

Ringwood Town Council

Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood, Hampshire BH24 1AT

Tel: 01425 473883

www.ringwood.gov.uk

SUMMONS

Dear Member

19th September 2024

You are hereby summoned to attend a meeting of the Town Council at the Forest Suite, Ringwood Gateway on 25th September 2024 at 7.00pm.



Mr C Wilkins
Town Clerk

AGENDA

1.* PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There will be an opportunity for public participation for a period of up to 15 minutes at the start of the meeting

2. To receive Apologies for Absence

3. To receive Declarations of Interest

4. GRANT AID AWARDS

To note Grant Aid awards to Rotary Club of Ringwood £400, Forest Forge £250, Ringwood Veterans £500, Avon Valley Concerts £250, ERRFC £500 and STARF £600

5. To approve as a correct record the minutes of the meeting on 31st July 2024

6. To receive Minutes of Committees and approve recommendations contained therein:

Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces DATE :- 4th September 2024

Planning, Town & Environment DATE:- 2nd August & 6th September 2024

Staffing DATE:- 11th September 2024

Policy & Finance DATE:- 18th September 2024

(RECOMMENDATION: F/6341 External Audit report (see separate agenda item))

7. EXTERNAL AUDIT 2023/24

To consider the recommendation from Policy & Finance Committee on 18th September that the external audit report be received and noted and that the notice of conclusion of audit be published by 30th September (*F/6341 refers*)(*Report A*)

8. SAFER NEW FOREST SURVEY RESPONSE

To approve a response to the Safer New Forest consultation (*Report B*)

9. STRATEGY REVIEW

To consider the Town Clerk's report and review the Council's Strategy (*Report C*)

10. SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AT LONG LANE

To receive a report from Cllr Briers (the Council's representative on the Steering Group) or Cllr Swyer (deputy) on project developments

11.*To receive such communications as the Town Mayor may desire to lay before the Council

12.*To receive Reports from County and District Councillors (*Report D*)

13.*To Receive Reports from Ringwood Town Councillors

14. Forthcoming Meetings – to note the following dates:

Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 2 nd October 2024
Planning, Town & Environment	10.00am	Friday 4 th October 2024
Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 23 rd October 2024
Full Council	7.00pm	Wednesday 30 th October 2024

15. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

To consider exclusion of the press and public from the meeting, in accordance with the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, section 1(2), to transact business for which publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of its confidential nature

16. LEGAL MATTERS

To receive a verbal report from the Town Clerk on legal matters

If you would like further information on any of the agenda items, please contact Mr Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk, on 01425 484720 or chris.wilkins@ringwood.gov.uk

Council Members:

Chairman: Cllr Rae Frederick, Town Mayor
Vice-Chairman: Cllr Philip Day, Deputy Mayor
Cllr Andrew Briers
Cllr Luke Dadford
Cllr Ingrid De Bruyn
Cllr Gareth DeBoos
Cllr Mary DeBoos
Cllr Janet Georgiou
Cllr John Haywood
Cllr Peter Kelleher
Cllr James Swyer
Cllr Michael Thierry
Cllr Glenys Turner
Cllr Becci Windsor

Officers:

Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk
Jo Hurd, Deputy Town Clerk

REPORT TO POLICY & FINANCE COMMITTEE – 18th SEPTEMBER 2024

Notice of conclusion of audit 2023/24

- 1.1 The audit of the Council Finances for 2023/24 has now been concluded. The auditors, BDO LLP, concluded that:
- “On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.”
- 1.2 The auditors did make one observation that we need to take into consideration when we commence the process of auditing the 2024/25 accounts. The auditors noted:
- “The Council have provided minutes resolving to re-appoint the internal auditor, but the minutes do not indicate whether the independence of the internal auditor has been considered which is not in line with best practice contained in the practitioners’ guide,”
- 1.3 Members will be invited to consider the independence of the internal auditor that we appoint early in 2025.
- 1.4 The external auditor’s certificate is appended along with the draft notice of conclusion of audit which must be published by the 30th September.

2 RECOMMENDATION

It is **recommended** that: -

- 2.1 The conclusions of the external auditor be noted.
- 2.2 The notice of conclusion of audit be submitted to full Council and published by the Council no later than the 30th September.

For further information please contact:

Rory Fitzgerald, Finance Manager or

Tel: 01425 484723

rory.fitzgerald@ringwood.gov.uk

For further information please contact:

Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk

Tel: 01425 484720

Chris.wilkins@ringwood.gov.uk

Ringwood Town Council

Notice of conclusion of audit

Annual Governance & Accountability Return for the year ended 31 March 2024

Sections 20(2) and 25 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014

Accounts and Audit Regulations 2015 (SI 2015/234)

	Notes
<p>1. The audit of accounts for Ringwood Town Council for the year ended 31 March 2024 has been completed and the accounts have been published.</p>	<p>This notice and Sections 1, 2 & 3 of the AGAR must be published by 30 September. This must include publication on the smaller authority's website. The smaller authority must decide how long to publish the Notice for; the AGAR and external auditor report must be publicly available for 5 years.</p>
<p>2. The Annual Governance & Accountability Return is available for inspection by any local government elector of the area of Ringwood Town Council on application to:</p> <p>(a) <u>Rory Fitzgerald, Responsible Finance Officer</u> - <u>Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong,</u> - <u>Ringwood BH24 1AT</u> -</p> <p>(b) <u>Monday to Friday</u> <u>09:30am to 16:30, (by appointment)</u></p>	<p>(a) Insert the names, position and address of the person to whom local government electors should apply to inspect the AGAR.</p> <p>(b) Insert the hours during which the inspection rights may be exercised.</p>
<p>3. Copies will be provided to any person on payment of £2.00 for each copy of the Annual Governance & Accountability Return.</p>	<p>(c) Insert a reasonable sum for copying costs.</p>
<p>(d) Announcement made: <u>Christopher Wilkins</u> <u>Town Clerk</u></p>	<p>(d) Insert the name and position of person placing the notice.</p>
<p>(e) Date of announcement: 26th September 2024</p>	<p>(e) Insert the date of placing of the notice.</p>

Section 1 – Annual Governance Statement 2023/24

We are governed by the members of:

Ringwood Town Council

Our responsibility for the preparation of the Accounting Statements for the year ended 31 March 2024, that:

	Agreed		We consider this to be: <i>compliant</i>
	Yes	No	
1. We have published information on our website or other management facing document, on the responsibilities of the accounting statements.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>compliant with the requirements of the Accounting Statements Regulations 2015</i>
2. We maintained an adequate system of internal controls including procedures designed to prevent and detect fraud and corruption and reviewed its effectiveness.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>these proper arrangements and controls adequately and satisfactorily the financial statements in its charge.</i>
3. We took all reasonable steps to ensure ourselves that the true state of affairs of actual or potential beneficiaries have been ascertained and Properly provided for, and that we are not liable to conduct its business in an unlawful manner.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>not only that we have the legal power to do so but also we have fully reviewed the beneficiaries.</i>
4. We have taken all reasonable steps during the year to be free of conflicts of interest, and to comply with the requirements of the Code.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>during the year gave all persons involved the opportunity to present and deal questions about the authority's business.</i>
5. We carried out an assessment of the risks facing the authority, including those arising from its strategic aims, objectives, activities and projects, and identified and assessed the risks to the achievement of those aims, objectives, activities and projects.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>assessed and identified the financial and other risks of the authority and dealt with them.</i>
6. We maintained during the year an adequate and effective system of internal audit or other arrangements for monitoring and assessing risks.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>arranged for a competent person independent of the Council to audit its accounts. It was also agreed that the external auditor should also audit the assets of the Council's children.</i>
7. We took appropriate action to deal with any identified weaknesses in the internal control system.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>immediate corrective action to address weaknesses identified.</i>
8. We considered whether any expenses incurred in connection with the business of the authority during the year are properly incurred for the authority and, where appropriate, are included in the accounting statements.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>expenses were properly incurred in the course of the business of the authority and were properly included in the accounts.</i>
9. (For local authorities only) In the event of the authority being liable to pay a sum of money to a person, it is a sum exceeding the amount of £1000 from or over.	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<i>Amount of £1000 per person per month up to £1000 per month. It is a sum exceeding the amount of £1000 from or over.</i>

how the authority will address the weaknesses identified. These sheets must be published with the Annual Governance Statement.

Chair: *[Signature]*
 Clerk: *[Signature]*

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Section 2 – Accounting Statements 2023/24 for

Ringwood Town Council



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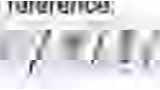

	Year ending		Notes and guidance
	31 March 2023	31 March 2024	
1. Balance brought forward	118,040	714,303	Total balances and receipts at the beginning of the year as shown in the financial records. Your declaration is only of proceeds.
2. (+) Precept or Rates and Levies	531,940	610,428	Total amount of precept (or for IDPA rates and levies) received or retained during the year (after any other recovery)
3. (+) Total other receipts	1,217,530	2,328,098	Total amount of receipts in accordance with conditions laid in the grant or publications received from all sources and other income
4. (-) Expenditure	425,748	467,468	Total expenditure on payments made to and on behalf of all employees. Includes gross salaries and wages employees, contributions, employers pension contributions, gratuities and severance payments
5. (-) Loan Interest/capital repayments	31,548	48,436	Total interest or payments on capital and other loans during the year on the balance sheet
6. (-) All other payments	(1,297,771)	2,419,884	All expenditure or payments as recorded in the accounts (not included elsewhere) and less government grants received (line 8)
	634,461	629,180	Total balances and payments at the end of the year. MUST equal (1+2+3) - (4+5+6)
8. Total value of fixed and other long-term investments	607,023	609,688	The sum of all current and deposit bank balances, cash holdings and other long-term investments held at 31 March as agreed with bank statements
9. Total long-term investments and assets	1,171,837	1,629,351	The value of all long-term investments held at 31 March as agreed with bank statements and other assets
10. Total borrowings	(48,283)	(85,624)	The sum of all long-term borrowings at 31 March of all long-term borrowings (including interest)

For Local Council's Duty	Y0	Y1	N/A	
11a. Discharge under Town Hall (including Charities)	✓			The Council has duly complied with all its duties and is responsible for financial control and accounts
11b. Discharge under Local Funds (including Charities)	✓			The figures in the accounts are true and correct

I certify that the financials for 31 March 2024 are Accounting 1. I confirm that these Accounting Statements were

signed either in receipt and payments or in accordance with the guidance in the Practitioners' Guide to Practice to ensure the financial position of this authority.

Signed by  Councillor  for approval
25/06/2024

Signed on 26/06/2024
as recorded in minute references:

Signed by Chair of the Finance and Accounts Committee where the Accounting Statements were approved


Section 3 – External Auditor’s Report and Certificate 2023/24

In respect of

EN Ringwood Town Council TY

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1 Respective responsibilities of the auditor and the authority

Our responsibility as auditors to complete a **limited assurance review** is set out by the National Audit Office (NAO). A limited assurance review is **not a full statutory audit**, it does not constitute an audit carried out in accordance with International Standards on Auditing (UK & Ireland) and hence it **does not** provide the same level of assurance that such an audit would. The UK Government has determined that a lower level of assurance than that provided by a full statutory audit is appropriate for those local public bodies with the lowest levels of spending.

Under a limited assurance review, the auditor is responsible for reviewing Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with NAO Auditor Guidance Note 02 (AGN 02 as issued by the NAO on behalf of the Comptroller and Auditor General. AGN 02 is available from the NAO website – <https://www.nao.org.uk/code-audit-practice/guidance-and-information-for-auditors/> .

This authority is responsible for ensuring that its financial management is adequate and effective and that it has a sound system of internal control. The authority prepares an Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with *Proper Practices* which:

- summarises the accounting records for the year ended 31 March 2024; and
- confirms and provides assurance on those matters that are relevant to our duties and responsibilities as external auditors.

2 External auditor’s limited assurance opinion 2023/24

On the basis of our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, in our opinion the information in Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return is in accordance with Proper Practices and no other matters have come to our attention giving cause for concern that relevant legislation and regulatory requirements have not been met.

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

Other matters not affecting our opinion which we draw to the attention of the authority:

The council have provided minutes resolving to re-appoint the internal auditor, but the minutes do not indicate whether the independence of the internal auditor has been considered, which is not in line with best practice contained in the practitioners' guide.

(continue on a separate sheet if required)

3 External auditor certificate 2023/24

We certify that we have completed our review of Sections 1 and 2 of the Annual Governance and Accountability Return, and discharged our responsibilities under the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, for the year ended 31 March 2024.

External Auditor Name

BDO LLP - Southampton OF EXTERNAL AUDITOR

External Auditor Signature

SIGNATURE REQUIRED

Date

09 September 2024 YY

TOWN COUNCIL**25th September 2024****Safer New Forest survey**1. Introduction and reason for report

- 1.1 This council has been invited to respond to the annual Safer New Forest Survey by the end of the month. Responses to the survey questions need to be agreed.

2. Background information and options

- 2.1 As in previous years, the three questions asked are:

- What is going well in your town/parish? (*i.e. partnership working, community engagement, voluntary services*)
- What (if any) are your concerns for your town/parish regarding crime and anti-social behaviour?
- If you have outlined concerns within question 2, what would improve your area? (*town and parish, partnership working, other services*)

- 2.2 Draft responses are attached as Annexe 1. Members are invited to consider adding to, altering or deleting these.

3. Issues for decision and any recommendations

Members are requested to agree responses to the survey questions.

For further information, contact:

Christopher Wilkins, Town Clerk
Direct Dial: 01425 484720
Email: chris.wilkins@ringwood.gov.uk

Annexe 1 – Draft survey response

1. What is going well in your town/parish?
(*i.e. partnership working, community engagement, voluntary services*)

We have a good relationship with our local Police Inspector who reports to the Town Council every quarter. We are pleased to see the police surgeries taking place at the tabletop area in Waitrose and hope that residents will come along and chat to them.

We also have a close network of community groups in the town which harness volunteer labour and other resources for community benefit. Their work to support local families through the cost of living crisis and enhance our public spaces is probably helping to discourage some anti-social behaviour.

2. What (if any) are your concerns for your town/parish regarding crime and anti-social behaviour?

Part of our Parish is rural, part is town, each with differing problems. Anti-social behaviour continues to cause concern within the town and appears to be driven in part by a relative lack of facilities for more constructive activity.

A continuing public perception that reporting crime is difficult and pointless is probably leading to under-reporting and distortions in the allocation of resources.

There is a perception that shoplifting is an increasing issue, not only from the main supermarkets in the Town Centre but from other smaller, independent outlets.

3. If you have outlined concerns within question 2, what would improve your area?
(*town and parish, partnership working, other services*)

A sharper focus on allocating available financial support to the provision of enhanced recreational resources (for example, to the improvements identified and costed in our Masterplan for Carvers Recreation Ground which were derived from extensive public consultation and input from a wide variety of user groups and balance their varying needs and desires).

A fully manned Police Station in Ringwood would meet the needs of the many residents (both in Ringwood and the surrounding areas within a relatively short travelling distance) who are not able to report on-line and have stated that being able to speak to a Police Officer in person of their worries about crime and anti-social behaviour would make them feel safer within the community.”

We welcome recent initiatives to target shoplifters including the deployment of plain-clothes officers and the posting of CCTV images on social media. However, we consider that a greater pro-active approach would be beneficial, not least an increased presence of uniformed officers in the Town Centre to act as a deterrent (and to assist and support the retailers when incidents occur).

TOWN COUNCIL**25th September 2024****Council Strategy review**1. Introduction and reason for report

- 1.1 This council has adopted a strategy to identify its priorities and ensure that resources are focussed on these. It is important that this document be kept up to date and therefore reviewed regularly and updated as necessary.

2. Background information and options

- 2.1 The current version of the strategy is attached as Annexe 1. It was adopted on 27th September 2023.

3. Issues for decision and any recommendations

- 3.1 Members are requested to review the current strategy and agree any changes thought necessary.**

For further information, contact:

Christopher Wilkins, Town Clerk

Direct Dial: 01425 484720

Email: chris.wilkins@ringwood.gov.uk



Ringwood Town Council – Strategy 2023-2026

VISION

Our Council tightly focussed on helping our market town to thrive by improving the things that matter most to Ringwood residents, businesses and visitors

TODAY
Ringwood Town Council is known for organizing great events, providing oversight of planning applications, looking after valued green spaces and being a good employer

Y3 – 2025-26
Identify gaps in open space provision and options to fill them

Y2 – 2024-25
Complete new grounds department facility
Agree management plan for every open space

Y1 – 2023-24
Complete football pavilion
Complete Columbarium
Agree strategic plan for Carvers
Complete our Neighbourhood Plan

Improving our facilities, services & green spaces

Y3 – 2025-26
Plan celebration of Market Charter anniversary in 2026

Y2 – 2024 -25
Inaugurate a new event specifically to support town centre retail businesses
Agree advance plan for major events

Y1 – 2023-24
Recruit local businesses to provide stalls at events in place of businesses from out of town

Developing events

Y3 – 2025-26

Y2 – 2024-25
Promote/facilitate a business community network

Y1 - 2023-24
Identify priorities & present weaknesses
Agree a communications strategy

Improving communication with residents and businesses

Y3 – 2025-26

Y2 – 2024-25
Identify needs of growing population and gaps in provision

Y1 – 2023-24
Explore scope for improving major development decisions
Develop Thriving Market Place concept

Implementing our Neighbourhood Plan

THE FUTURE

Ringwood Town Council is

- Known for organizing great events, providing oversight of planning applications, Looking after valued green spaces and being a good employer.
- The first point of contact for all local public services in Ringwood
- Proactively engaging local people about issues that matter to them
- providing valued support to Ringwood businesses and the local economy

ENABLERS and DISRUPTORS

Skills of councillors and staff - We will encourage more training and improve our performance management processes. [Events Management Sub-Committee](#). [Volunteers](#). [Neighbourhood Plan](#)
Budget pressures and inflation – We will review our budgetary control and management of reserves

RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

FULL COUNCIL MEETING

25th September 2024

DISTRICT COUNCILLOR'S REPORT

NFDC PLACE & SUSTAINABILITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL Meeting 12 September 2024.

(Recommendations to NFDC Cabinet to meet in Autumn 2024.)

1. Waste Programme Update.

- Panel to note the new refuse service roll out is in three phases during 2025/6:-
- Lymington Depot Area June 2025,
- Ringwood Depot Area October 2025,
- Totton/Hardley Depot Area March 2026.
- New weekly food waste collection; households to have 23-litre lockable caddy for kerbside collections & smaller 7-litre caddy for kitchen use.
- New recycling & rubbish collections using Wheelie Bins; 240-litre wheelie bin for recycling one week & 180-litre wheelie bin for rubbish the following week.
- Four Weekly Glass Collections

2. Climate Change and Nature Emergency Annual Update.

- Government figures show NFDC emissions have reduced by approx. 70% from the 1990 baseline. (UK reduction is 54%).

3. Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects.

- The Panel noted the provisions of the Planning Act 2008 in relation to the process by which Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects are determined and agrees for the Council to be involved in future projects in its role as a host authority and that Planning Performance Agreements be sought from promoters and applicants for each project at the earliest stage to cover the District Council's costs.

**Cllr W Steve Rippon-Swaine FRICS DipGS
New Forest Councillor for Ringwood South**