

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 20th December 2023 at 7pm at Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood

PRESENT: Cllr Gareth DeBoos (Chairman)
Cllr Rae Frederick (Deputy Chair)
Cllr Andrew Briers
Cllr Luke Dadford
Cllr Philip Day
Cllr Mary DeBoos
Cllr Janet Georgiou
Cllr John Haywood
Cllr James Swyer
Cllr Michael Thierry
Cllr Glenys Turner
Cllr Becci Windsor

IN ATTENDANCE: Mr Chris Wilkins, Town Clerk
Mrs Jo Hurd, Deputy Town Clerk
District Cllr Jeremy Heron
District Cllr Steve Rippon-Swaine
District Cllr Nigel Linford

ABSENT: Cllr Ingrid De Bruyn
Cllr Peter Kelleher

C/7064

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

District Cllr Heron asked for further details to be made available on the proposal for parking clock subsidies, such as the criteria for eligibility and how it would be assessed, and asked how it would be fairly distributed. He commented on the Council's current proposal to increase the precept by 6%, which was double the percentage increase of the District Council, which was capped at 3%. He said he would prefer to see a lower percentage increase.

District Cllr Rippon-Swaine emphasised the value of the parking clock which, for those people working full time (an average 220 days throughout the year), would cost approximately £1 per day using the long stay clock. Also, the card can be shared between people and vehicles and can be used in any NFDC car park. The price of some elements of the scheme had been frozen for the last six years and this couldn't continue, taking into account the rising costs of managing the car parks. He appreciated that all councils are under financial pressure but felt Town Council funds could be better used.

C/7065

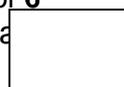
APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

The Town Clerk reported that apologies had been received from Cllr Kelleher.

C/7066

DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Haywood and Thierry declared an interest in agenda item 9 (parking subsidy scheme) as Members of New Forest District Council.



C/7067
MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 29th November 2023, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/7068
RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Cllr Briers presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 6th December 2023.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting on 6th December 2023 be received.

C/7069
PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Day presented the minutes of the Planning, Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 1st December 2023.

P/6232 – it was noted that appointment of members to the Thriving Market Place Working Party had been deferred to the next Committee meeting on 5 January. Cllrs Thierry and Haywood indicated their interest in being appointed.

P/6233 – it was noted that Gladman were currently undertaking a pre-application consultation for development on land at Snails Lane and a Members Briefing had been arranged for 11 January. This would be held jointly with Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley Parish Council.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town and Environment Committee meeting held on 1st December 2023 be received.

C/7070
POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr M DeBoos presented the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 13th December 2023.

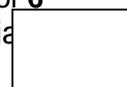
RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 13th December 2023 be received.

C/7071
COUNCILLOR-OFFICER PROTOCOL (REVISED)

Following discussion at the last meeting (C/7058 refers) Members considered approving the revised Councillor-Officer Protocol (*Annex A*). The section on page 6 relating to attendance at meetings had been amended.

Some Members felt it was a shame that such a protocol was required as no problems have been experienced by the Council. However, by outlining roles of members and officers and the standards and conduct expected, it would provide insurance against any future issues.

There was a proposal to note the protocol and to take time to explore the subject further and provide examples of situations that may occur, but this was not supported.



It was suggested that paragraphs are numbered to facilitate easy reference to the document.

RESOLVED: That the Councillor-Officer Protocol be adopted.

ACTION C Wilkins

C/7072

SAFER NEW FOREST SURVEY REPORT

Members considered a report resulting from a safety survey carried out to inform the Council's response to the annual Safer New Forest Survey (*Annex B*).

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

ACTION C Wilkins

C/7073

TEN – ACRE FIELD LEASE SEALING

Members considered approving use of the Council's Common Seal to execute the Ten-Acre Field lease (*Annex C*). The replaces the lease currently held by NFDC and represents a substantial concession on ground rent.

RESOLVED: That use of the Council's Common Seal be approved to execute the lease for the Ten-Acre Field at Long Lane.

ACTION C Wilkins

C/7074

PARKING SUBSIDY SCHEME

Members considered a motion proposed by the Town Mayor to facilitate the award of cash subsidies to low-income employees of Ringwood town centre businesses to assist the purchase by each of a 2024 NFDC Long Stay Parking Clock (*Annex D*). This was in response to over 100 representations from residents and businesses concerned about the increased cost, and it was intended to use the Mayor's allowance to seed fund.

Whilst sympathetic to the impact of the cost of living crisis, Members did not support the motion for various reasons, including:

- No costings had been provided;
- There were other ways to support people in need;
- It would set a precedent;
- It would only help a limited number of people;
- It would be a mis-use of tax payers money;
- There was insufficient detail of how the scheme would operate and the Council would have no control;
- It would be subsidising employers who aren't paying their employees the living wage.

Instead, Members felt the Council should be expressing concern to NFDC about the high increases and asking for this to be reviewed.

Therefore, with regret, the Town Mayor withdrew the motion.

RESOLVED: That the motion be withdrawn.

ACTION C Wilkins

C/7075

RINGWOOD BUSINESS COMMUNITY

Members considered a report from Cllr Frederick with regard to the newly formed Ringwood Business Community (*Annex E*).

It was noted there are other business networking forums in the town, but the aim of the RBC is to create a core business community for the town, encouraging networking with a purpose and working within the community for the community.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That Cllr Frederick be appointed to represent the Council on Ringwood Business Community;
- 2) That information be included on the Council's website to support and promote Ringwood Business Community, and authority be delegated to officers in liaison with Cllr Frederick to agree where this sits best.

ACTION J Hurd

C/7076

SPORTS DEVELOPMENT PROJECT AT LONG LANE

The Town Clerk reported the project is progressing on track and on budget. The local MP has been invited to view progress and receive a briefing on the project. The Pavilion Construction Contract is now complete and has been negotiated in detail by the project architect and QS with the contractors. Members were asked to consider approving use of the Council's Common Seal to execute the Pavilion Construction Contract (*available to view on the Council's website - [here](#)*)

Members thanked the Town Clerk for his work on this project.

In response to a question about usage of the pitches, it was noted there is competition for use of the artificial grass pitch but feedback from Ringwood Town Football Club is that it has transformed the youth teams experience as they are now able to play games they wouldn't have been able to previously due to poor weather and pitch conditions. There have been some changes to scheduling, but this is due to the Community Sports Trust offering a wider range of uses.

RESOLVED:

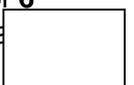
- 1) That use of the Council's Common Seal be approved to execute the Pavilion Construction Contract; and
- 2) That the Town Clerk's verbal report be received.

ACTION J Hurd

C/7077

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED

The Town Mayor reported that he had attended the Danny Cracknell Homeless Appeal at Ringwood School and the Veterans Christmas Celebration at Greyfriars.



C/7078

REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County and District Cllr Thierry has been dealing with numerous flooding enquiries. There were a number of hot spots and he had asked officers to look at these, and to ensure ditches were cleared.

District Cllr Heron commented on the reported closure of Ringwood Brewery by Carlsberg Marston who had advised they were looking to sell the site and move production to the Midlands. NFDC has expressed disappointment, as had the local MP, and the desire to have a dialogue about keeping the brewery in Ringwood. Unfortunately, there was little hope this could be achieved.

District Cllr Rippon-Swaine reported that the Leader of the Council had written to MPs regarding bank closures, highlighting the situation with regard to the older population and general access to cash, which appeared to have been totally disregarded. He said he had sympathy as an individual with regards to the parking clock increases, and undertook to make sure the price is right in the next review and communication is improved.

District Cllr Haywood thanked NFDC for their effort with regard to Ringwood Brewery and expressed disappointment that Carlsberg Marston didn't appear to have engaged in process. The Brewery had put the town on the map and it would be sad to see it go. He had written to HCC on behalf of residents of Ringwood North regarding flooding issues and maintenance of drains.

District Cllr Linford reported that Bransgore had been cut off during the recent floods. He had attended Ringwood School's carol concert and said the school was a credit to the town.

C/7079

REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCILLORS

Cllr Frederick had received many emails about flooding, and had encouraged individuals to report incidents direct to HCC - <https://www.hants.gov.uk/transport/roadmaintenance/roadproblems/flooding>.

Cllr Turner said it was good to see the Crow Arch Lane allotment site ready for use. It was noted that plots were now starting to be let.

Cllr Swyer reported that he had carried out a SWOT analysis of the recent communications survey. The next meeting of the Communications Task & Finish Group would be held in January.

Cllr Georgiou was concerned about flooding on Hightown Hill and Crow Hill, where drains were blocked and springs were discharging on to the A31.

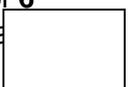
C/7080

FORTHCOMING MEETINGS

Forthcoming Meetings – to note the following dates:

Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 3 rd January 2024
Planning, Town and Environment	10.00am	Friday 5 th January 2024
Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 24 th January 2024
Full Council	7.00pm	Wednesday 31 st January 2024

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.44pm.



APPROVED
31st January 2024

TOWN MAYOR

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 The purpose of this Protocol is to guide councillors and officers of the council in their relations with one another. The Protocol's intention is to build and maintain good working relationships between councillors and officers as they work together. Employees who are required to give advice to councillors are referred to as "officers" throughout. References to the Proper Officer are to the Town Clerk unless otherwise stated.

1.2 A strong, constructive, and trusting relationship between councillors and officers is essential to the effective and efficient working of the council.

1.3 This Protocol also seeks to reflect the principles underlying the Code of Conduct which applies to councillors and the employment terms and conditions of officers. The shared objective is to enhance and maintain the integrity (real and perceived) of local government.

1.4 The following extract from the Local Government Association guidance on the 2020 Model councillor Code of Conduct states that:

"Both councillors and officers are servants of the public and are indispensable to one another. Together, they bring the critical skills, experience and knowledge required to manage an effective local authority.

At the heart of this relationship, is the importance of mutual respect. Councillor-officer relationships should be conducted in a positive and constructive way. Therefore, it is important that any dealings between councillors and officers should observe reasonable standards of courtesy, should show mutual appreciation of the importance of their respective roles and that neither party should seek to take unfair advantage of their position or seek to exert undue influence on the other party.

Councillors provide a democratic mandate to the local authority and are responsible to the electorate whom they represent. They set their local authority's policy framework, ensure that services and policies are delivered and scrutinise local authority services.

[Councillors of the executive,] Chairs and vice chairs of committees have additional responsibilities. These responsibilities will result in increased expectations and relationships with officers that are more complex. Such councillors must still respect the impartiality of officers and must not ask them to undertake work of a party-political nature or compromise their position with other councillors or other officers.

Officers provide the professional advice and managerial expertise and information needed for decision making by councillors and to deliver the policy framework agreed by councillors. They are responsible for implementing decisions of councillors and the day-to-day administration of the local authority.

The roles are very different but need to work in a complementary way.

It is important for both sides to respect these differences and ensure that they work in harmony. Getting that relationship right is an important skill. That is why the code requires councillors to respect an officer's impartiality and professional expertise. In turn officers should respect a councillor's democratic mandate as the people accountable to the public for the work of the local authority. It is also important for a local authority to have a councillor-officer protocol which sets out how this relationship works and what both councillors and officers can expect in terms of mutual respect and good working relationships."

1.5 This Protocol covers:

- The respective roles and responsibilities of the councillors and the officers;
- Relationships between councillors and officers;
- Where/who a councillor or an officer should go to if they have concerns;
- Who is responsible for making decisions.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 This Protocol is intended to assist councillors and officers, in approaching some of the sensitive circumstances which arise in a challenging working environment.

2.2 The reputation and integrity of the council is significantly influenced by the effectiveness of councillors and officers working together to support each other's roles.

2.3 The aim is effective and professional working relationships characterised by mutual trust, respect and courtesy. Overly close personal familiarity between councillors and officers is not recommended as it has the potential to damage this relationship

3. ROLES OF COUNCILLORS AND OFFICERS

The respective roles of councillors and officers can be summarised as follows:

- Councillors and officers are servants of the public and they are indispensable to one and other, but their responsibilities are distinct.
- Councillors are responsible to the electorate and serve only for their term of office.
- Officers are responsible to the council. Their job is to give advice to councillors and to the council, and to carry out the council's work under the direction and control of the council and relevant committees.

3.1 Councillors

3.1.1 Councillors have four main areas of responsibility:

- To determine council policy and provide community leadership;
- To monitor and review council performance in implementing policies and delivering services;
- To represent the council externally; and
- To act as advocates for their constituents.

3.1.2 All councillors have the same rights and obligations in their relationship with officers, regardless of their status and should be treated equally.

3.1.3 Councillors should not involve themselves in the day to day running of the council. This is the responsibility of the Proper Officer and other employees, all of whom will be acting on instructions from the council or its committees, within agreed job descriptions. The council or its committees may from time to time delegate specific authority to individual councillors to undertake tasks such as research and information gathering and (exceptionally) other matters usually dealt with by officers but, as a general rule, councillors should not engage (or expect to be engaged) in the following:

- Preparation of reports to the council or its committees;
- Drafting of legal, policy or other documents;
- Arranging the procurement, purchase or ordering of goods or services by or on behalf of the council;
- Attending meetings with other parties or agencies to discuss council business (save as appointed representatives or unless accompanied by the appropriate officer or officers).

3.1.4 In line with the council's Code of Conduct, a councillor must treat others with respect, must not bully or harass people and must not do anything which compromises, or is likely to compromise, the impartiality of those who work for, or on behalf of, the council.

3.1.5 Officers can expect councillors:

- to give strategic leadership and direction and to seek to further their agreed policies and objectives with the understanding that councillors have the right to take the final decision on issues based on advice
- to act within the policies, practices, processes and conventions established by the council
- to work constructively in partnership with officers acknowledging their separate and distinct roles and responsibilities
- to understand and support the respective roles and responsibilities of officers and their associated workloads, pressures and reporting lines
- to treat them fairly and with respect, dignity and courtesy
- to act with integrity, to give support and to respect appropriate confidentiality
- to recognise that officers do not work under the instruction of individual councillors or groups
- not to subject them to bullying, intimidation, harassment, or put them under undue pressure.
- to treat all officers, partners (those external people with whom the council works) and members of the public equally, and not discriminate based on any characteristic such as age, sex, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or religion.
- not to request officers to exercise discretion which involves acting outside the council's policies and procedures

- not to authorise, initiate, or certify any financial transactions or to enter into any contract, agreement or undertaking on behalf of the council or in their role as a councillor without proper and lawful authority
- not to use their position or relationship with officers to advance their personal interest or those of others or to influence decisions improperly
- to comply at all times with the council's Code of Conduct, the law, and such other policies, procedures, protocols and conventions agreed by the council.
- to respect the impartiality of officers and not undermine their role in carrying out their duties
- not to ask officers to undertake work, or act in a way, which seeks to support or benefit a particular political party or gives rise to an officer being criticised for operating in a party-political manner
- not to ask officers to exceed their authority where that authority is given

3.2 Chairs and vice-chairs of council and committees

Chairs and vice-chairs have additional responsibilities as delegated by the council. These responsibilities mean that they may have to have a closer working relationship with officers than other councillors do. However, they must still respect the impartiality of officers and must not ask them to undertake work or anything else which would prejudice their impartiality.

3.3 Officers

3.3.1 The primary role of officers is to advise, inform and support all members and to implement the agreed policies of the council.

3.3.2 Officers are responsible for day-to-day managerial and operational decisions within the council, including directing and overseeing the work of any more junior employees. Councillors should avoid inappropriate involvement in such matters.

3.3.3 In performing their role officers will act professionally, impartially and with neutrality. Whilst officers must respect a councillor's view on an issue, no officer should be influenced or pressured to make comments, or recommendations which are contrary to their professional judgement or views.

3.3.4 Officers must:

- implement decisions of the council and its committees which are lawful, which have been properly approved in accordance with the requirements of the law and are duly recorded. This includes respecting the decisions made, regardless of any different advice given to the council or whether the decision differs from the officer's view.
- work in partnership with councillors in an impartial and professional manner
- treat councillors fairly and with respect, dignity and courtesy

- treat all councillors, partners and members of the public equally, and not discriminate based on any characteristic such as age, sex, race, sexual orientation, gender identity, disability or religion.
- assist and advise all parts of the council. Officers must always act to the best of their abilities in the best interests of the authority as expressed in the council's formal decisions.
- respond to enquiries and complaints in accordance with the council's standards protocol
- be alert to issues which are, or are likely to be, contentious or politically sensitive, and be aware of the implications for councillors, the media or other sections of the public.
- act with honesty, respect, dignity and courtesy at all times
- provide support and learning and development opportunities for councillors to help them in performing their various roles in line with the council's training and development policy
- not seek to use their relationship with councillors to advance their personal interests or to influence decisions improperly
- comply, at all times, with the council's Employee Handbook, and all other policies or procedures approved by the council that are relevant

3.3.5 Officers will frequently and routinely attend meetings with other parties or agencies to discuss council business. Whenever arranging or agreeing to attend such meetings, officer should consider the following:

- (a) if the Council has appointed a representative to that agency, whether they should be informed, consulted about the subject matter or even invited to attend as well (if the council has appointed more than one representative, all should be treated equally);
- (b) in any other case, whether councillors should be informed, invited to suggest questions or invited to attend as well. The officer should exercise judgement about whether these obligations should apply to all councillors or be restricted to the Town Mayor (or deputy) or the chair (or deputy) of the relevant committee, sub-committee, working party or task-and-finish group.

It is important that officers respect the spirit as well as the letter of the foregoing principles and take particular care when subject matter is politically sensitive. However, councillors should be aware that other participants may prefer to meet without councillors being present and in such cases, their presence will not be possible.

3.3.6 Officers have the right not to support councillors in any role other than that of councillor, and not to engage in actions incompatible with this Protocol. Officers must never actively seek to undermine majority decisions of the corporate body or criticize such decisions or individual councillors at meetings held in public or on social media.

3.3.7 In giving advice to councillors, and in preparing and presenting reports, it is the responsibility of the officer to express his/her own professional views and recommendations. An officer may report the views of individual councillors on an issue,

but the recommendation should be the officer's own. If a councillor wishes to express a contrary view they should not pressurise the officer to make a recommendation contrary to the officer's professional view, nor victimise an officer for discharging his/her responsibilities.

3.4 Special situations

3.4.1 There are exceptional circumstances where a councillor can fulfil the role of an officer, for example where there is a vacancy. This can only be done if the councillor is not paid for the role and should only ever be short-term while the council seeks to fill a vacancy. Whenever this situation arises, care will need to be exercised to ensure there is clarity about when the councillor is acting as a councillor and when acting as an officer.

3.4.2 Whilst individual councillors should always be free to maintain and express their disagreement with decisions of the council, no councillor should ever actively seek to undermine majority decisions of the corporate body, as this could then bring them into conflict with officers who have been charged with promoting and implementing the council's collectively-determined course of action.

3.4.3 Councillors should not raise matters relating to the conduct or capability of an officer, or of officers collectively, in a manner that is incompatible with this Protocol at meetings held in public or on social media. This is a long-standing tradition in public service. An officer has no means of responding to criticisms like this in public.

3.4.5 A councillor who is unhappy about the actions taken by, or conduct of, an officer should:

- avoid personal attacks on, or abuse of, the officer at all times
- ensure that any criticism is well founded and constructive
- ensure that any criticism is made in private
- take up the concern with the chair

3.4.6 Neither should an officer raise with a councillor matters relating to the conduct or capability of another councillor or officer or to the internal management of the council in a manner that is incompatible with the objectives of this Protocol.

3.4.7 Close personal relationships between councillors and officers can confuse their separate roles and get in the way of the proper conduct of council business, not least by creating a perception in others that a particular councillor or officer is getting preferential treatment.

3.4.8 Councillors are always entitled to communicate with the Proper Officer who should make every reasonable effort to respond promptly and helpfully to communications from councillors. Councillors may also communicate directly with other officers concerning matters within their respective areas of responsibility but must not abuse such direct access to undermine the authority of the Proper Officer as the council's head of paid service or circumvent his/her line-management responsibilities for all other council staff.

Councillors should not give instructions directly to the Proper Officer's staff without the express approval of the Proper Officer. If an officer asks a councillor to direct their communication to the Proper Officer instead, the councillor should respect that request.

4. COUNCILLORS' ACCESS TO INFORMATION AND TO COUNCIL DOCUMENTS

4.1 Councillors are free to approach officers to provide them with such information, explanation and advice as they may reasonably need in order to assist them in discharging their role as members of the council. This can range from a request for general information about some aspect of the council's activities to a request for specific information on behalf of a constituent. Such approaches should normally be directed to the Officer.

4.2 The legal rights of councillors to inspect council documents are covered partly by statute and partly by the common law.

4.3 The common law right of councillors is based on the principle that any member has a prima facie right to inspect council documents so far as their access to the documents is reasonably necessary to enable the member properly to perform their duties as a member of the council. This principle is commonly referred to as the "need to know" principle.

4.4 The exercise of this common law right depends therefore upon the councillor's ability to demonstrate that they have the necessary "need to know". In this respect a member has no right to "a roving commission" to go and examine documents of the council. Mere curiosity is not sufficient. The crucial question is the determination of the "need to know". This question must be determined by the officer.

4.5 In some circumstances (e.g. a committee member wishing to inspect documents relating to the functions of that committee) a councillor's "need to know" will normally be presumed. In other circumstances (e.g. a councillor wishing to inspect documents which contain personal information about third parties) a councillor will normally be expected to justify the request in specific terms. Any council information provided to a councillor must only be used by the councillor for the purpose for which it was provided i.e. in connection with the proper performance of the councillor's duties as a member of the council.

4.6 For completeness, councillors do, of course, have the same right as any other member of the public to make requests for information under the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

5. CORRESPONDENCE

5.1 Correspondence between an individual councillor and an officer should not normally be copied (by the officer) to any other councillor. Where exceptionally it is necessary to copy the correspondence to another councillor, this should be made clear to the original councillor. In other words, a system of "silent copies" should not be employed. Acknowledging that the "BCC" system of e-mailing is used, it should be made clear at the

foot of any e-mails if another councillor has received an e-mail by adding “CC councillor X.”

5.2 Official letters or emails on behalf of the council should normally be sent out under the name of an officer, rather than under the name of a councillor. It may be appropriate in certain circumstances (e.g. representations to a Government Minister) for a letter or email to appear over the name of the chair, but this should be the exception rather than the norm. Letters or emails which, for example, create obligations or give instructions on behalf of the council should never be sent out in the name of a councillor. Councillors should not use the Town Crest or official council stationery without the prior approval of the Proper Officer (save that the Town Mayor or the Deputy Town Mayor may issue letters (which include the Town Crest and/or use official stationery) in response to invitations, hospitality or gifts received, etc. provided the content of these is strictly limited to the matter in hand and include no comment on council policy or other politically sensitive matters).

5.3 Correspondence to individual councillors from officers should not be sent or copied to complainants or other third parties if they are marked “confidential”. In doing so, the relevant officer should seek to make clear what is to be treated as being shared with the councillor in confidence only and why that is so.

6. PRESS AND MEDIA

6.1 Councils are accountable to their electorate. Accountability requires local understanding. This will be promoted by the council, explaining its objectives and policies to the electors and customers. Councils use publicity to keep the public informed and to encourage public participation. The council needs to tell the public about the services it provides. Good effective publicity should aim to improve public awareness of the council’s activities. Publicity is a sensitive matter in any political environment because of the impact it can have. Expenditure on publicity can be significant.

6.2 Officers may respond to press enquiries but should confine any comments to the facts of the subject matter and the professional aspects of the function concerned. On no account must an officer expressly or impliedly make any political opinion, comment or statement.

6.3 Any press release that may be necessary to clarify the council’s position in relation to disputes, major planning developments, court issues or individuals’ complaints should be approved by the relevant officer.

6.4 The Mayor and the chairs of committees may act as spokespersons for the council in responding to the press and media and making public statements on behalf of the council or the relevant committee but should liaise with the relevant officer on all forms of contact with the press and media. The council may also appoint individual councillors as spokespeople where there is an area of particular expertise but this should only be done with the agreement of the council.

6.5 The council must comply with the provisions of the Local Government Act 1986 (“the Act”) regarding publicity. All media relations work will comply with the national Code of Practice for Local Government Publicity. The Code is statutory guidance and the council must have regard to it and follow its provisions when making any decision on publicity.

6.6 The LGA has produced useful guidance on the Publicity Code - <https://www.local.gov.uk/publications/short-guide-publicity-during-pre-election-period>

6.7 For more detailed information and guidance regarding the role of councillors in connection with the use of social media, reference should be made to the council’s Social Media Protocol where there is one in place.

7. IF THINGS GO WRONG

From time to time the relationship between councillors and officers (or other employees) may break down or become strained. Whilst it is always preferable to resolve matters informally, it is necessary to have and follow formal protocols or procedures in cases of need.

7.1 Procedure for officers:

7.1.1 Officers should raise any concerns they may have about breaches (or alleged breaches) of this protocol by a councillor or councillors with the Proper Officer in the first instance. The Proper Officer should raise the matter informally with the councillor or councillors concerned and may seek support from the Town Mayor. The principal council’s monitoring officer may be able to offer a mediation/conciliation role or it may be necessary to seek independent advice.

7.1.2 If an employee’s concern cannot be resolved informally, the employee should proceed in accordance with the council’s grievance procedure. No councillor should attempt to deal with employee grievances on their own. The necessary authority has already been delegated to the Council’s Staffing Committee

7.1.3 Where the matter relates to a formal written complaint alleging a breach of the council’s Code of Conduct the matter must be referred to the principal council’s monitoring officer in the first instance in line with the Localism Act 2011. The council may however try to resolve any concerns raised informally before they become a formal written allegation.

7.2 Procedure for councillors:

If a councillor is dissatisfied with the conduct, behaviour or performance of an officer or other employee, the matter should be reported to the chair and then raised with the Proper Officer in the first instance. If the matter cannot be resolved informally, it may be necessary to invoke the council’s disciplinary procedure. Again, no councillor should attempt to deal with disciplinary, performance management or line-management issues on their own. The necessary authority has already been delegated to the Council’s Staffing Committee.

**Report on a research exercise
to identify and assess the concerns of the public
about issues of safety in Ringwood**

Date of Report
14th November 2023

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1. Introduction

Each year, the NFDC invites town councils within their district to contribute to an assessment of safety issues in the New Forest.

Ringwood Town Council (RTC) agreed to a proposal that this year it would be informative to conduct a simple survey amongst the people of Ringwood to provide input to the Town Council's response to the NFDC request. A simple questionnaire was designed, incorporating the questions posed by the NFDC. We used open questions to allow the respondent to submit answers in their own words. It was felt that, on a subject of some sensitivity where no previous research amongst the public had been undertaken, an open question questionnaire would give the respondents maximum freedom to choose how to answer and would provide us with the best indication of areas of safety concern, if any.

When the questionnaire was ready to "go live" on 26th October 2023, the NFDC informed RTC that the deadline for responses would be 5th November 2023, that collation of NFDC community engagement had already been completed with 400 community responses received throughout the NFDC area of 178,000 residents but if we wished to continue with the survey they would have no objection.

The survey "went live" on the afternoon of Thursday 26th October and was advertised on the Ringwood Town Council website and Facebook Page. Completed responses from 57 participants were received 9th November and analysed by 14th November 2023.

As we had missed the deadline for submission to the Strategic Report, it is hoped this report will be used to inform the Council and local police of Ringwood residents' concerns; and will provide useful additional input to the NFDC's periodic research into safety issues in their District.

All respondents were guaranteed complete confidentiality. The only classification data gathered was the age and sex of the respondent.

It should be clearly understood that, although we have presented the results in tabular and chart form, this research is essentially qualitative. In other words it is intended to identify possible general concerns (if any) about safety issues, and to inform any future research (whether qualitative or quantitative). That said, there are safety issues which, if raised by anyone, merit serious consideration. Concern about the lack of effective policing in Ringwood is one such concern and, while not suggesting Ringwood has a major drug problem, another concern is that drug-taking and dealing were mentioned as issues by no less than five respondents.

One final caveat. The survey reveals the perceptions of respondents. How far these perceptions correspond with reality can be determined only by evidence (e.g. police prompt attendance at crime scenes; effective follow-up on evidence provided by victims of crime; police engagement with the safety concerns of the public). **Assessment of the validity of criticism of the police is outside the scope of this survey, except insofar as respondents cite factual evidence of poor police response.**

2. A general question about Ringwood

The questionnaire began with a general question about the current state of Ringwood. It did not focus on safety; rather it invited respondents to think of “What is good about Ringwood”. The results are of interest and use to Ringwood Town Council but are only marginally informative about safety issues.

The top quality of the Ringwood brand is confirmed as its strong community spirit (19 mentions), supported by another 11 mentions of good community projects. There is no doubt from this and other research that the people of Ringwood have an extraordinarily powerful sense of community. Its care for the elderly, its wide range of highly successful sports activities, the work of its churches and the plethora of other charitable institutions, testify to Ringwood’s powerful social cohesion.

It is also noteworthy that 11 respondents, unprompted, remarked that Ringwood was “a good place to live”, and there were a further five mentions that Ringwood was “generally a safe place to live”; while two respondents remarked on the low level of anti-social behaviour..

Other aspects of the town singled out for praise were:

good entertainment; good range of shops; good town appearance; well organised social events; improved road network.

What's good about Ringwood?		
COMMENT	Mentions	%
Strong community spirit	19	33%
Good place to live	11	19%
Good range of community projects	11	19%
Good entertainment	7	12%
Good range of shops	7	12%
Generally safe place to live	6	11%
Good town Appearance	5	9%
Well-organised events	4	7%
Road network improved	4	7%
Low level of anti-social behaviour	2	4%
Good facilities	1	2%
TOTAL	77	
BASE		57



3. Public concerns about safety

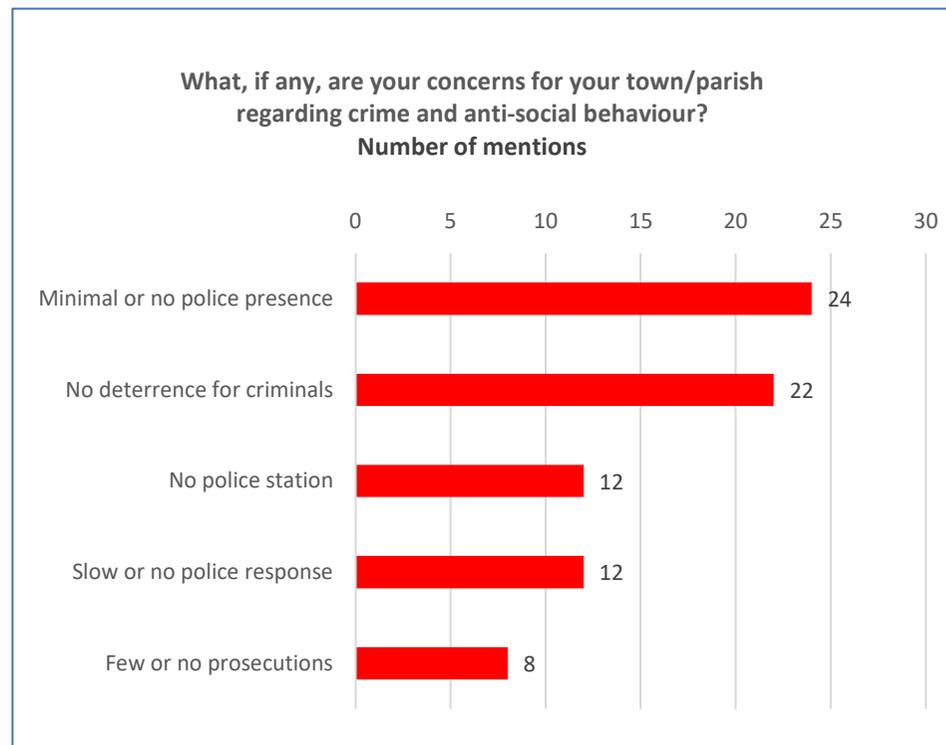
3.1 Concerns about the Police

It is immediately apparent that the key safety issue in the minds of the respondents was the view that there is a lack of effective policing in Ringwood.

Although a sample of 57 is obviously not statistically significant, this result is clearly indicative of intense dissatisfaction about the police service - at least in some sections of the Ringwood community.

The chart lists the reason for this dissatisfaction.

A reading of the answers in the questionnaires reveals anger, frustration and resignation about the situation. The criticism seems to have at its core the view that the level of policing provided for Ringwood is seriously inadequate. As a result, there is evidence of concern that, while there may be a general impression that all is well, it is not so. Furthermore, some are worried that the situation, if not remedied, will inevitably deteriorate.



“We have a history of break-ins/robberies in our neighbourhood (Hightown Hill) and it is very worrying, particularly if we go out of an evening or away for a weekend.”

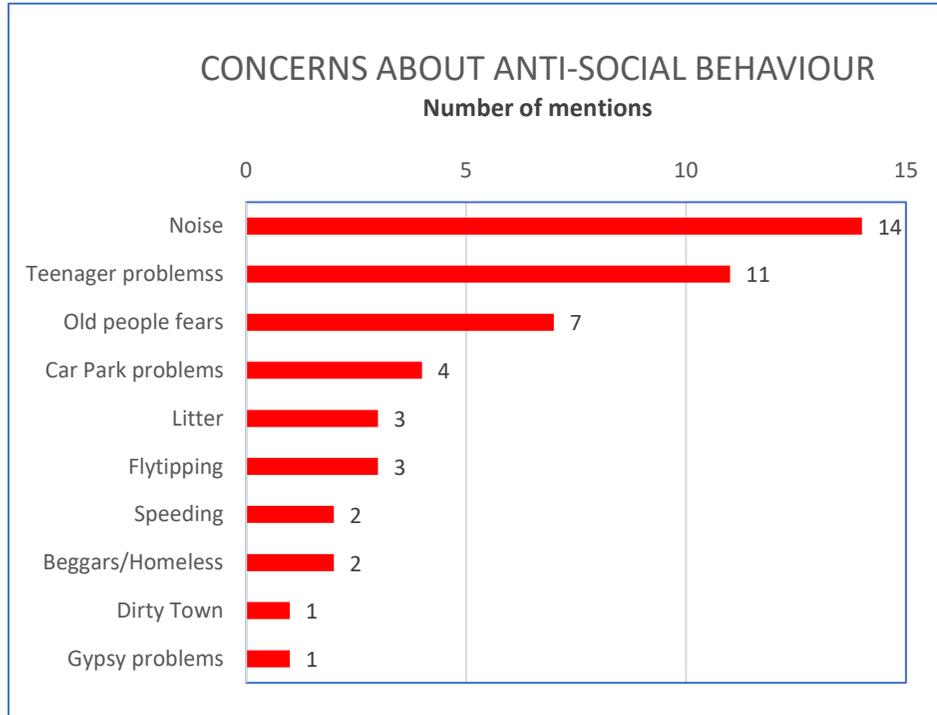
“Seems to be crime in my area every week and nothing done about it. I don't like leaving home empty even though we have CCTV .”

“Crime is an issue. Reporting is a waste of time, as we do not have a police station in Ringwood any longer. Burglaries and attempted burglaries around Hightown Hill/Forest Lane are a constant worry. The police are basically not interested, even when someone has a CCTV recording of the attempt!”

“The Hampshire Tory PCC, getting loads of our Council Tax and decimating our police service, when did we last see a Traffic Officer, a police officer, a PCSO, it was nice to see some walking around during the Carnival.”

“There doesn't appear to be any deterrent for crime in the area apart from that provided by residents themselves.”

3.2 Concerns about anti-social behaviour



Perhaps inevitably the top complaint is noise (noise from pubs, noise from other places of entertainment, rowdy behaviour by teenagers, noise from motor vehicles and other sources).

In cities, although city-dwellers build up some tolerance, it still remains one of the main complaints about anti-social behaviour. In a small market town there is understandably less tolerance.

The main cause is that loud noise is powerfully intrusive (i.e it forces someone to hear what they don't want to hear) and indicates a callous disregard of one person's rights (to have peace and quiet) to satisfy another person's right (to enjoy themselves noisily)

The second instance of anti-social behaviour, not entirely unconnected with the first, is complaints about teenage behaviour.

“Cars screeching around Poulner late at night, around Tesco's area. And when two travellers come to Ringwood, it's not an anti-traveller comment but not really sure what to suggest. I don't feel safe when they are here because they have no accountability for their actions.”

“an annoying frequency of littering and anti-social behaviour, and little logic in planning applications”

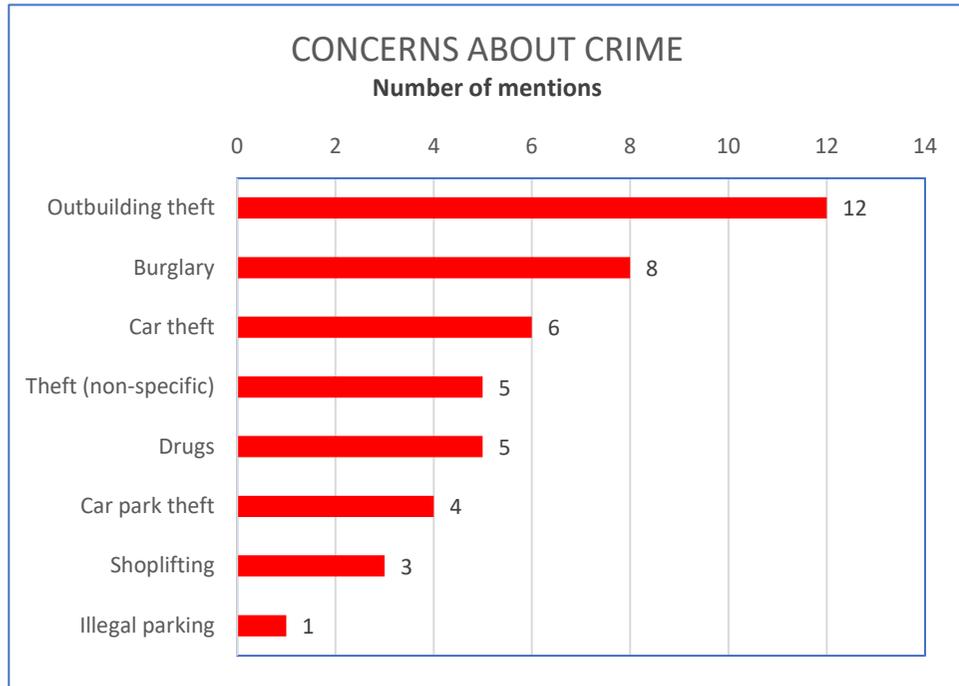
“Ongoing issues with older teens/young adults with drugs and intimidation. Break ins generally vehicles mainly vans, lack of police presence and when caught lucky if they're prosecuted.”

“Anti social behaviour around Skatepark/Carvers and near Sainsburys and Gateway when its not open.”

“Kids on scooters in the shops should be stopped. I saw an elderly lady in one shop rammed into by five teenagers (boys). They just laughed.”

“Late night surgery at Ringwood Medical Centre, with the bad weather and the sheltered areas, there are several homeless people accumulating under the shelters. As a woman on her own I was approached by a lovely chap but another was quite abusive. The police need to be aware that some practitioners are working late at night, in this case this was approx. 21.30.”

3.3 Concerns about crime



While the general impression of Ringwood is that it is a peaceful, law-abiding town, there is nevertheless an under-current of criminality which law enforcement currently does not appear to reach – and of which, it may be unaware.

While we cannot quantify the amount of theft, we can say that the incidence of outbuilding break-ins, burglary and general theft (including car theft in car parks and elsewhere) is extremely upsetting to the victims and it is disappointing that the police seem to be unable to get a grip on it.

Perhaps more alarming is the mention of drug-taking and drug-dealing. The fact that five respondents mentioned the drug problem suggests that, at least at some level, Ringwood has a problem with young people taking drugs. We cannot comment on the extent of the problem, but we can propose the problem should be recognised and investigated.

Based on the ‘broken window’ principle, we can understand why respondents feel that if nothing is done, matters will certainly deteriorate.

“Cars being broken into, anti social behaviour, house burglaries, theft, illegal parking..... you know the usual crime that never gets sorted.”

“Never see a policeman in Ringwood!! Anti-social behaviour is increasing & older residents are scared to leave their properties as a result.”

“Targeted thefts of machinery from outbuildings seems to be an episodic problem. Groups of youngsters collecting in the underpass from Gravel Lane can be intimidating especially when they are high on poppers or cannabis. There is rarely any visible presence of law enforcement and I am in town most days at various times. I think most people don’t bother reporting petty crimes to the police as they don’t feel confident of getting a response.”

3.4 Proposed improvements

The overwhelming recommendation from the research is that there needs to be a substantial increase in the police presence in Ringwood. If the people of Ringwood are to feel that problems of anti-social behaviour and criminality are to be addressed, we need more police in the town and ideally a police station from which they can operate effectively, a place where people can express their concerns and report criminal incidents. The top five recommendations all concern the police.

Four of the second five proposals focus on what we as a town or as individuals can do to combat the problems.

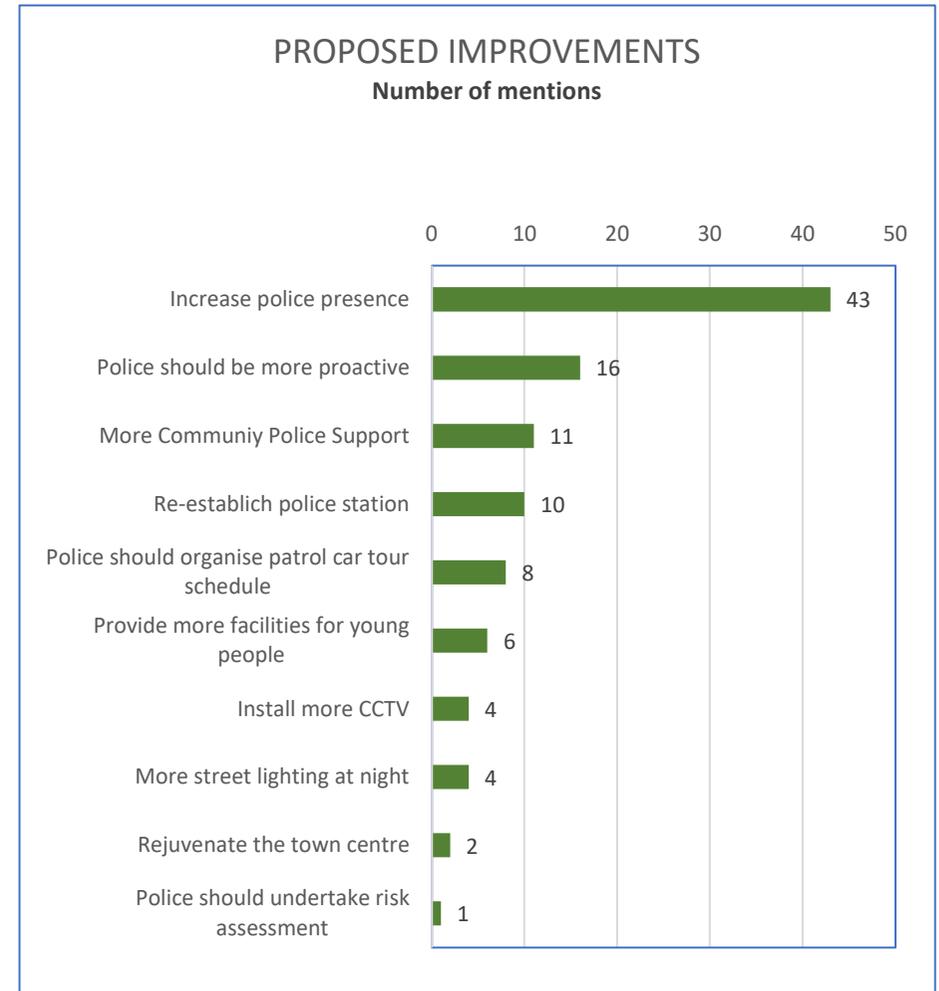
The sixth recommendation addresses the problem of anti-social behaviour and criminality by suggesting the town should provide more facilities for young people.

The seventh recommendation (the installation of CCTV) falls into the category of “self-help”, encouraged by the police but of little use if the police fail to attend incidents or to pursue criminals even when supplied with evidence of crimes.

Recommendation 8 involves the Highways Authority for street lighting and the town council for ‘footway lighting’.

Recommendation 9 falls within the remit of the town council.

The last recommendation (the police should undertake risk assessment) was proposed we infer as an attempt to persuade the police that they should take Ringwood’s problems more seriously.



4. Conclusion

Given the findings of this survey, it seems that Ringwood needs more help from the police than the police are currently providing. The perception is that crimes are not properly investigated; criminals are not prosecuted; crime increases; residents despair.

As a result, many residents decide not to report the petty (and not so petty) instances of anti-social behaviour and crime. In response, the police urge us to report incidents. If we don't their statistics are misleading, so they are right, we should report even minor transgressions of the law. But if, when we submit reports, nothing seems to happen (except the pointless generation of paperwork) most people won't bother. (Of course, if the police believe that the perception of inadequate policing is unfair, it would be helpful if they could more actively present evidence of their successful investigation of crimes and arrest of criminals.)

It can be argued that Ringwood's appeal for a stronger and more effective police presence is echoed in cities, town and villages throughout the country. That may be true. But there must be a level of bad behaviour and criminality at which the police must act, or the people will have to abandon all hope of a civilised society. It is for the authorities to judge when that level has been reached. If the police do not have the resources, the Government must provide them; and the tax-payers must pay for them. It is all too easy for a decent town to deteriorate; it can happen quite quickly. But it takes decades to restore a failing town and, even with time, it is far from easy.

Ringwood is still basically a good town, with a great community spirit. Nevertheless, even this modest survey reveals that not all is well and that there is room for improvement, particularly in terms of greater police involvement and firmer enforcement of the law.

“The Broken Windows Theory of Criminology suggests that visible signs of disorder and neglect, such as broken windows or graffiti, can encourage further crime and anti-social behaviour in an area, as they signal a lack of order and law enforcement.”

Technical Appendix

Classification Data

SEX		
	Number	%
Male	24	42
Female	29	51
Not stated	4	7
TOTAL	57	100

AGE		
	Number	%
18 - 24	1	2
25 - 34	0	0
35 - 44	5	9
45 - 54	12	21
55 - 64	14	25
65 - 74	11	19
75 +	11	19
Not stated	3	5
TOTAL	57	100

Question Tables: Mentions and Percentages

WHAT IS GOING WELL		
COMMENT	Mentions	%
Strong community spirit	19	33%
Good place to live	11	19%
Good range of community projects	11	19%
Good entertainment	7	12%
Good range of shops	7	12%
Generally safe place to live	6	11%
Good town Appearance	5	9%
Well-organised events	4	7%
Road network improved	4	7%
Low level of anti-social behaviour	2	4%
Good facilities	1	2%
TOTAL	77	
BASE		57

PUBLIC CONCERNS: THE POLICE	Mentions	%
Minimal or no police presence	24	42%
No deterrence for criminals	22	39%
No police station	12	21%
Slow or no police response	12	21%
Few or no prosecutions	8	14%
TOTAL	78	
BASE		57

PUBLIC CONCERNS: ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR	Mentions	%
Noise	14	25%
Teenager problems	11	19%
Old people fears	7	12%
Car Park problems	4	7%
Litter	3	5%
Fly-tipping	3	5%
Speeding	2	4%
Beggars/Homeless	2	4%
Dirty Town	1	2%
Gypsy problems	1	2%
TOTAL	48	
BASE		57

PUBLIC CONCERNS: CRIME	Mentions	%
Outbuilding theft	12	21%
Burglary	8	14%
Car theft	6	11%
Theft (non-specific)	5	9%
Drugs	5	9%
Car park theft	4	7%
Shoplifting	3	5%
Illegal parking	1	2%
TOTAL	44	
BASE		57

PUBLIC CONCERNS: PROPOSED IMPROVEMENTS	Mentions	%
Increase police presence	43	75%
Police should be more proactive	16	28%
More Community Police Support	11	19%
Re-establish police station	10	18%
Police should organise patrol car tour schedule	8	14%
Provide more facilities for young people	6	11%
Install more CCTV	4	7%
More street lighting at night	4	7%
Rejuvenate the town centre	2	4%
Police should undertake risk assessment	1	2%
TOTAL	105	



Dated _____ 2023

(1) **CREST NICHOLSON OPERATIONS LIMITED**

- and -

(2) **RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL**

LEASE

of

Land at Long Lane Ringwood Hampshire

PARTICULARS

LR1.	Date of lease:	2023
LR2.	Title number:	
LR2.1	Landlord's title number:	HP854672
LR2.2	Other title number(s):	None
LR3.	Parties to this lease:	
	Landlord:	CREST NICHOLSON OPERATIONS LIMITED whose registered office is at 500 Dashwood Lang Road, Bourne Business Park, Addlestone, Surrey, KT15 2HJ (Company Registration Number: 01168311)
	Tenant:	RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL of Ringwood gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood, Hampshire BH24 1AT
LR4.	Property:	In the case of a conflict between this clause and the remainder of this lease then, for the purposes of registration, this clause shall prevail The property known as Land at Long Lane, Ringwood, Hampshire and defined as the Premises in clause 1
LR5.	Prescribed statements etc:	None
LR6.	Term for which the Property is leased:	From and including 15 July 2023 To and including 14 July 2033 (referred to elsewhere in this lease as the " Contractual Term ")
LR7.	Premium:	None
LR8.	Prohibitions or restrictions on disposing of this lease:	This lease contains a provision that prohibits or restricts dispositions
LR9.	Rights of acquisition etc:	
LR9.1	Tenant's contractual rights to renew this lease, to acquire the reversion or another lease of the Property, or to acquire an interest in other land:	None
LR9.2	Tenant's covenant to (or offer to) surrender this lease:	Yes – see clause 10 of this Lease
LR9.3	Landlord's contractual rights to acquire this lease:	None

- LR10. Restrictive covenants given in this lease by the Landlord in respect of land other than the Property:** None
- LR11. Easements:**
- LR11.1 Easements granted by this lease for the benefit of the Property:** None
- LR11.2 Easements granted or reserved by this lease over the Property for the benefit of other property:** The easements set out in clause 3.4 of this Lease
- LR12. Estate rentcharge burdening the Property:** None
- LR13. Application for standard form of restriction:** None
- LR14. Declaration of trust where there is more than one person comprising the Tenant:** Not applicable

OTHER PARTICULARS

- Rent:** the yearly rent of One Thousand Pounds (£1,000.00) (subject to review pursuant to clause 5)
- Permitted Use:** use as recreational playing fields for the playing of games under proper supervision including the provision of premises for the use of not for profit non-professional clubs and societies having athletic, social or recreational objects for the purposes of providing changing facilities, parking facilities and the sale of food and drink.

THIS LEASE is made on the date and between the parties specified in the Particulars.

1. DEFINITIONS

In this Lease the following definitions apply:

1954 Act the Landlord and Tenant Act 1954;

1995 Act the Landlord and Tenant (Covenants) Act 1995;

Business Day any day from Monday to Friday (inclusive) which is not Christmas Day, Good Friday or a bank, statutory, public or common law holiday;

End of the Term the date of the expiry or earlier termination of the Term (however it arises);

Interest interest at the base lending rate from time to time of Lloyds Bank plc or (if such base lending rate ceases to be published) such other reasonably comparable rate of interest as the Landlord specifies plus in each case four per cent (4%) accruing on a daily basis;

Legal Obligation any obligation arising under any present or future statute, statutory instrument, directive, code of practice, regulation, order, notice, direction or requirement of any competent authority or court, or under common law, irrespective of the person on whom such obligation is imposed;

Liabilities costs, damages, losses and liabilities incurred or suffered by the Landlord;

Outgoings all existing and future rates, levies, duties, financial impositions and taxes, and all charges for utilities and other services, and all other outgoings;

Plan 1 the plan attached and labelled 'Plan 1';

Plan 2 the plan attached and labelled 'Plan 2';

Premises all that land shown edged red on the attached Plan 1;

Rents all sums payable under clause 3.1;

Rent Review Date the fifth anniversary of the date of this Lease;

Retained Land all that freehold land registered with title number HP854672;

Tenant's Default breach of a Tenant's Obligation or any other act, neglect or default by the Tenant or anyone acting expressly or by implication with the Tenant's authority;

Tenant's Obligation an obligation of the Tenant in this Lease;

Term the Contractual Term;

Third Party a company or partnership or any other entity or association which operates on a not for profit basis;

VAT value added tax and any tax or duty of a similar nature substituted for it or in addition to it.

2. INTERPRETATION

The following interpretation provisions apply to this Lease:

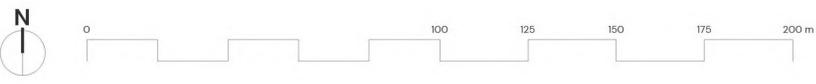
2.1 Reference to the **Landlord** includes any person for the time being entitled to the immediate reversion to this Lease and reference to the **Tenant** includes its successors in title;

2.2 Reference to a statute or statutory instrument includes all subordinate legislation made under it and any re-enactment, amendment or consolidation of it which is for the time

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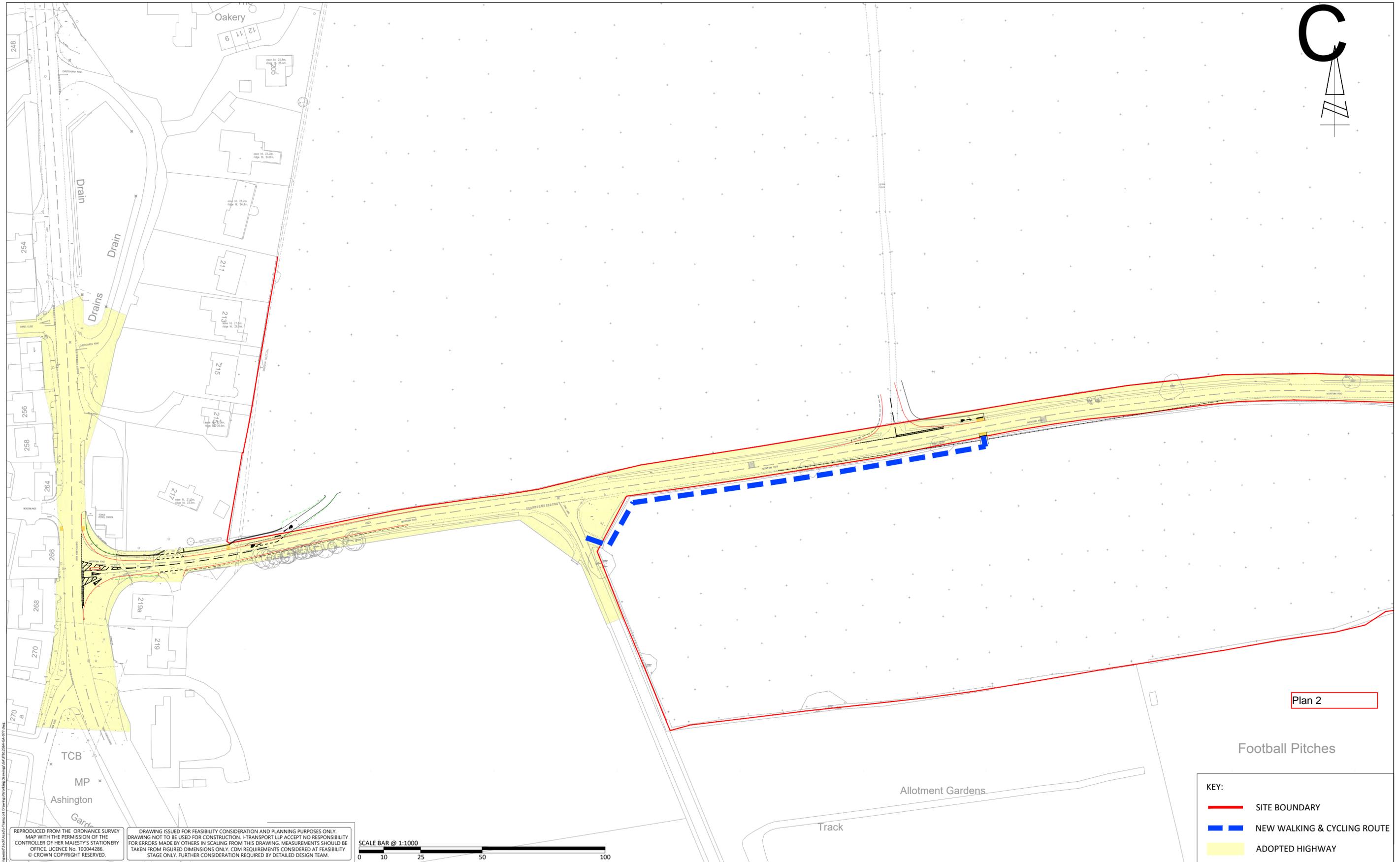
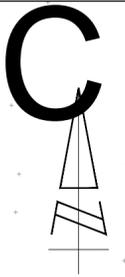
PLAN 1



LAND AT LONG LANE, RINGWOOD, HAMPSHIRE

| PEGASUSGROUP.CO.UK | TEAM/DRAWN BY: SN | APPROVED BY: JB | DATE: 05/05/2023 | SCALE: 1:1000@A1 | DRWG: P21-1078_DE_003_002 REV: | CLIENT: CREST NICHOLSON |





Plan 2

Football Pitches

Allotment Gardens

Track

KEY:

	SITE BOUNDARY
	NEW WALKING & CYCLING ROUTE
	ADOPTED HIGHWAY

REPRODUCED FROM THE ORDNANCE SURVEY MAP WITH THE PERMISSION OF THE CONTROLLER OF HER MAJESTY'S STATIONERY OFFICE. LICENCE No. 100044286 © CROWN COPYRIGHT RESERVED.

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The Square, Basing View,
Basingstoke, Hampshire, RG21 4EB
www.i-transport.co.uk

Tel: 01256 637940

REV	DATE	BY	DESCRIPTION	CHK	APP	PROJECT:	CLIENT:	DRAWN:	CHECKED:	APPROVED:
			PLANNING			LAND AT MOORTOWN LANE, RINGWOOD	CREST NICHOLSON SOUTH	SH	GT	SJ
STATUS:								PROJECT No:	SCALE @ A2:	DATE:
								ITB12364	1:1000	19.07.23
								DRAWING No:	REV:	
								ITB12364-GA-077		

INDICATIVE WALKING AND CYCLING ROUTE TO LONG LANE

LAND AT MOORTOWN LANE, RINGWOOD

CREST NICHOLSON SOUTH

ITB12364-GA-077

being in force (unless expressly provided otherwise);

- 2.3 Any person undertaking an obligation under or by virtue of this Lease which is a 'landlord covenant' for the purposes of the 1995 Act does so only until the date of the transfer by deed or operation of law (and not, where applicable, the date of registration at the Land Registry) of the immediate reversion to this Lease to another person;
- 2.4 If a party to this Lease comprises more than one person their obligations and liabilities are joint and several, and any person who has executed this Lease (or a counterpart of it) shall be bound by its terms even if any other person may not have executed it or may not be so bound;
- 2.5 An obligation by a party to this Lease not to do something includes an obligation not to allow it to be done;
- 2.6 Termination of this Lease is without prejudice to any accrued claims of any party against any other;
- 2.7 A consent or approval of the Landlord shall not be valid unless it is in writing;
- 2.8 Any payment or other consideration to be provided to the Landlord is exclusive of VAT;
- 2.9 Unless expressly provided otherwise, references to a clause or a schedule are to a clause of or a schedule to this Lease (and any schedule to this Lease forms part of this Lease), and references to a paragraph is to a paragraph of the relevant schedule in which it appears.
- 2.10 A provision of this Lease which is void or unenforceable shall be severed to the extent necessary from all other provisions of this Lease and the remaining provisions shall continue to have effect;
- 2.11 The words and expressions contained in the Particulars have the meanings specified there but as further defined (if applicable) in clause 1 and elsewhere in this Lease;
- 2.12 Headings are for ease of reference only;
- 2.13 Any references to **includes**, **include** or **including** are deemed to be followed by the words "without limitation".

3. DEMISE

- 3.1 The Landlord demises the Premises to the Tenant for the Term at the Rent and also paying by way of rent VAT and any interest the Tenant is obliged to pay.
- 3.2 The Rent is payable in advance by equal quarterly payments on every usual quarter day with the first payment being due on the date of this Lease and being a duly apportioned payment in respect of the period from and including that date to the day before the next payment date.
- 3.3 The Premises are demised subject to all matters affecting the title to the Premises.
- 3.4 The Lease is granted subject to the following reservations in favour of the Landlord and the Retained Land (as applicable):
 - 3.4.1 The right for the Landlord and those authorised by it to enter the Premises on reasonable notice (save in emergency when no notice need be given) for the purpose of ascertaining whether the terms of this Lease have been complied with and or for any other lawful purpose;
 - 3.4.2 The right for the Landlord and its successors in title to the Retained Land (or any part) and or those authorised by the Landlord to:

- 3.4.2.1 construct and install a pedestrian and cycle accessway (including ancillary bollards) at the Premises along that route shown by a blue dotted line on Plan 2 or such other route as agreed with the Tenant from time to time (such agreement not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed) and thereafter the right (subject to reasonable prior written notice to the Tenant) to enter and undertake repair maintenance cleaning and or upgrading of the same;
- 3.4.2.2 a right of way by foot and cycle over the accessways installed pursuant to 3.4.2.1 above for the purpose of access to and egress from the Retained Land to the Premises

4. TENANT'S OBLIGATIONS

The Tenant shall:

- 4.1 Make the payments due under clause 3.1 without deduction, counterclaim or set-off in accordance with clause 3.2 and, to the extent so required by the Landlord, by direct transfer of cleared funds to such bank account as the Landlord directs;
- 4.2 Promptly pay all Outgoings in respect of the Premises, their use or occupation during the Term;
- 4.3 Pay VAT on any sum due under this Lease at the same time as the sum on which it is charged;
- 4.4
 - 4.4.1 keep in proper repair and condition the hedges ditches fences and gates at the Premises;
 - 4.4.2 keep the Premises clean and tidy and free from deposits of waste rubbish or refuse;
 - 4.4.3 keep the grass in good condition and not to break up or damage the grass (save so far as is necessary for levelling and laying out playing fields and in providing associated facilities in accordance with the Permitted Use);
- 4.5 Not cut down or injure any hedges or trees nor plant any trees within a distance of 30 feet from the boundaries of the Premises fronting Moortown Lane and Long Lane provided always that the Tenant may effect marginal strengthening of the existing hedges subject to the specification of such work being first approved by the Landlord (such approval not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed);
- 4.6 Permit the exercise of all rights reserved in this Lease;
- 4.7 If there is a Tenant's Default and the Tenant does not remedy it within two (2) months (or earlier, if urgent) of being required to do so by the Landlord, allow the Landlord to remedy it and pay to the Landlord on demand as a debt all costs in so doing;
- 4.8 Within five (5) Business Days of receipt (or sooner if necessary) produce to the Landlord a certified copy of any notice, order, permission or proposal affecting the Premises or their use and (at the request of the Landlord) make or join with the Landlord in making such objections or representations as the Landlord may require;
- 4.9 Not use the Premises otherwise than for the Permitted Use nor for any dangerous, noisy or offensive purpose;
- 4.10 Not erect any building on the Premises or carry out any development at the Premises without the prior written consent of the Landlord (such consent not to be unreasonably

withheld or delayed where the proposed building or development is to facilitate the use of the Premises for the Permitted Use);

- 4.11 Not cause any nuisance of annoyance to the Landlord or any neighbouring owners or occupiers;
- 4.12 Not do anything at the Premises by reason of which the Landlord may under any statute have imposed on it or become liable to pay any penalty damages compensation costs charges or expenses;
- 4.13 indemnify the Landlord against all actions claims demands and liabilities whatsoever in respect of any damage to any property and or the death of or injury to any person arising out of the use by the Tenant of the Premises;
- 4.14
 - 4.14.1 effect and maintain in the joint names of the Landlord and Tenant such insurances and in such amounts as the Landlord may from time to time require in respect of any liability of the Tenant under clause 4.13 of this Lease;
 - 4.14.2 produce to the Landlord on demand every policy of such insurance and the receipt for the then current year's premium;
- 4.15 Comply with all Legal Obligations affecting the Premises or their use or occupation;
- 4.16 Not assign underlet charge or part with possession of occupation of the Premises provided that this shall not prevent:
 - 4.16.1 an assignment to a local authority or the statutory successor to the same;
 - 4.16.2 an underlease for nil premium and a rent which does not exceed the annual Rent due under this lease from time to time to AFC Bournemouth Community Sports Trust (company registration number 06396310 and charity registration number 1122693) provided that the provisions of sections 24 to 28 (inclusive) of the 1954 Act are excluded in relation to the tenancy created by that underlease;
 - 4.16.3 the grant of a licence(s) in favour of a Third Party for the use of a sports pitch(s) at the Premises for the Permitted Use only and provided that the licence does provide for any payment by the licensee other than a licence fee which does not exceed £50.00 plus VAT and further provided that such licence is on terms which would allow the occupier to obtain any security of tenure
- 4.17 take all steps to prevent any new window light opening doorway path passage pipe or other encroachment or easement being made or acquired in against out of or upon the Premises and notify the Landlord immediately if any such encroachment or easement shall be made or acquired (or attempted to be made or acquired) and at the request of the Landlord adopt such means as shall it required to prevent such encroachment or the acquisition of any such easement;
- 4.18 If the Rent or other sums due under this Lease are unpaid on their due date, pay to the Landlord on demand Interest on them from and including the due date for payment, whether or not there is a formal demand for payment;
- 4.19 Upon written request from the Landlord from time to time (and at the reasonable cost of the Landlord) to enter into a deed of easement for nil consideration (in a form approved by the Tenant (such approval not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed)) which provides for the following rights in favour of adjoining land to which the Landlord is or is entitled to be the registered proprietor:

- 4.19.1 the right (in addition to and without prejudice to the right reserved at clause 3.4.2 of this Lease) to construct and install further pedestrian and cycle accessways (including ancillary bollards) at the Premises along such route as agreed with the Tenant from time to time (such agreement not to be unreasonably withheld or delayed) and thereafter the right (subject to reasonable prior written notice to the Tenant) to enter and undertake repair maintenance cleaning and or upgrading of the same;
- 4.19.2 a right of way by foot and cycle over the accessways installed pursuant to 4.19.1 above for the purpose of access to and egress from the adjoining land to the Premises

5. RENT REVIEW

- 5.1 On the Rent Review Date the Rent is to increase by that amount equivalent to the increase (if any) in the Consumer Price Index (or where that is abolished any replacement equivalent index rate agreed between the Landlord and Tenant (both acting reasonably)) from the date of this Lease and the index rate as of the date one month prior to the Rent Review Date.
- 5.2 A statement of the new rent, signed by the Landlord and Tenant is to be attached to this Lease.
- 5.3 If the Landlord and Tenant have not agreed the amount of the new rent one month before the Rent Review Date, the new rent will be determined at the option of either the Landlord or the Tenant by an independent expert (being a member of the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors) the costs of which shall be borne equally between the Landlord and Tenant.
- 5.4 The Tenant is to continue paying rent at the rate applying before the Rent Review Date until the next rent payment date after the new rent is agreed or determined by an expert pursuant to this clause 5 (the Next Payment Date).
- 5.5 Starting as of the Next Payment Date and thereafter for the balance of the Term the Tenant is to pay the new rent to the Landlord pursuant to clause 3.2.
- 5.6 On the Next Payment Date the Tenant is also to pay an amount by which the new rent since the Rent Review Date exceeds the rent paid for the period between the Rent Review Date and the Next Payment Date, with interest on that amount of 2% below the Law Society's interest rate

6. LANDLORD'S OBLIGATIONS

The Landlord shall permit the Tenant quietly to enjoy the Premises without any interruption or disturbance from or by the Landlord or any person lawfully claiming under or in trust for the Landlord, except as permitted by this Lease.

7. MISCELLANEOUS

- 7.1 The Landlord does not warrant that the Premises may lawfully be used for the Permitted Use or give any warranty as to the state or condition of the Premises or their fitness for purpose.
- 7.2 The rules about serving notices in section 196 of the Law of Property Act 1925 (as amended by the Recorded Delivery Service Act 1962) apply to any notice given under this Lease (unless otherwise provided by statute).
- 7.3 If any chattels of the Tenant or of any person at the Premises remains at or on the Premises at the End of the Term the Landlord may, as agent of the Tenant (and the Landlord is irrevocably appointed by the Tenant to act a such) store of and or dispose

of those chattels and shall then hold the proceeds of sale, after deducting the costs and expenses of removal, storage and sale and any other monies due from the Tenant to the order of the Tenant or apply the same towards sums owed by the Tenant to the Landlord pursuant to this Lease Provided always that if such proceeds of sale shall be insufficient to meet the costs and expenses as aforesaid the Tenant shall pay the amount of the deficiency on demand and will indemnify the Landlord against any liability to any third party whose chattel is sold by the Landlord, having been left at the Premises at the End of the Term.

7.4 The Tenant acknowledges that it has not entered into this Lease relying on any statement or representation made by or on behalf of the Landlord but nothing in this clause will however operate to limit or exclude any liability for fraud or deliberate misrepresentation.

7.5 This Lease embodies the entire understanding of the parties to it.

8. RIGHT OF RE-ENTRY

The Landlord may forfeit this Lease by re-entering the Premises and the Term will then end in any of the following events:

8.1 the Rents or any other sums payable under this Lease are not paid within (5) Business Days after they become due (whether they are lawfully demanded or not);

8.2 there is a Tenant's Default.

9. AGREEMENT TO EXCLUDE SECTIONS 24 TO 28 OF THE 1954 ACT

9.1 The Landlord and the Tenant agree pursuant to section 38A(1) of the 1954 Act that the provisions of sections 24 to 28 (inclusive) of the 1954 Act are excluded in relation to the tenancy created by this Lease.

9.2 The Tenant confirms that not less than fourteen (14) days before the Tenant became contractually bound to enter into the tenancy created by this Lease, the Landlord served on the Tenant a notice applicable to that tenancy in accordance with section 38A(3)(a) of the 1954 Act.

10. LANDLORD'S BREAK OPTION

In the event of the Premises (or such part of it not being less than 50% of the whole) being at any point during the Term subject of a grant of planning permission for development of a nature which would be inconsistent with the Permitted Use the Landlord may determine this Lease by serving on the Tenant not less than 12 months written notice expiring at any time.

11. CONTRACTS (RIGHTS OF THIRD PARTIES) ACT 1999

A person who is not a party to this Lease has no right to enforce any term of this Lease under the Contracts (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999.

12. GOVERNING LAW AND JURISDICTION

This Lease shall be governed by and construed in accordance with the laws of England and Wales and the parties irrevocably submit to the exclusive jurisdiction of the courts of England and Wales.

This Lease is executed as a deed and is delivered and takes effect on the date set out at the beginning of this Lease.

Notice of Motion

Parking Subsidy Scheme

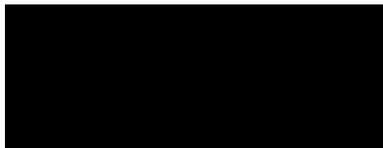
To: The Proper Officer

I give notice of my intention to move the motion set out below at the meeting of the Town Council on 20th December 2023:

“That the Town Council facilitate the award of cash subsidies to low income employees of Ringwood town centre businesses to assist the purchase by each of a New Forest District Council Parking Clock 2024 Long Stay by

- (a) Noting and approving the payment of the Mayor’s Allowance and
- (b) Awarding an Emergency Grant of such sum as the Council shall think fit to Ringwood and District Round Table (which shall have sole authority and responsibility for properly administering the funds so received and will be ring-fenced for this purpose)”

Date: 12th December 2023



.....
Cllr. G. DeBoos (Town Mayor)

Background

NFDC Long Stay Carparking Clocks for 2024 have risen in price from £140 to £220 per annum. Many of the people that purchase these clocks do so as they work in relatively modestly paid jobs within Ringwood Town Centre. The rise of £80 is roughly equivalent to a day's pay for staff on minimum wage.

I have received emails from individuals or businesses representing customers of parking clocks, most of whom (over 100) are complaining to me about the Long Stay Clock cost. Businesses are concerned that this extra burden, on top the cost of living crisis, will make it difficult to get or retain staff. According to one email: "It is difficult enough to recruit staff without them having to pay excessive parking fees".

NFDC support local businesses in a number of ways, but provision of a parking discount for employees working in the district is not one of them. It may be that this situation will change in due course.

From the perspective of RTC, our strategy document from 2023 includes Strategic Pillar 3 "*Improving communication with residents and businesses*" with an aim in the future of "*providing valued support to Ringwood Businesses and the local economy*". In addition, the emerging Ringwood Neighbourhood Plan contains 'Policy R2: maintaining a Successful and Prosperous Town Centre' and states "*The town suffers from a disconnect between the parking and public transport arrival points and parts of the primary shopping area. The policy encourages proposals to tackle these problems if the town is to continue to be sustainable*". Linked to this, there is the 'Thriving Marketplace' Working Party.

The purpose of this motion is to provide some '*valued support to Ringwood Businesses*' by reimbursing a portion of the rise in the Long Stay Clock cost to customers that:

- Are working within the town centre;
- Have purchased a Long Stay Carpark Clock;
- Are receiving the equivalent of the Living Wage or less (£11.44 per hour).

The exact mechanism by which the customers are identified and that they fit the criteria for reimbursement will need to be detailed, with considerations such as GDPR being taken into account.

The management of the financial contributions will be carried out by a third-party charity. A natural pace for this to happen would be within the STAR organisation, but this has yet to achieve charity status, so the Ringwood and District Round Table have been approached and they are happy to manage a ring-fenced fund in principle. The Round Table is a charity. Again, exact details need to be agreed and confirmation of their commitment made at their January meeting.

For the avoidance of doubt, save for the transfer of funds, there will be no impact on RTC officer time.

TOWN COUNCIL

20 December 2023

Ringwood Business Community (Networking with a Purpose) – an update from Cllr Rae Frederick

1. Introduction and reason for report

- 1.1 Ringwood Business Community was launched in October this year and had a very successful first event. This purpose of the report is to:
- i) Inform Members of how the group came about, what has happened so far, and its purpose; and
 - ii) To consider a request for a page on the Council's website.

2. Background

- 2.1 There have been several attempts over the years to set up a business forum in Ringwood; the latest being organised by retailers in the high street in response to issues caused by the A31 improvement works. However, there is not currently a cohesive business group in the town.
- 2.2 The idea for the Ringwood Business Community came about when two business people agreed to get a group of people they knew who were active in the Ringwood community together around the table to see if it could be taken forward.
- 2.3 I was invited to join a steering group and it quickly became apparent that this sits well with the Council's Strategy and therefore the Council should play a part. At the first meeting of the steering group Adam Skirton spoke about the charity he has set up - STAR (Stronger Together Across Ringwood and Fordingbridge); its purpose being to support local families out of hardship. Others around the table were unaware of the charity, and it was decided that for the first event we would introduce the charity, explain what it does and how local businesses can become involved.
- 2.4 The name Ringwood Business Community was born, with the aim to provide a forum for 'networking with a purpose' and to encourage effective business collaboration, and the first event was set for 5 October 2023. An Eventbrite page was set up for the event and spaces were limited to 40. This soon had to be increased as the event proved to be very popular amongst the business community and 75 people registered. There was no cost to attend.
- 2.5 The event began with an introduction from Richard Milner-Smith, Headteacher at Moyles Court School as they were hosting the event, followed by a talk from Adam Skirton on the work of STAR, and finally a talk from Ryan O'Shea from Empower Energy explaining what they do as a business to support STAR and how they do it. This was a very powerful talk as it was business to business and you could hear a pin drop when Ryan was speaking. After the talks, attendees were encouraged to circulate and chat to each other.
- 2.6 The steering group held a wash up meeting after the event and were delighted and encouraged at how well it had been received. There was lots of positive feedback and pledges to STAR from businesses that had attended. And perhaps more interestingly, businesses who hadn't attended have been in touch to find out the date of the next event so they can attend. It has created a stir in local business, which is terrific.

- 2.7 The next event is planned for 6 February 2024, to be held at Moyles Court School, as they are set up for large events and are keen to be involved. There will be a different focus for each event to keep it fresh.

3. Request for a page on the Town Council website

- 3.1 At the event wash up meeting it was agreed there is a need to promote the Ringwood Business Community, and suggested that a page on the Town Council's website would serve the purpose until the group becomes more established.
- 3.2 Given that the Ringwood Business Community is in its infancy and has no funds available for its own website, and that the Council's strategy includes improving communication with businesses and to promote/facilitate a business community network, it would seem a perfect match.
- 3.3 There is a need to encourage communication between businesses and the Council, and a wish to support the business community. The provision of a page for Ringwood Business Community on the Council's website would allow the Council to be at the centre of the business community. The page will require little maintenance as its main purpose will be to advertise the existence of Ringwood Business Community and to share information on future events and contact details.
- 3.4 Officers recommend the simplest solution, without requiring input from the website creators to alter the existing template, would be to add a static paragraph about the emerging group (to include contact details) in either the "Information Service and Visitor Information" or the "Special Features" section and add details of upcoming events in the "Events" and/or "News" section. It is also suggested that any agreed arrangement be for a set period of time (or until the group has a website of its own), after which a link will be added to the "Useful Links" section at the foot of the home page.

4. Issues for decision and any recommendations

Members are respectfully invited:

- 4.1 **to formally appoint Cllr Frederick to represent the Council on Ringwood Business Community;**
- 4.2 **to consider the inclusion of information on the Council's website to support and promote Ringwood Business Community and, if agreed, to agree where this should sit (from the options in paragraph 3.4) and for what period of time.**

For further information, contact:

Cllr Rae Frederick
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Jo Hurd, Deputy Town Clerk
Direct Dial: 01425 484721
Email: jo.hurd@ringwood.gov.uk