

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 16th December 2020 at 7.00pm

The meeting took place in a virtual environment using “Zoom” video conferencing technology and members of the public and press were given the opportunity to observe or participate in the meeting.

PRESENT: Cllr Tony Ring, Town Mayor
Cllr Philip Day, Deputy Mayor
Cllr Andy Briers
Cllr Gareth Deboos
Cllr Hilary Edge
Cllr John Haywood
Cllr Jeremy Heron
Cllr Peter Kelleher
Cllr Darren Loose
Cllr Gloria O’Reilly
Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk
Mrs Jo Hurd, Deputy Town Clerk

ABSENT: Cllr Rae Frederick
Cllr Glenys Turner

C/6527 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no members of public present.

C/6528 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence had been received from Cllrs Frederick and Turner.

C/6529 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none declared at this time.

C/6530 POLICE REPORT

No report had been received. The Police and Crime Commissioner had tentatively agreed to attend the Council meeting on 27th January.

The Town Mayor offered congratulations to Ringwood Police for the recent arrests in connection to burglaries and reported that a Neighbourhood Watch for the Hightown Hill area would soon be established.

**C/6531
MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Meeting held on 25th November 2020, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

**C/6532
STAFFING COMMITTEE**

Cllr Haywood presented the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 20th November 2020.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Staffing Committee meeting held on 20th November 2020 be received.

**C/6533
RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE**

Cllr Briers presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 2nd December 2020.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 2nd December 2020 be received.

**C/6534
PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE**

Cllr Day presented the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 4th December 2020.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 4th December 2020 be received.

**C/6535
POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE**

Cllr Heron presented the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 9th December 2020.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy & Finance Committee meeting held on 9th December 2020 be received.

**C/6536
SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AT LONG LANE**

The Town Clerk reported that there had been no significant developments since the last meeting but the Steering Group would meet next in February 2021 and he hoped to have more to say after that.

RESOLVED: That the town Clerk's verbal report be noted.

**C/6537
MEMBERS ALLOWANCES 2020/21**

Members considered the RFO's report on Members' Allowances (*Annex A*).

Cllr Heron reported that the Council had not kept up with the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel over the years and supported the recommendation to increase the allowance in line with the Local Government pay award. He also said that Members should be mindful not to preclude access to the role of councillor to anyone on financial grounds.

Cllr Day repeated his decision from previous years not to accept any agreed increase, and Cllr Deboos said that he also would not accept an increase.

As some Members donated their allowance to local causes, Cllr Day had previously asked if it would be possible to convert the allowance to a grant, to enable the gross amount (without the deduction of tax and national insurance) to be donated. It was noted that the legislation did not allow for this.

RESOLVED: That Members Allowances be increased by 2.75% to £769.60 per annum in line with the pay award granted to officers, and that this be backdated to 1st April 2020.

ACTION R Fitzgerald / J Hurd

C/6538

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED

The Town Mayor reported the following:

- 1) He had visited 4 care homes and 2 schools during the previous month and had been impressed with the Covid secure measures in place.
- 2) He read a letter from the Leader of NFDC confirming that all parish and town councils would receive a support grant in recognition of additional expenditure pressures as a direct consequence of the pandemic. The grant for Ringwood was £8,106.50.
- 3) He gave an update on NFDC's plans for the delayed by-election to fill the casual vacancy in Ringwood North:
 - i) Election day will be Thursday 6th May 2021 and be shared with elections for County Councillor and the Police & Crime Commissioner;
 - ii) The Town Council result should be known the following day but may be delayed until the Saturday (allowing the successful candidate to take office and participate in the annual meeting later that month);
 - iii) There will be polling cards and (it is hoped) the usual polling stations;
 - iv) Costs may be increased by ongoing Covid precautions but combining the elections should reduce the Town Council's contribution;
 - v) Confirmation and fuller details will follow as soon as they are available.
- 4) He had visited Ringwood School and congratulated them on the volume of tinned goods they had collected for the Salvation Army to distribute.
- 5) He had received many positive comments about the Christmas activities being undertaken by the Council and Events Team.

C/6539

REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCILLORS AND STUDENT ADVISORS

Cllr Day reported that, given the constraints, Christmas activities had so far been a great success with over 11,000 views of the lights switch-on video; a record number of shops entering the Shop Window Competition (the results of which would be announced on Sunday as part of the Drive-In Carol Service); a successful Spot the Oddity competition; and more. He was proud of what everyone had achieved and thanked businesses for joining in to bring festive cheer to the lives of many.

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Cllr Haywood gave an update on RCA. It was noted that volunteers were being sought to drive residents to Fordingbridge for Covid vaccinations; Ringwood Good Neighbours would be helping with this, but he encouraged everyone to help friends and neighbours. There hadn't been a need for RCA to stand up in the last lockdown, but they remained vigilant. The Town Mayor thanked everyone involved in RCA.

Cllr Loose asked why Ringwood Gateway was part of the Christmas Window Competition – it was noted that part of the display had been created by volunteers, and that the competition had been extended to community organisations for the first time.

Cllr Edge noted that the Nottingham Knockers were in town and asked if information on where "No to Doorstep Sellers" signs could be publicised. She reported that the surface of the North Poulner Play Area (Kick Park) was pitted and asked if a litter bin could be provided adjacent to the bench. She was continuing to look at the provision of new play equipment and was advised to raise this matter at the relevant Committee meeting.

C/6540
REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County Cllr Thierry had submitted a written report (*Annex B*). In response, Cllr Heron said that little notice was given by the Police for their street meetings and it was often not possible to attend at such short notice. He and other Members said it would be helpful for Cllr Thierry to attend meetings to enable them to take matters up with him in person, particularly as HCC was taking on more responsibilities affecting the town. Cllr Day commented on the suggestion of one-way traffic in Poulner and said there was no proposal to introduce such a change.

District Cllr Heron commented on parking tickets being issued in Market Place on Wednesdays after the Market has cleared. He said that HCC is responsible for enforcing on-street parking restrictions and for making and amending Traffic Regulation Orders.

District Cllr Rippon-Swaine reported that the period of consultation for the Draft Waste Strategy had been extended to 20th December.

C/6541
FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 6 th January 2021
Planning, Town & Environment	10.00am	Friday 8 th January 2021
Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 20 th January 2021
Full Council	7.00pm	Wednesday 27 th January 2021

The Town Mayor wished everyone a Merry Christmas and thanked Members for their input during the year. He hoped that 2021 would be a happier and healthier year for all.

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 20.11pm.

APPROVED
27th January 2021
TOWN MAYOR

REPORT TO FULL COUNCIL – 16th DECEMBER 2020

MEMBERS ALLOWANCES

A

1. BACKGROUND

- 1.1 New Forest District Council have increased their basic members allowances by 2.75 % from the 1st of April 2020 in line with the National Local Government pay award. This has an impact on the recommended basic allowance paid to members of Town and Parish Councils within the District.

2. MEMBERS ALLOWANCES – FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

- 2.1 For 2019/20 Ringwood Town Council paid a basic members allowance of £749.09 per annum. Currently eleven members are in receipt of the allowance.
- 2.2 The District Council have just announced that their allowance is now £6,602 per annum and the recommended allowance for this Council is 12.5% of the District Council allowance, or £825.25. This would represent an increase of 10.2%.
- 2.3 The Town Council does not have to accept the increase, and need not adhere strictly to it, but 'must have regard to' the recommendations of the Independent Remuneration Panel when setting any allowance it has chosen to pay.
- 2.4 If the full increase is applied, spend will increase by £837.76 per annum which would exceed the original budget. The budget was based on a more modest increase in line with the predicted pay award for staff.
- 2.5 However, currently only 11 of 14 Councillors are in receipt of the allowance (Co-opted members are not eligible to claim the allowance). Should all Councillors claim, expenditure would increase by £3,315 and the annual budget would need to be increased by £2,695.
- 2.6 An increase of 2.75%, in line with the increase awarded to staff, would increase total costs by £227 per year and bring the basic allowance up to £769.60 per annum, which is within the current budget provision.

3. Recommendations

- 3.1 It is recommended that the members allowance be increased by 2.75% per annum in line with the pay award granted to officers.

For further information please contact:

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County Council November/December 2020 Report

Councillor Michael Thierry - Ringwood Division

For further details - email: mthierry04@aol.com or telephone 01425 479095

Hampshire County Council & New Forest District Council Meetings

During the period under review, I have attended, via video conferencing, Full Council, and committee meetings of both authorities. The County meeting covered the financial impact of Covid 19, particularly in the Adult and Children's Services. The affect of the pandemic will be reflected in the county budget.

Police 'pop' up Meeting

Attended the Ringwood Police Inspector's 'Pop' up meeting with residents held in Southampton Road. A goodly number of local people were present, highlighting varying issues. Many were concerned about speeding within the North Ward.

Anti-social behaviour was a concern that warranted the attendance of District Council housing officers. It wasn't very re-assuring to residents that only one Town Council North Ward Councillor attended and engaged with them.

New Forest District Council Waste Survey & Consultation

I have received resident comment about the New Forest District Council Waste Survey. The main criticism is that the District Council utterly failed to inform residents that the survey was being conducted, relying on the Council's web site. Some people had to go searching for the form whilst some came across the survey almost by accident. The district council confirmed at the recent Full Council Meeting that the response had been very low indeed, bringing into question the authority of the exercise.

RACE Tree Planting

I have given support to the ambitious tree planting programme initiated by RACE. Tarmac, on the A338, has an extensive tree planting scheme; the figure for this year has been added to the overall total. I am chairman of the liaison forum and was aware of the planting programme.

Ringwood One-way road system

Concern is still be expressed by residents in North Poulner related to proposals to introduce a significant one-way road arrangement in Poulner. Whilst the aim of the system had merit, the plan did not. Residents are un-convinced that a re-worked system will not re-appear. There was a hit and run incident in Broadshard Lane. County officers have been asked to look again safety aspects the lane. Many householders are in favour of creating a 'Quomp' arrangement by blocking off the lane mid-way at a suitable junction.

Monthly Surgery

The well established monthly surgery has been held, now at the Scout Hut in Southampton Road. Some issues cannot be dealt with by email or a telephone call. The surgery gives resident that personal contact with their MP and local councillor.

Video Conferencing

An interesting departure from the usual was engaging with residents using video conferencing. The couple of residents who used MS Teams were comfortable using the system, and was deemed much better than a phone call. We will extend the use of video in the New Year.

Stand Alone Nursery Provision

I have received early indication of a proposal, the cost to be met from the County capital programme, to build a stand alone nursery provision at Poulner Junior School. This will free up a classroom occupied by the nursery for a bulge in numbers in the mainstream school and is a step towards the anticipated permanent expansion of the school as housing in Ringwood is brought forward. The final decision will be made by the Executive Member on 13th January 2021.

Parking on the Pavement

A complaint from a resident related to vehicles parking on the pavement in Southampton Road, half on the road and half on the pavement, thereby creating problems for pavement users. The matter was referred to the Traffic Parking Unit at County Hall. They confirm that officers patrol Southampton Road, and have provided the number of tickets issued. (I suspect in the town section of road and not the residential)

Ringwood Town Full Council

I am not a member of Ringwood Town Council; therefore, there is no statutory requirement or obligation for me as the County Councillor to attend any meeting of the Town Council. A report, if expected, does not mean that a report will be made for each meeting. I refer to my letter sent to the Town Mayor dated 28th June. Indicating I would attend Full Council meetings of Ringwood Town Council when expressly invited for a pre-determined purpose.