



January 2019

Dear Ryde Town Councillors

We are writing to request that consideration be given by the finance committee for allocation of an annual grant to assist Ryde Business Association in fulfilling projects across the town, throughout the year.

Ryde Business Association, under the current committee, has developed over the last 2 and a half years. The reputation of the association, and its function, at the time prior to this was unclear and the organisation ineffective.

Since 2016 the aims of the RBA have been updated to reflect the needs of businesses, and the town, and have developed to include local charities, community groups and more generally the local community. This was needed as research shows that effective town promotion, requires a more holistic approach, to fully showcase an area for all it has to offer. The benefit to businesses is that this approach is more likely to generate greater year-round footfall to the town, which specific shop/businesses and organisations can then more readily take advantage of through their own independent promotion.

As outlined in the RBA Constitution, the objectives of RBA are:

- 1. To Encourage collaborative working:** Encourage and support the joint working between businesses, organisations, individuals, and local authorities to help promote the growth and prosperity of the Ryde District.
- 2. To Promote Ryde:** Advertise, and communicate the benefits of the Ryde district to all members of the community. Including residents, local Island communities beyond that of Ryde, and Tourist visitors coming to the island.
- 3. To Organise, Develop and carry out Events:** RBA will consider a variety of events that will help to encourage visitors to the area, promote community collaboration, and contribute to the events calendar for the island.
- 4. To Promote Businesses/Organisations/Voluntary Groups:** Assist in the advertising of local businesses/organisations and voluntary groups in the Ryde district, through social media, local advertising and wider reaching marketing campaigns (where funding permits).
- 5. To Support local Businesses/Organisations/Voluntary Groups:** Offer support and encouragement to all businesses/organisations/voluntary groups within the Ryde district. Offer advice within the remit of the association, and signpost to other professionals where needed.
- 6. To Encourage independent small business:** RBA will support preserving the town's independent businesses, ensuring that there continues to be a good variety of high street trade, and associated companies working within the Ryde District.

Under the current committee, RBA has taken advantage of the grants scheme offered by Ryde Town Council. This has been focussed on specific events, such as Christmas, as these have sat more in line with the criteria for the applications.

We feel that now the association is in a much stronger position we would like to maximise the potential of what can be achieved. If we were able to be included for an annual financial award, as other groups and event organisers have been in the 18/19 RTC budget, we believe this would be of great assistance to the further development of RBA and what we can do for the town.

We are asking for a £3,000 contribution which would be used to further achieve items 2 and 3 as outlined above (the other items are fulfilled through direct financial contributions from local businesses).

ADVANTAGES:

An annual award would replace the need for applying for the community and marketing grants supplied by RTC.

It would allow for more specific annual planning by the RBA committee as we would be assured of guaranteed financial support in advance

It would give RBA , as a not for profit voluntary group, more opportunity to source further funding from other grants, being able to site match funding from our local council to help with applications.

POTENTIAL PROJECTS:

Christmas in Ryde - The feedback for this was extremely positive and saw direct results in the promotion of the town. An annual award would mean the planning for this could take place much further in advance, and we could grow this as a seasonal event for Ryde.

Ryde Green Town – In the last two years there have been a number of environmental projects that we have not been able to carry out due to limitations in our budget. We believe Ryde has potential to really showcase it's commitment to issues such as the reduced use of plastics, and that much more can be done through events and marketing to high light this. Last year we were able to secure an interview on Radio 4's Open Country programme, which generated great interest, and positive online communication from across the UK, and we would like to follow this up in 2019 with more localised promotion.

Lantern Parade – This has been an historic event for Ryde, and one that holds a lot of good memories for people. We have attempted to resurrect this previously, with it being included in Christmas activities, however this did not work with feedback from schools being that the end of the year is quite a difficult time to dedicate extracurricular time to. We would like to look into contributing to this as a stand-alone event, which we believe could be established as an ongoing annual event for the town.

Pop Up shops/Markets – This is something we have been approached about in the past but have not been able to consider due to budget restrictions. There is a lot of potential for showcasing new businesses, creatives and makers, and something which would highlight Ryde's unique and vibrant retail sector. From consulting with some other mainland town groups, feedback has been that short-term pop-up events have helped to promote their towns, meaning that the wider community benefits from increased visitors. It is also the type of the project that achieves wider publicity which we would very much like to see Ryde benefit from.

The above is just some of the outlined projects that we believe Ryde Business Association could contribute to, and establish for benefit of Ryde.

We hope that Ryde Town Council would see the advantage of these and would be willing to consider this proposal.

2019 will be a difficult year for the businesses in Ryde with the threat of the impact of budget cuts from Isle of Wight Council, uncertainties within the economy due to national issues, and the continued struggle of competing with out of town and online retailers.

It would be great if we could announce the support of Ryde Town Council through an annual award, and help to reinforce that Ryde is a community committed to joint working.

We are happy to clarify any of the points above should there be any questions.

Yours Hopefully

Zoe Thompson

RBA CHAIR

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