

**MINUTES OF RYDE TOWN COUNCIL'S MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL HELD ON MONDAY  
5 FEBRUARY 2024 AT 7.00PM IN THE GEORGE STREET CENTRE,  
RYDE BAPTIST CHURCH, GEORGE STREET, RYDE.**

**Members Present:** Cllr Richard May (Mayor), Cllr Georgie Carter, Cllr Simon Cooke, Cllr Ian Dore, Cllr Diana Conyers, Cllr Jo Elliott (Deputy Mayor), Cllr Jess Higgins, Cllr Les Kirkby, Cllr Michael Lilley, Cllr Karen Lucioni, Cllr Malcolm Ross, Cllr Jenna Sabine, and Cllr Ian Stephens

**Also in Attendance:** Jon Baker (Committees and Ryde Place Plan Coordinator), Tara Bloomfield Lisa Dyer (Clerk of Ryde Town Council).

18 Members of the public attended.

**PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

- A question was asked by a member of the Friends of Ryde Town Hall (FORTH) as to whether they could make a presentation to members at a future Full Council meeting following comprehensive public surveys which attracted over a thousand responses on the future of Ryde Town Hall / Theatre.

The Mayor agreed to the request and members also noted that a report would be issued by FORTH in due course.

- A member of the public reminded councillors of a question from the previous meeting regarding the need for a detailed Infrastructure Plan for Ryde and whether the Town Council had made enquiries to the Isle of Wight Council (IWC) asking for a response.

It was noted that IWC officers had been approached but a response was still forthcoming. Officers would continue to press for a reply.

- A further question was asked regarding the proposed recruitment of IWC Enforcement Officers (as outlined in the 2024-2025 Budget Setting) and should it be agreed, could the first cases addressed be the two semi-derelict houses located at the Westridge Cross Junction which have been run-down for many years. There had been an understanding between the owner and the IWC (as the local planning Authority) that restoration work would commence, but so far nothing had started.

It was noted that the request would be considered when first engaging with the Enforcement Officer (subject to Full Council Approval). It was also noted that Cllr Lilley was making enquiries regarding the matter in his capacity as an IWC Councillor representing Ryde Appley and Elmfield and would report back as soon as more information became available.

- A member of the public asked what the proposed £50,000 for Vectis Hall set aside in the 2024-2025 Budget under 'Repairs' was for.

It was noted that such costs were required for essential ongoing repairs of the building to make it safe and secure and prevent further deterioration.

## **1/24 APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from Cllr Charles Chapman and Cllr Phil Jordan.

## **2/24 DECLARATION OF MEMBERS INTERESTS**

Cllr Simon Cooke declared an interest in Minute 16/24 (Motion 2/24) as he was a member of the Ryde Town Hall Working Group.

Cllr Jenna Sabine declared a pecuniary interest in minute 15/24 (Budget Setting Precept Request and reference to Appley Tower) as she was involved with the proposed leasing out of the Beach Huts at Appley Tower through Monkton Arts.

Cllr Ian Dore declared an interest in minute 15/24 (Budget Setting Precept Request and reference to the grant allocation for Armed Forces Day) as he was the Chair of the Civil Military Partnership and the IWC's Armed Forces Champion.

## **3/24 REQUESTS FOR DISPENSATION**

None requested.

## **4/24 UPDATE FROM THE LOCAL POLICE**

Sergeant Matt Brown, PC Henry Trotman, and PC Greg Rogers from the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Police attended the meeting and provided members with an update on issues since the previous meeting.

Anti-Social Behaviour and Shoplifting continued to be areas of concern and the Ryde Super Bowl, and the Isle of Wight Bus Museum had both been recent targets for break-ins and criminal damage. Ongoing efforts were in place to identify known offenders in Ryde and the public had been encouraged to engage with the Police to help prevent future offences taking place. Local Police officers could be approached on the [Hampshire Alert](#) Website where their contact details were available.

Members were concerned that the Toilets at Appley Park had once again been the subject of some extensive vandalism resulting in the closure of the men's facility. The Police had made some enquiries as to who the perpetrators were, but with the absence of any CCTV, this was proving to be difficult. Patrols for Appley Park would however be increased in an attempt to deter future anti-social behaviour.

Members welcomed the presence of local Police Officers and encouraged members of the public to engage with them as much as possible to assist in the fight against criminal activity.

## **5/24 MINUTES TO THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 27 NOVEMBER 2023**

The minutes to the previous meeting held on 27 November 2023 were reviewed. After a proposer, seconder, and a vote via a show of hands, the following was:

### **RESOLVED:**

**THAT the minutes to the meeting of Full Council held on 27 November 2023 be agreed.**

## 6/24 MAYORS ANNOUNCEMENTS

The mayor circulated his report ahead of the meeting. The report can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.rydetowncouncil.gov.uk/town-council/minutes-and-agendas/#43-502-wpfd-5-february-2024-p3>

## 7/24 OFFICER REPORTS

Members received and noted the following officer reports which were circulated ahead of the meeting.

- Clerks Update
- St Thomas Church Project Manager
- Report from the Community Development Officer

The reports can be accessed via the following link:

<https://www.rydetowncouncil.gov.uk/town-council/minutes-and-agendas/#43-502-wpfd-5-february-2024-p2>

## 8/24 NOTICE OF TOWN COUNCILLOR VACANCY

Members noted that Tom Hanley had offered his resignation as a Councillor for Ryde Appley and Elmfield to the mayor, which he duly accepted. Members also noted that should a by-election be required, Polling Cards would be issued by the Isle of Wight Councils Election and Land Charges Department and the costs would be met by Ryde Town Council. This provision was always in place within the budget to cover such eventualities.

Following a proposer, seconder and after a vote via a show of hands, it was:

### **RESOLVED:**

**THAT the provision the cost of the issuing of Polling Cards for a forthcoming By Election for the Ryde Appley and Elmfield ward, be agreed.**

## 9/24 MEMBERS REPORTS

Cllr Cooke advised that he had attended a recent Isle of Wight Association of Local Councillors (IWALC) Executive Committee meeting discussing budgetary and staffing issues. There would also be a discussion on Road Safety matters with Island Roads and a further update on this would be given to members at a later meeting.

## 10/24 FINANCE AND COMMUNITY RESOURCES COMMITTEE

- To note the approved minutes of the meeting held on the 17 October 2023

The approved minutes of the meeting held on 17 October 2023 were noted.

- ii. To consider the recommendation arising from the meeting held on 23 January 2024 regarding the approval of the Reserves Policy as written by the Responsible Finance Officer.

Members were presented with the recommendation arising from the meeting held on Tuesday, 23 January 2024 and following a proposer, seconder, and a vote via a show of hands, it was:

**RESOLVED:**

**THAT the Reserves Policy as written by the Responsible Financial Officer be agreed and approved.**

- iii. Vacancy for one member on the Finance and Community Resources Committee

Cllr Simon Cooke nominated Cllr Michael Lilley which was seconded by Cllr Sabine.

Cllr Jess Higgins nominated Cllr Les Kirkby which was seconded by Cllr Karen Lucioni.

Following a vote via a show of hands for both candidates, it:

**RESOLVED:**

**THAT Cllr Michael Lilley becomes a member of the Finance and Community Resources Committee.**

## **11/24 PLACE , NEIGHBOURHOOD AND PLANNING (PNP) COMMITTEE**

- i. Minutes of the Place, Neighbourhood and Planning Committee

The approved minutes to the meetings held on 14 November 2023 and 5 December 2023 were noted.

- ii. To consider any recommendations arising from the meeting held 16 January 2024.

At its meeting held on 16 January 2024 PNP Committee Members recommended that a provision of £15,000 be set aside in the budget for the services of an Isle of Wight Council Enforcement Officer to assist in various urgent cases within Ryde. This would be approved as part of the overall Budget Setting and Precept Request (Minute No 15/24 of these minutes).

- iii. Vacancy for one member of the Place, Neighbourhood and Planning Committee

As there were no nominations, the item would be taken to the next meeting of Full Council.

## **12/24 PUBLIC TOILETS - RYDE INTERCHANGE**

Following the Full Council meeting held on 27 November 2023 the Clerk was asked to clarify some issues with the proposed lease for the Interchange toilet facilities ahead of any further decisions.

Members were advised that the facilities were ready to be opened and with the Interchange building project nearing completion, the matter of the toilet management needed to be resolved as soon as possible to ensure sufficient time for any legal work to be completed to ensure the facilities were open before the start of the tourist season.

Members were asked to consider the following two options:

- 1) To agree the Heads of Terms as presented and agree to enter into an agreement with South West Trains to lease the public toilet facility within the Transport Interchange building on Ryde Esplanade subject to a satisfactory report from the Town Council's solicitor Ryde Town Council.
- 2) Decline the offer to lease the facilities and manage the public toilets situated within the Interchange.

Members were disappointed that the Town Council had been put in the unfortunate position of considering the management of the toilets when it was originally the intention to just open, close, and clean the facilities.

It was also noted that the Town Council's request for an additional 'Changing Places' facility had not been met by South Western Railways. However, the need for the toilets to be open for the start of the tourist season was essential and members felt that there was no choice but to proceed with option 2.

After a proposer, seconder, and a vote via a show of hands, the following was:

**RESOLVED:**

**THAT the following be agreed:**

**Subject to a satisfactory report from the Town Council's solicitor Ryde Town Council agree to enter into an agreement with South West Trains to lease the public toilet facility within the Transport Interchange building on Ryde Esplanade. Ryde Town Council agree to manage the facility and open the facilities to the public.**

**13/24 BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN**

Members discussed the plan which would prepare the Town Council's business in the event of extended service outages caused by factors beyond its control and to restore services to the widest extent possible in a minimum time frame.

The outcome of the plan was to ensure that the business would be able to maintain a good level of service for the residents of Ryde and its visitors.

Members agreed that the updated plan was a comprehensive one and covered all areas of Ryde Town Council's business.

After a proposer, seconder, and a vote via a show of hands, the following was:

**RESOLVED:**

**THAT the Business Continuity Plan be agreed.**

## 14/24 RESOLUTION TO BORROW

The committee was requested to approve the submission of a borrowing application to the Secretary of State to allow for the purchase of the former NatWest Building, St Thomas Square, Ryde, which was a proposed new headquarters site for Ryde Town Council.

If successful, the Council would then seek to draw down a loan of up to £466,000 for a period of 30 years which will be funded by a precept increase, the cost of which was as follows:

- Estimated annual loan repayments £30,282.00\*
- Percentage increase to precept 2.18%\*\*
- Additional cost on precept £3.67\*\*

\*Interest rates correct as of 4 January 2024 \*\* figures based on the 2023 – 2024 Tax Base.

Members were given copies of the business case (previously presented to them at the 16 November meeting) to aid this request.

It should be noted that in order to follow the official guidance on such a matter, any resolution must be decided by a majority of all members at Full Council and recorded into the minutes.

Whilst the majority of members agreed that such a move for Ryde town Council to own such a property as opposed to continue paying rent ad infinitum was sensible, there was some concern around the risk of not sub-letting any office space within the existing facility at Lind Street, thus incurring more costs. It was however noted that there were opportunities to rent such space and that Ryde Town Council already does so with Barclays Bank, thus covering over a third of its annual rent costs. Members also welcomed the opportunity of providing public toilets in the centre of Ryde which would come as part of the acquisition of the building.

After a proposer, seconder, and a vote via a show of hands, the following was:

### **RESOLVED:**

**To seek the approval of the Secretary of State for the Levelling Up, Housing and Communities to apply for a PWLB loan of £466,000 over the borrowing term of 30 years for the purchase of the former NatWest Bank building. The annual loan repayments will come to around £30,282.00. It is also intended to increase the council tax precept for the purpose of the loan repayments by 2.18%, which is equivalent to an additional £3.67 per year. This is subject to a precept increase consultation.**

## 15/24 BUDGET SETTING AND PRECEPT REQUEST

The RFO presented the covering report which highlighted the areas of expenditure for the 2024-2025 financial year.

Within the report, the Chair of the Finance and Community Resources Committee stated that the proposals established the financial security of Ryde Town Council, as well as supporting Corporate Plans, and balancing the Capital and Revenue expenditure with established income. It also incorporated the inflationary pressures from elevated interest rates and nationally agreed salary uplifts.

Whilst there were concerns raised around the continuing funding of private events, at eastern Gardens, members were advised that these costs were previously agreed by Full Council in October 2023.

It was also noted that the expenditure allocated for Vectis Hall was essential in order to ensure the building was of a condition that would avoid any unwanted enforcement action from the IWC.

Members were also reminded that town councils across the country were having to take on more and more services owing to government cuts being handed down from primary councils (such as the IWC). If Ryde Town Council chose not to fund such services, they would ultimately be lost.

After a proposer, seconder, and a vote via a show of hands, the following was:

**RESOLVED:**

**THAT the Budget setting and the precept request for the financial year 2024-2025, be agreed.**

**16/24 MOTIONS 01/24 AND 02/24**

Members were of the opinion that owing to a lack of information and time remaining in the meeting, both motions would be deferred to a future meeting of Full Council.

**17/24 MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

None

**18/24 DATE OF NEXT MEETING OF FULL COUNCIL**

The next scheduled ordinary meeting of Full Council would be held on Monday, 4 March 2024.

Meeting closed at 9.00pm

Signed.....

Cllr Richard may  
Mayor of Ryde Town Council, 4 March 2024