



Annual Report 2017/18



I would like to start by giving you some brief background information on the town council and then I will talk about some of the successes we have had during 2017/18 and some of the challenges the council - and Ryde - face in the coming year.

Ryde Town Council is entirely independent of the Isle of Wight Council. It has 16 councillors representing seven wards, across Ryde, Binstead and Haylands. In 2017/18, the town council raised a precept (or local council tax) of £740,188. Using this precept, the town council has provided a range of services, contributed funding to ensure the continuation of many Isle of Wight Council-led services and has started delivering some new ones for the benefit of Ryde residents.

The town council has used the precept to provide:

- A skatepark
- Decorative lighting and Christmas trees
- Funding support to a range of local events, such as Ryde Carnival
- Marketing projects, such as the Town Map, which promote Ryde as a unique tourist destination
- A beach safety and first aid service in the summer months.
- Funding support towards countryside sites
- Summer and winter planting schemes
- The management of five allotment sites
- Ryde in Bloom

As mentioned, the town council has also, for a number of years, supplied funding to enable the Isle of Wight Council to continue to provide a range of local services for the town that would otherwise have been lost. These include

- A dedicated Environment Officer to deal with dog fouling, litter, fly posting and other environmental crimes – and we thank Sophia and Katharine for all their hard work in this area.
- Funding for repairs and the replacement of play equipment in the town's play areas.
- Funding for the maintenance and planting of parks and community gardens.
- An increase in the emptying of bins along Ryde Esplanade and in Appley Park.

The town council listened to the community and has offered funding support to the Isle of Wight Council to undertake enforcement activities at the town's 'eyesore' properties and has been investigating the most effective way to improve safety and access in the lower part of the High Street. The council's Planning Committee has been an influential voice, representing the community on a range of planning, licensing and highways matters.

This year, the town council took on full ownership and management of the town's four public toilets and became largely responsible for the cleanliness of Ryde's beaches. Staff have worked exceptionally hard to deal with the challenges these new services present.

Perhaps the greatest achievement has been the introduction of new services for young people in our town, as part of the Network Ryde project. This saw the opening of a new youth cafe at 147 High Street, in early January, and the delivery of a range of town-wide activities aimed at reaching as many young people as possible. These included The Duke of Edinburgh and games activities at Eastern Gardens and Waterside Pool to name a few. My sincere thanks to Cllr Tim Wakeley and all those partner organisations that have helped the town council get this project up and running.

We have also continued to work hard to build on the council's role in - and connection to - the local community. Members have approved community grant funding of around £15,000 to groups, such as Ryde Saints Football Club, The IW Literary Festival, Aspire's Community Larder and the VIVA Carnival Group. Members also offer support to a vast range of organisations through ward allocations – small sums of money that can make a big difference to our community.

The council has also continued to be a key player in keeping the Waterside Pool and the nearby children's water play park open. We also work hard to

deliver improvements to the public realm and community sites ensuring Ryde is attractive for residents and visitors alike.

The council's public face can be found at Town Hall Chambers in Lind Street. Following a much needed refurbishment, the council is now able to assist residents with a range of enquiries and undertake projects and initiatives aimed at improving Ryde. We are also developing a role as a community hub so residents can access a range of local advice and support services.

Town councillors undertake a range of ward work and sit on many local groups, such as the Age Friendly Island Initiative, My Life a Full Life, the Community Safety Partnership, Ryde Carnival Association, the business association, action groups and residents' associations. Councillors have also attended the PACT groups set up by the police aimed at working with residents to reduce crime in our town.

As we look to the future, the challenges remain, as the public sector continues to be squeezed and budgets are stretched even further. At this local level, the town council is well placed to make every pound go further.

I want to end the year on a positive note, as I have been so proud to serve as Mayor for a second time and to represent Ryde at many events, including Remembrance ceremonies, ribbon cutting and judging, shop openings and fundraising, conferences and carol services. Highlights of my year have been seeing Ryde host such a successful Isle of Wight Day and being able to present the prizes at the Vectis Boating and Fishing Club's annual junior fishing competition - seeing all the youngsters who participated getting a prize was wonderful!

As I come to the end of my year in office I believe that we all have much to be proud of in Ryde and the town council will continue to do all it can for the town, its residents, businesses and visitors.

**Councillor Henry Adams
Mayor, Ryde Town Council
April 2018**