

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL

Held on Wednesday 29th January 2025 at 7pm at Ringwood Gateway, The Furlong, Ringwood

PRESENT: Cllr Rae Frederick (Chairman)
Cllr Philip Day
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

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

C/7280 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were 10 members of the public present. A spokesperson for longstanding residents of Stillwater Park spoke of their experience of issues with a neighbour who was keeping a large number of animals, which was affecting their health and wellbeing. The matter had been referred to New Forest District Council, as the owner of the site, but the situation was getting worse rather than improving. She asked for support from Members. Cllr Haywood, as a District Councillor, was working on the case and said he would be in touch to give an update.

Although Members had sympathy for the residents, it was noted that the Town Council has no powers or duties in respect of the issues raised.

There were four District Councillors in the meeting and Cllr Thierry proposed that they collectively seek an interview with the Chief Executive of New Forest District Council to discuss the matter.

C/7281 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

All Members were present.

C/7282 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were none.

C/7283
CEMETERY COMPLAINT RESOLUTION

Cllr Day gave an update, as follows:

A complaint was received at the end of October 2024 relating to a “Cemetery Management Issue”. The Clerk having been unable to resolve the matter and in accordance with the Complaints procedure arranged for a Panel to be convened to resolve the issue. The Panel consisted of Cllr Day (who led on the matter), Cllr Frederick and Cllr Haywood. The complainants were also assisted by Cllr Turner.

The complaint related to the use of a relatively small area of the car park for the storage of gravel used in the Cemetery (and the previous storage of vegetation waste) adjacent to the complainants’ family grave.

Following a site visit by the Panel, one of the complainants (accompanied by Cllr Turner) and exchanges of correspondence with all concerned, the matter was amicably resolved without the need for a formal meeting on the basis that an apology was made for any distress caused to the complainants and that a promise was made “not to place anything on that area of the car park between the storage compound and the grave again, and as soon as circumstances allow to paint yellow hatching on that area as a reminder to staff to honour that promise”.

C/7284
POLICE REPORT

Sergeant Chris Pell presented the Neighbourhood Policing Team quarterly report (*Annex A*), which had been revised in format to respond to feedback received. He ran through the crime statistics for the last quarter, which were now compared to the same period the previous year.

The issue of shoplifting across the town remains a priority. The team is working hard to be more efficient and bring offenders to justice and is making good use of facial recognition techniques. This is often linked with antisocial behaviour, which is another priority for the team.

He presented a new graph in the report showing Formal Action Taken (FAT), which demonstrates a 4% increase on the same period last year, and summarised a number of successes that had been achieved. He is proud of the work the team is doing with the limited resources they have.

In response to questions, Sergeant Pell explained the procedures for first time offenders; community protection warnings and notices; and gathering of evidence and information.

In response to the issues raised in the Open Session, he encouraged residents to report any antisocial or threatening behaviour they may be experiencing via 101 or online.

Members were pleased with the increase in Police presence of late, both physically and online, and the improved communication. Cllr Windsor said that an increased confidence in the Police was not reflected across all demographics, and she raised some specific concerns about drug problems, general crime and knife carrying – it was agreed that she would speak separately to Sergeant Pell.

Members thanked Sergeant Pell for his attendance; the work that he and his team are doing; and the informative report.

C/7285
MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting held on 18th December 2024, having been circulated, be approved and signed as a correct record.

C/7286
RECREATION, LEISURE AND OPEN SPACES COMMITTEE

Cllr Briers presented the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 8th January 2025.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Recreation, Leisure and Open Spaces Committee meeting held on 8th January 2025 be received.

C/7287
PLANNING, TOWN & ENVIRONMENT COMMITTEE

Cllr Day presented the minutes of the Planning Town & Environment Committee meeting held on 10th January 2025.

He updated on the following:

P/6389 – Planning Application 23/10821 New House, Market Place had been refused by NFDC.

P/6392 – Taylor Wimpey had declined to meet with the Council at this time to update on development of land north of Hightown Road (21/10042).

P/6392 – The Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government had made the decision not to call-in Planning Application 21/11723 for development of land at Moortown Lane.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Planning, Town and Environment Committee meeting held on 10th January 2025 be received.

C/7288
POLICY AND FINANCE COMMITTEE

Cllr M DeBoos presented the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 22nd January 2025.

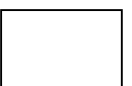
RESOLVED: That the minutes of the Policy and Finance Committee meeting held on 22nd January 2025 be received.

C/7289
COUNCIL BUDGET 2025/26

Members considered the Finance Manager's report (*Annex B*) and recommendations from Policy and Finance Committee on 22nd January 2025 (*F/6378 refers*).

RESOLVED: 1) That the budget for 2025/26 be approved; and
2) That the precept requirement of £683,620 and consequent 6.12% increase in the Council Tax, which will take the Band D equivalent Council Tax contribution for the Town Council to £124.13, be approved.

ACTION R Fitzgerald



C/7290

COMMITTEE COMPOSITION AND REPRESENTATION ON OUTSIDE BODIES

Members considered changes to the composition of council committees, sub-committees, working parties or panels, and whether to appoint a nominee to Ringwood United Charities trusteeship.

Cllr M DeBoos, a current Trustee of Ringwood United Charities, explained there was likely to be a review of the Charities' governing document with one possible change being the removal of the need for the Town Council to nominate trustees. They were currently advertising for trustees with specific skills.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That Cllr Day and Cllr Thierry be appointed to the Town Clerk Recruitment Panel; and that Cllr M DeBoos' resignation from the Panel be accepted.
- 2) That Cllr G DeBoos' resignation from Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces be accepted.
- 3) That Cllr Georgiou's resignation from Carvers Working Party be accepted.
- 4) That no councillor be appointed to Ringwood United Charities trusteeship at this time.

ACTION N Vodden

C/7291

DEVOLUTION OPPORTUNITIES

The Town Clerk gave an update on local government re-organisation in Hampshire and asked Members if they wished to discuss opportunities that may arise for devolution of services or functions to this Council and, if so, how this should be done. He stated this could have profound implications on the Council's agreed Strategy. Officers were to receive a briefing from NFDC Chief Executive on 6 March, and he hoped to have a steer from Members before then.

Cllr Thierry explained government had indicated in December 2024 that it wished to embark on a programme of devolution. In this area, that means Hampshire, Portsmouth, Southampton and Isle of Wight authorities will form part of a new enlarged authority, and New Forest District Council will need to combine with neighbouring authorities, such as Test Valley and Winchester. The government is due to make a decision on Monday whether or not to fast track the process. If it proceeds, HCC will continue for one year in its present format, with no elections taking place in May 2025. He said it was important to recognise that both HCC and NFDC could cease to exist in a very short period.

Members agreed they should consider the opportunities that might arise, but were mindful of the need to know what resources would be required and what the cost to the Council could be. As there was still much uncertainty and unanswered questions, it was agreed that Members should receive an informal briefing from officers in the first instance, and then when further detail is known, this should be discussed in a public meeting.

RESOLVED: That Members receive an informal briefing from officers on the potential opportunities arising from devolution.

ACTION C Wilkins



C/7292

COMMUNICATIONS TO BE RECEIVED

The Town Mayor reported that she had attended the following events:

- Coffee morning at Bickerley Green Care Home and gave a talk;
- A presentation of a grant award to Ellingham & Ringwood RFC from the Hall & Woodhouse Community Chest; and
- Repair Café, on the second Saturday of each month, which was going from strength to strength.

C/7293

REPORTS FROM COUNTY AND DISTRICT COUNCILLORS

County and District Councillor Thierry had no report, other than the update given on devolution earlier in the meeting.

District Cllr Haywood reported local government reorganisation was dominating discussions at NFDC. He was a member of the CIL Task & Finish Group, which had met recently to discuss bids. He noted there were few bids from this area compared to other parts of the District and encouraged community organisations to apply in future.

District Cllr Rippon-Swaine reported that work was in progress on an Air Quality Strategy for the District. He praised the performance of the Planning team in determining 85% of planning applications within nationally prescribed time frames and, of 15 appeals registered in the year, only 2 had been allowed and 13 dismissed.

District Cllr Nigel Linford reported on the new waste strategy and said that new bins would be delivered in the Ringwood area from August. He said there was to be a by-election for Bransgore, Burley, Sopley and Ringwood East ward on 13 February, following the resignation of Cllr Neil Millington.

C/7294

REPORTS FROM TOWN COUNCILLORS

Cllr Kelleher had taken part in the first Speedwatch of the year in Ringwood North, and these will now take place monthly.

Cllr Georgiou had attended a NFALC meeting and noted that members of CPRE had free access to a qualified planning expert, so this may be worth considering.

Cllr Turner expressed thanks to the Grounds Team for the speedy removal of a fallen tree blocking the path on the Castleman estate.

Cllr Swyer had been elected as a Trustee of Forest Forge Theatre Company.

Cllr Windsor is leading a project with the WI and RFU. She had met with a representative from the Department for Culture, Media and Sport about the cost of climate change and the effect on grass roots rugby clubs. She reported that the boiler in the Brownie hut on Cloughs Road had failed and they were unable to run groups as the building was too cold. They would be fundraising for a replacement and would appreciate advice.

Cllr Haywood reported that residents had commented on the success of the drainage works recently carried out in Southampton Road, near the White Hart. A service of thanksgiving for Roly Errington would be held on Saturday 15 February at 2pm in Ringwood Church.

Cllr Thierry gave a good example of devolution when Town Council Grounds Staff had fixed the temporary barriers in Mansfield Road following inaction by HCC.

**C/7295
FORTHCOMING MEETINGS**

The following meeting dates were noted:

Recreation, Leisure & Open Spaces	7.00pm	Wednesday 5 th February 2025
Planning, Town & Environment	10.00am	Friday 7 th February 2025
Policy & Finance	7.00pm	Wednesday 19 th February 2025
Full Council	7.00pm	Wednesday 25 th February 2025

**C/7296
EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

RESOLVED: That, in accordance with section 1(2) of the Public Bodies (Admission to Meetings) Act 1960, the press and public were excluded because publicity would be prejudicial to the public interest by reason of the confidential nature of the business to be transacted (*Confidential minutes - Annex C*).

**C/7297
LEGAL MATTERS**

The Town Clerk reported on ongoing legal matters relating to the land swap at Poulner Lakes and the Long Lane Football project.

RESOLVED: That the Town Clerk’s verbal report be received.

**C/7298
COMMUNITY AWARDS**

Members discussed nominations for Community Awards, which would be presented at the Annual Town Assembly on 14 May.

RESOLVED: That nominations be submitted to the Deputy Town Clerk for consideration by Full Council in February.

ACTION J Hurd

There being no further business, the Town Mayor closed the meeting at 8.54pm.

APPROVED
26th February 2025

TOWN MAYOR



Ringwood Quarterly Report



General Crimes & Outcomes

General Crime Summary

Crime VRD

01/01/2024 26/01/2025

District	Count Occurrence
NEW FOREST	2,013

Total Crimes

2,013

Total Crimes (SPLY)

2,016

% Difference

-0.1%

Crime Volumes



HMIC 9 Group	Jan 24	Feb 24	Mar 24	Apr 24	May 24	Jun 24	Jul 24	Aug 24	Sep 24	Oct 24	Nov 24	Dec 24	Jan 25	Total
1 Violence Against the Person	39	59	55	62	57	64	56	43	54	48	50	57	46	690
2 Sexual Offences	7	6	5	2	2	5	8	12	8	6	4	3	6	74
3 Robbery						1	1	1						3
4 Theft Offences	44	65	70	47	52	55	58	51	80	54	63	53	42	734
5 Criminal Damage and Arson Offences	22	21	16	20	21	12	20	20	8	16	21	14	7	218
6 Drug Offences	6	3	3	1	4	3	4	1	4	4	4	2	5	44
7 Possession of Weapons Offences	3	1		1		1	2	2		3	5		1	19
8 Public Order Offences	9	10	23	13	18	14	13	11	20	28	9	9	11	188
9 Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society	1	1	2	7	1	2	2	3	12	4	3	2	3	43

The above graph shows the number of offences recording for the area your local Neighbourhood Police Team (including the Fordingbridge Officers) covers, including beats outside of the Ringwood Town area. Whilst the figures are fairly consistent with the previous year it is believed that due to an increase in confidence in Policing, particularly from businesses, we are making positive strides to make Ringwood and the surrounding area safer for residents, but there remains much to do.

Following the arrival of Chief Inspector Scott Johnson (New Forest District Commander) we have made a change to improve the way in which we engage with local representatives with a monthly meeting now taking place between Sergeant Pell, Inspector Ord and Chris Wilkins during which we are looking to gather information relating to the concerns of the community in order to better focus our resources and understand community priorities.

As a result of discussions with Chris Wilkins we have amended the presentation of the crime stats to now show the most recent 3 months compared to the same period the year before (SPLY – Similar Period Last Year)



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Ringwood Quarterly Report



Ringwood South

	Current 90 days	SPLY	Difference
<u>Violence with Injury</u> ↑	11	15	-4
<u>Violence without Injury</u> ↑	42	36	+6
<u>Other Sexual Offences</u> ↑	4	7	-3
<u>Burglary Residential</u> ↑	3	4	-1
<u>Burglary Business and Community</u> ↑	2	2	0
<u>Vehicle Offences</u> ↑	8	15	-7
<u>Bicycle Theft</u> ↑	6	2	+4
<u>Shoplifting</u> ↑	19	17	+2
<u>All Other Theft Offences</u> ↑	12	6	+6
<u>Criminal Damage</u> ↑	9	13	-4
<u>Trafficking of Drugs</u> ↑	1	1	0
<u>Possession of Drugs</u> ↑	4	3	+1
<u>Possession of Weapons Offences</u> ↑	4	1	+3
<u>Public Order Offences</u> ↑	14	14	0
<u>Misc Crimes Against Society</u> ↑	2	1	+1
TOTAL	141	137	+4





Ringwood Quarterly Report



Ringwood North (Poulner)

	Current 90 days	SPLY	Difference
<u>Violence with Injury</u> ↑	7	5	+2
<u>Violence without Injury</u> ↑	19	16	+3
<u>Sexual Offences</u> ↑	4	1	+3
<u>Burglary Residential</u> ↑	4	3	+1
<u>Vehicle Offences</u> ↑	6	4	+2
<u>Shoplifting</u> ↑	13	5	+8
<u>All Other Theft Offences</u> ↑	2	5	-3
<u>Criminal Damage</u> ↑	5	8	-3
<u>Drugs Offences</u> ↑	0	4	-4
<u>Possession of Weapons Offences</u> ↑	1	0	+1
<u>Public Order Offences</u> ↑	1	4	-3
<u>Misc Crimes Against Society</u> ↑	3	0	+3
TOTAL	65	55	+10





Ringwood Quarterly Report

Ringwood East & Sopley

	Current 90 days	Previous 90 days	Difference
<u>Violence with Injury</u> ↑	3	3	0
<u>Violence without Injury</u> ↑	7	4	+3
<u>Other Sexual Offences</u> ↑	1	0	+1
<u>Burglary Residential</u> ↑	1	1	0
<u>Burglary Business and Community</u> ↑	1	0	+1
<u>Vehicle Offences</u> ↑	1	5	-4
<u>Bicycle Theft</u> ↑	0	0	0
<u>All Other Theft Offences</u> ↑	1	2	-1
<u>Criminal Damage</u> ↑	8	4	+4
<u>Possession of Drugs</u> ↑	0	0	0
<u>Public Order Offences</u> ↑	4	1	+3
<u>Misc Crimes Against Society</u> ↑	0	0	0
TOTAL	27	20	+7





Ringwood Quarterly Report



Current Priorities for the Ringwood Neighbourhood Policing Team

Shoplifting – Business crime has been taken on as an area priority. We are attending all reports, building links to the local businesses and detecting more offences – through CCTV and ID. Use of Out of Court disposals as well as court summons employed.

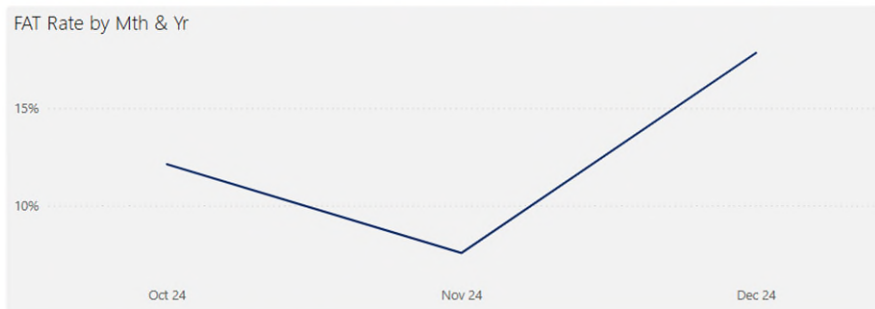
Anti-Social Behaviour – We are aware of concerns from local businesses relating to groups of youths causing problems within the town, we have identified those involved and will be working with partners to change behaviours.

Successes/Outcomes

Ringwood Police have had a busy few months across the board as a team with the impact of the riots in August impacting the team due to the abstractions to cover other areas within the organisation. The team have worked hard to recover despite ongoing staffing pressure and abstractions.

FAT Outcome VRD		
26/10/2024	26/01/2025	
District	FAT Outcomes	FAT Rate
NEW FOREST	63	13.9%
HMIC 9 Group		
	FAT Outcomes	
1 Violence Against the Person	22	
2 Sexual Offences	2	
3 Robbery	0	
4 Theft Offences	21	
5 Criminal Damage and Arson Offences	4	
6 Drug Offences	10	
7 Possession of Weapons Offences	1	
8 Public Order Offences	2	
9 Miscellaneous Crimes Against Society	1	
Total	63	

FAT Outcome Rate YTD	FAT Outcome Rate YTD (SP...)	% Difference
13.0%	9.0%	4.0%



Year	Oct 24	Nov 24	Dec 24	Total
Current Year	12.1%	7.5%	17.9%	12.3%
Previous Year	6.9%	9.3%	10.9%	9.6%
% Difference	5.2%	-1.7%	6.9%	2.7%
Total				



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Ringwood Quarterly Report

- You will note a 4% increase in our FAT (Formal Action Taken) stats when compared to the same period the year before. There is a drive to increase our detection rate and the team are working hard to ensure those who commit offences within the town are held responsible for their actions.
- Conviction secured on youth responsible for ASB and shoplifting offences within the town, given a 3 month Youth Rehabilitation Order, further offence being prosecuted.
- Week of engagement with schools in November based around County Lines and the dangers of carrying knives with the team attending assemblies to provide advice and support.
- Regular ongoing proactive work includes beat surgeries within Waitrose also the following in the last few weeks alone the team have located a stolen vehicle and sent it to be forensically examined, stopped and searched a male known to shoplift after he appeared to evade Police, carried out speed watch on Gorley Rd and Hightown Hill after requests were made by local residents, located a high value electric mountain bike hidden in woodland and that had been reported stolen from a burglary in Dorset, carried out further high visibility patrols in the Furlong to tackle ongoing ASB issues and issued a community resolution to an young person for shoplifting with a condition to engage with youth services.

Your Ringwood Neighbourhood Team

Sergeant Chris Pell

Your Designated Named Officer (DNO) is PC 28455 Ian Bigland

PC Kate Gillingham

PC Nat Roberts

PC Naz Chalk

PCSO Tracey Cooper

PCSO Sam Troughton

Inspector 1904 Darren Ord



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TOWN COUNCIL – 29th JANUARY 2025
BUDGET 2025/2026

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Policy & Finance Committee members considered a draft budget for 2025/26 at their meetings in November, December and January. The Committee recommended several changes which have been incorporated into this draft budget which was endorsed at the January meeting. This report sets out the revised proposals for the 2025/26 budget and consequent Precept and Council Tax for approval by Full Council.

1.2 This report also includes an update to the revised budget for 2023/24.

1.3 Attached for the Committee's consideration are the following documents:-

Appendix A - Draft summary Council budget, including actual spend 2021/22, to 2023/24, original and revised budgets 2024/25 and revised draft proposals for 2025/26.

Appendix B - Reserves & Provisions at 1st April 2024, and estimated balances at 31st March 2025 and 2026, based on the revised budget 2024/25 and the updated proposals for 2025/26.

Appendix C - Summary of budget preparation assumptions.

2. REVISED BUDGET 2024/25

2.1 In December, a revised budget for the current year was approved. This predicted a budget deficit of £36,733 by year end. The deficit arose mainly because of reduced rental income and lower than anticipated cemetery income.

2.2 There have been some further developments in the current year. Now that the events activity has finished for the year, an analysis of income and expenditure has revealed somewhat better outturn although any surplus generated by events is retained in the events reserve and does not directly benefit the general fund. However, interest generated on invested funds has performed better than expected and despite some modest budget overspends it now seems likely that the outturn deficit will reduce to around £32,000.

2.3 There are some changes in predicted capital expenditure but as this is all funded through reserves, grants and other sources of income, these will have no net impact on the general fund.

2.4 Reserves at the start of the year, including key and rent deposits, amounted to £639,190. (£254,457 General reserve, £365,165 earmarked reserves and £19,569 key and rent deposits). The reserves are expected to move as follows:

• Planned revenue contributions to earmarked reserves	£ 45,100
• Transfer of predicted events surplus for 2024/25	£ 9,815
• Plus cash receipts collected during 2024/25	£ 79,794
• Less Funding capital expenditure	£126,229
• Less balance held for 2023/24 budget underspends	£ 35,225
• Less anticipated deficit on the revenue account	<u>£ 32,117</u>
Net reduction in reserves:	£ 58,862

2.5 Planned and predicted movements on reserves are detailed in Appendix B.

3. DRAFT BUDGET 2025/26

- 3.1 The draft budget has been prepared, initially, on an incremental basis. The original budget for 2024/25 has been adjusted for known and unavoidable changes, any one off items approved for the current year have been removed and a modest range of estimates for inflation have been applied. Inflation rose very slightly for the year to December but is still expected to fall during 2025.
- 3.2 A draft budget was discussed at the December meeting of the Policy & Finance Committee. This indicated that a budget increase of £59,341 would be necessary equivalent to a 9.2% increase in the Council Tax.
- 3.3 The main drivers of the increased budget requirement and hence the deficit, have been falling cemetery receipts the budget for which has been reduced by £11,200 together with a predicted fall of £10,000 in interest generated following the reductions in balances and predicted interest rates. The changes to National Insurance will add an estimated £13,200 to pay costs.
- 3.4 It has also been necessary to increase the budget provision for machinery maintenance and for street lighting, whilst NFDC have increased the recharge in respect of the Gateway building by more than £2,500 above inflation. Furthermore, NFDC have reduced their net contribution towards Gateway costs by £2,625. Inflation accounts for just £16,000 of the increase, or around 2.5%.
- 3.5 Following the December meeting the pay inflation assumption was increased from 2.0% for the year to 2.8%. This increased the budget requirement by a further £4,750. However, since then staff turnover amongst the grounds team has reduced the staffing budget by £8,340. Further agreed adjustments which include a reduction in the discretionary grants budget of £3,200, elimination of the mayor's allowance which hasn't been spent for the last two years, a reduction in the annual contribution to earmarked reserves and a reduction in the subsidy to the events committee will save a further £12,740.
- 3.6 Work has progressed on identifying further savings in order to reduce the Council Tax requirement. These include reducing the budget provisions for fuel, CCTV, property management agents and the environment agency whilst increasing revenue generated through market stalls and allotments. Together these adjustments reduce the budget requirement by a further £8,000. All of these adjustments are based on performance in the current year but do come with the risk that margins are very tight and income and savings targets may be very difficult to achieve.
- 3.7 The combined impact of these changes is that a reduced budget increase of £39,428 will be required which will require a Council Tax increase of 6.12% in order to achieve a balanced budget without drawing on reserves. The wider budget assumptions are included in Appendix C.
- 3.8 Note that the Council Tax base has increased by 0.104% to 5507.3 which means that £1 on the Council Tax will generate £5,507.30. The increase in the base generates an additional £670, at current council tax rates and has been taken into account in the draft budget.
- 3.9 The proposed base expenditure budget, after allowing for adjustments and unavoidable inflation, is £1,184,187, which includes £218,080 capital expenditure funded from grants and reserves. Income is predicted to be £446,692 resulting in a base net budget of £737,495. Net transfers from reserves reduce the budget requirement to £690,031 before any new bids are considered. It should also be noted that it remains likely that there will be some residual spend on current

capital projects although any such expenditure is covered by reserves and any such slippage will not impact the revenue account.

- 3.10** There is just one new bid for consideration in the draft budget. This is to enable the procurement of the services of a company that assists parish and town councils with communications and GDPR/FOI compliance. As the Council has recently agreed a communications strategy, this could save officer time and give us the skills necessary to carry out members' wishes. The annual cost of such a service would be £1,164.
- 3.11** Reserves movements are summarised in appendix B. The opening balance on earmarked reserves is expected to be £338,419 at 1st April 2025 whilst budgeted transfers to reserves will increase this by £41,600. A further transfer from the events committee is expected to add a further £5,582 but this will be entirely dependent on performance during the year. Transfers to the revenue budget from reserves amount to £6,806 whilst a further £87,840 will be used to support capital projects during the year (including some replacement plant and equipment). Grant income of £68,080 is anticipated and this will be taken to reserves pending its application. This means that the predicted balance of earmarked reserves at 31st March 2026 will be £359,036.
- 3.12** The budget proposals include a transfer of £7,575 from the general reserve to fund the temporary shortfall in rental income resulting from the Southampton Rd vacancy. The plans set out here would therefore result in a modest increase in total reserves of £13,041 in 2025/26, before any unplanned expenditure that may necessitate an additional transfer from reserves. At this stage it is impossible to predict the level of CIL receipts that might be expected, but these too will be added to earmarked reserves. The General reserve is expected to reduce to £214,765.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1** The proposed budget, including the new bids, will result in a Council Tax requirement of £683,620 for 2025/26, an increase of 6.23% from 2024/25. However this increase is mitigated by the small increase in the Council Tax base and so it would require an increase in the Council tax of 6.12% in order to achieve a balanced budget. This represents an increase of £7.16 per annum per band D property.
- 4.2** Many of the individual budgets have been shaved, frozen or cut for the last few years and there is consequently an increasing risk that the overall budget is vulnerable to any unexpected pressures as has been experienced in the current year. This may result in an increased reliance on the General Reserve to meet unexpected costs or cost increases. The general Reserve balance is expected to be around £215,000 or 31% of the precept.
- 4.3** Similarly, the transfer of some "irregular" spend from the budget has also placed a greater reliance on Earmarked Reserves to meet unplanned expenditure such as building repairs, legal fees, vandalism and so on. The current reserves policy which sets out the rationale for the annual transfers to earmarked reserves will need to be kept under review to ensure that sufficient reserves are in place to meet anticipated needs.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 Subject to any amendments made at this meeting, **it is recommended that:-**
- 5.2 Members approve the draft budget.
- 5.3 Members approve a precept of £683,620 and consequent 6.12% increase in the Council Tax which will take the Band D equivalent Council Tax contribution for the Town Council to £124.13.

For any further information, please contact:

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or

Chris Wilkins
Town Clerk
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RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
BUDGET AND REVISED BUDGET 2024/25 AND
DRAFT BUDGET 2025/26

B

1	2	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11
Committee	Actual 21/22 £	Actual 22/23 £	Actual 23/24 £	0	Budget 24/25 £	Revised 24/25 £	Inflation £	Known Changes* £	Budget 25/26 £
Policy & Finance									
Expenditure	346,301	411,888	391,577		418,378	464,684	7,770	-3,571	430,796
Income	-118,043	-133,528	-215,977		-185,511	-175,923	-1,324	18,050	-168,785
Net Expenditure	228,258	278,360	175,600		232,867	288,761	6,445	14,479	262,011
Transfers to Reserves	16,900	14,000	45,595		16,200	16,200	0	0	12,700
Transfers from Reserves	-1,732	-37,841	-15,042		-3,000	-41,105	0	0	-3,000
Growth bids and adjustments (net of transfers from reserves and income)									1,164
Committee net expenditure	243,426	254,519	206,153		246,067	263,856	6,445	14,479	272,875
Recreation & Leisure									
Expenditure	244,177	1,069,677	2,280,039		482,427	614,292	5,519	11,768	484,747
Income	-38,289	-517,390	-1,962,442		-180,700	-302,548	-251	0	-177,318
Net Expenditure	205,888	552,287	317,597		301,727	311,744	5,268	11,768	307,429
Transfers to Reserves	27,452	17,900	17,900		26,900	26,900	0	0	26,400
Transfers from Reserves	-33,684	-365,598	-85,180		-87,407	-95,741	0	0	-89,416
Growth bids and adjustments (net of transfers from reserves and income)									0
Committee net expenditure	199,656	204,589	250,317		241,220	242,903	5,268	11,768	244,413
Events									
Expenditure	17,892	51,702	41,356		40,048	43,352	469	0	37,418
Income	-32,425	-35,311	-49,857		-28,000	-40,419	0	0	-38,000
Net Expenditure	-14,533	16,391	-8,501		12,048	2,933	469	0	-582
Transfers to Reserves	7,940	0	12,361		0	9,815	0	0	5,582
Transfers from Reserves	0	-10,823	0		-2,048	-2,748	0	0	0
Growth bids and adjustments (net of transfers from reserves and income)									0
Committee net expenditure	-6,593	5,568	3,860		10,000	10,000	469	0	5,000
Cemeteries									
Expenditure	51,123	63,343	66,427		68,802	68,816	1,772	753	70,224
Income	-51,314	-41,041	-37,989		-37,922	-19,432	-896	11,238	-27,609
Net Expenditure	-191	22,302	28,438		30,880	49,384	876	11,991	42,615
Transfers to Reserves	4,000	2,500	2,500		1,000	1,000	0	0	0
Transfers from Reserves	-5,141	-230	-250		-230	-230	0	0	-230
Growth bids and adjustments (net of transfers from reserves and income)									0
Committee net expenditure	-1,332	24,572	30,688		31,650	50,154	876	11,991	42,385
Allotments									
Expenditure	13,246	19,577	23,718		22,844	22,794	594	0	20,858
Income	-5,585	-5,954	-7,791		-6,400	-7,200	-160	-820	-7,380
Net Expenditure	7,661	13,623	15,927		16,444	15,594	434	-820	13,478
Transfers to Reserves	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Transfers from Reserves	0	0	0		0	0	0	0	0
Growth bids and adjustments (net of transfers from reserves and income)									0
Committee net expenditure	7,661	13,623	15,927		16,444	15,594	434	-820	13,478
Carvers Clubhouse									
Expenditure	83,005	100,991	98,786		96,456	103,806	0	0	98,329
Income	-23,123	-26,274	-29,128		-26,500	-29,687	0	0	-26,500
Net Expenditure	59,882	74,717	69,658		69,956	74,119	0	0	71,829
Transfers to Reserves	2,500	2,500	2,500		1,000	1,000	0	0	2,500
Transfers from Reserves	0	-2,841	-165		-1,000	-10,631	0	0	-1,000
Growth bids and adjustments (net of transfers from reserves and income)									0
Committee net expenditure	62,382	74,376	71,993		69,956	64,489	0	0	73,329
Planning, Town & Environment									
Expenditure	32,498	37,993	30,610		30,289	40,746	788	530	41,815
Income	-16,299	-5,850	-1,100		-1,100	-1,100	0	0	-1,100
Net Expenditure	16,199	32,143	29,510		29,189	39,646	788	530	40,715
Transfers to Reserves	3,473	0	3,650		0	0	0	0	0
Transfers from Reserves	-450	-6,016	-2,784		-1,000	-11,000	0	0	-1,000
Growth bids and adjustments (net of transfers from reserves and income)									0
Committee net expenditure	19,222	26,127	30,376		28,189	28,646	788	530	39,715

RINGWOOD TOWN COUNCIL
 BUDGET AND REVISED BUDGET 2024/25 AND
 DRAFT BUDGET 2025/26

B

Total Base Expenditure	788,242	1,755,171	2,932,513	1,159,243	1,358,490	1,184,187
Total Income	-285,078	-765,348	-2,304,284	-466,133	-576,309	-446,692
Total transfer to reserves	62,265	36,900	84,506	45,100	54,915	47,182
Total Transfer from reserves	-41,007	-423,349	-103,421	-94,685	-161,454	-94,646
Total New Bids						1,164
Less funded from earmarked reserves						0
Total Budget Requirement	524,422	603,374	609,314	643,525	675,642	691,195
Precept	531,856	553,949	610,429	643,525	643,525	683,620
Covid Relief grant		4,071		0	0	
Transfer to/-from General Reserve	7,434	-45,354	1,115	0	-32,117	-7,575

RESERVES AND PROVISIONS - MOVEMENT & ESTIMATED BALANCES

1st April 2024 to 31st March 2026

B

	Actual Balance 01/04/24 £	Transfers 2024/25 :				Balance 01/04/25 £	Planned and Proposed Movements 2025/26:					Estimated Balance 31/03/26 £
		from Revenue £	to Revenue £	Cash Receipts £	between provisions £		from Revenue £	to revenue		Capital & Other Receipts £	between provisions £	
								base budget £	Growth £			
<u>EARMARKED PROVISIONS</u>												
I.T. & Equipment	25,600	2,700	0			28,300	1,700		0			30,000
Gateway	25,000	0	0			25,000	0		0			25,000
Cemetery	26,033	1,000				27,033	0		0			27,033
Buildings Reserve	64,502	5,500	-1,908	1,158		69,252	4,500	0	0			73,752
Election	0	5,000				5,000	5,000		0			10,000
Vehicle & Machinery	33,883	20,000	-36,000			17,883	20,000		-19,760			18,123
Play Equipment	15,616	6,900				22,516	6,400		0			28,916
Memorials	0	0	0			0	0		0			0
Christmas Lights	0	0	0			0	0		0			0
Carvers Clubhouse equipment reserve	6,682	1,000	-3,248			4,435	1,000	-1,000	0			4,435
Ringwood Events	13,172	9,815	-5,748			17,239	5,582	-3,000	0			19,821
Memorial Lantern	0	0	0	0		0	0		0			0
Carvers Grounds	2,480	0	-90			2,390	0		0			2,390
Carvers Sheds feasibility	3,075		-3,075			0			0			0
Infrastructure & Open Spaces	17,370	3,000	-5,750			14,620	3,000		0			17,620
Open Space Security Measures	1,406		0			1,406			0			1,406
Neighbourhood Plan	3,383	0	0			3,383	0		0			3,383
Football development Project	23,959	0	-23,959			0	0		0			0
Budget Underspends retained for use in 2024/25*	35,225	0	-35,225			0	0	0	0			0
Total Provisions	297,387	54,915	-115,002	1,158	0	238,457	47,182	-4,000	-19,760	0	0	261,879
<u>RESERVES</u>												
Earmarked Reserves:												
Dev Contribs	14,765		-11,000	10,000		13,765		-1,000	0			12,765
Cem Maint	500		-230			270		-230	0	0		40
Dev Cons(CIL)	29,030		-12,461	15,878		32,448						32,448
Capital Receipts	18,942			0		18,942			0	0		18,942
Grants Unapplied	4,540		-21,185	48,030		31,385			-68,080	68,080		31,385
Loans Unapplied	0					0			0	0		0
Maintenance contract fees in advance (Ellingham PC)	0		-1,576	4,728		3,152		-1,576				1,576
Total Earmarked Reserves and Provisions	365,165	54,915	-161,454	79,794	0	338,419	47,182	-6,806	-87,840	68,080	0	359,036
General Reserve	254,457		-32,117			222,340	0	-7,575			0	214,765
Key & Rent Deposits	19,569		-150	600		20,019						20,019
Total Reserves & Customer Deposits	639,190	54,915	-193,721	80,394	0	580,779	47,182	-14,381	-87,840	68,080	0	593,820

BUDGET ASSUMPTIONS 2025/26

B

Inflation (RPI) is currently running at 3.5% (for the year to December 2024 down from 3.6% in November. CPIH is 3.5% for the same period whilst the CPI is 2.5%, (unchanged from 3.5% and down from 2.6% in November respectively). The next set of inflation indices are due to be released on the 19th February.

Note that some costs and expenditure are linked to inflation, whereas some "non contractual" expenditure is more discretionary and inflationary cost increases may be absorbed by reducing spend, although this may not be without consequence. Other expenditure may be fixed with no inflationary adjustment required. Each expenditure component in the budget has been allocated an inflation type (1-6) which may be modelled on this page.

ASSUMPTIONS:

	%	Type
1 Inflation		
- Pay	2.8%	1
- Utilities	1.5%	2
- Other Expenditure	1.5%	3
- Non contractual expenditure	0.0%	4
- Income	2.5%	5
- Fixed expenditure (i.e. no inflation)	0.0%	6

2 Council Tax Base increase	0.10%
Note, the Council Tax base for 2024/25 is	5,501.6

3 Use of General Reserve	£ 7,575
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The Band D equivalent Council Tax for 2024/25 is: **116.97**

A target Council Tax increase of : **116.97**
would increase the Council Tax to:

And require an additional transfer from reserves of: **£39,428**
which would reduce the general reserve to £ 175,337 by March 2026
(given the assumptions in 1 - 3 on the left) or 25.6% of the annual precept

An increase of 0.10% (assumption 2) will increase the Council Tax base to: **5,507.3**

The General Reserve is expected to be £222,340 at April 1st 2025. This transfer will reduce it to £214,765 by March 2026

Net Budget Requirement and consequent Band D equivalent Council Tax

Based on the above assumptions together with any proposed new bids and adjustments:

	£
Base Budget 2025/2026	737,495
Net transfers to/from earmarked reserves	-47,464
Growth Bids & Adjustments	1,164
- Less funded from earmarked reserves (inc. borrowing)	0
- Less additional income generated	0
Net Budget requirement	691,195
Less funded from general reserve	-7,575
Sum to be funded from Council Tax Payers (Precept)	683,620

Band D equivalent Council Tax 2025/26 **124.13**

The budget requirement and resulting precept, as modelled, represents an increase of 6.12 % in the Council Tax

The Council Tax for 2024/25 is £116.97 per Band D Equivalent

Summary movement on reserves:

	£
Opening reserves 1/4/2025:	
General Reserve	222,340
Earmarked Reserves & Provisions	338,419
Total Reserves 1/4/2025	560,760
Planned transfers in	47,182
Planned transfers out	-94,646
Plus Capital Receipts 25/26	68,080
Less Funding for growth	0
Less use of general reserve	-7,575

Predicted reserves 31/3/2026 :

General Reserve	214,765
Earmarked Reserves	359,036
Predicted Reserves 31/3/2026	573,801
(nb excludes rent & key deposits)	

An increase of one percent on the Council Tax will generate an increased precept of : £6,442
For each increase of £1,000 in the precept requirement, a further £0.182 will be added to the Band D Council Tax