jeremy Heron  
Chairman

**RINGWOOD UNITED CHARITIES**

**ANNUAL REPORT 2009**

During this financial year under the guidance of New Forest District Council's planning department we have completed the installation of the double glazed windows on the rear aspect of the building.

The above has been paid for out of interest accrued over a number of years by the APT James Trust.

We are currently refurbishing one apartment which we hope will be occupied at the end of May.

We have made two payments from the poor account and none from the apprenticeship account.



JohnSteer  
Clerk

I would like to thank my fellow trustees who at the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 were:-

Peter Crutcher (Chairman)  
Anne Osborne  
Rev'd. Canon John Turpin  
Roy Godwin  
Susan Slater  
Lyn Wickens  
Mia Urwin

RINGWOOD UNITED CHARITIES & APT JAMES MEMORIAL TRUST

Accounts ending March 31st 2009

**Almshouse Account**

2007-08	Income	2008-09	2007-08	Expenditure	2008-09
142792.30	Balance B/F	138984.67	30.00	RDC Ground Maint	30.00
18403.50	Rents & Invts	27568.98	1403.48	Insurance	1244.49
7001.90	COIF Interest	5717.74	150.00	Warden Services	150.00
			907.04	Sewage charges	989.60
			647.44	Water Rates	667.20
			4.08	Admin	42.36
			24489.48	Maintenance &	
				Improvements	6441.39
			117.00	Almshouse Asscn	123.00
			150.00	Incidentals	367.77
			1314.51	Gas/Elec/Rates on	627.75
				empty flats	
				Carried Forward	161587.83
					<u>161587.83</u>
		<u>172271.39</u>			172271.39

**Poor's Account**

491.21	Balance B/F	487.22	100.00	Disbursements	100.00
96.01	Investments	<u>107.16</u>		Carried Forward	<u>494.38</u>
		594.38			594.38

**Apprenticeship Account**

	Balance B/F	405.25			
	Investments	<u>-</u>		Carried forward	<u>405.25</u>
		405.25			405.25

**APT James Memorial Trust**

	<b>Income</b>	2008-09		<b>Expenditure</b>	
	Balance B/F	53312.87		Refurbishments	
	Investments	<u>2398.55</u>		& Maintenance	15964.53
				Bank charges	80.00
				Carried Forward	<u>39766.89</u>
		<u>55811.42</u>			55811.42

**Bank Reconciliation**

**Ringwood United Charities**

<b>Almshouse Account</b>	161587.83	Natwest Account 02917262	32288.26
Poor's Account	494.38	COIF Deposit Account	130199.20
Apprenticeship Account	<u>405.25</u>		
	162487.46		<u>162487.46</u>

**APT JAMES MEMORIAL TRUST**

Natwest A/C 02963108	21027.35	<i>c/a</i>
Natwest A/C 13942190	<u>18739.54</u>	
	39766.89	