



MINUTES of MONTHLY MEETING OF RIPLEY TOWN COUNCIL

held at 7.00pm on **Tuesday 21st February 2023** in the Council Chamber,
Town Hall, Market Place, Ripley.

In Attendance: Cllrs M Allwood, R Ashton, Miss L Cox, R Emmas-Williams, S Freeborn, T Holmes, M Jones, P Lobley, P Moss, M Murray, T Spencer, N Weaving (Chair), D Williams and M Wilson.

Also: Two members of public

Plus: Jayne Simpson - Town Clerk and Hannah Curzon – Deputy Clerk.

AGENDA

210223/1. To Receive Apologies for Absence – Cllr Fisher and Cllr Carter

210223/2. Variation of Order of Business

RESOLVED to defer Item 15 – Discuss traffic, road and footway issues in the Township until the March 2023 Full Council meeting.

210223/3. Declaration of Members Interests

NONE

210223/4. Public Speaking

Cllr Freeborn spoke regarding the 'In Touch' leaflet which is being distributed by the local Conservative Party. He said he was disappointed by the integrity of the document, and that it was misleading. It claims that Amber Valley Borough Council, Councillor Tassi used National Lottery Funding to hold First Aid courses for members of the public, as well as career advice sessions and a free fish and chip supper. Cllr Freeborn questions how the funding was obtained because the National Lottery do not support individuals. There is no clarity or honesty.

Cllr Murray responded stating that Cllr Freeborn said he was disappointed but did not say why.

Cllr Lobley also spoke regarding the 'In Touch' Conservative Party leaflet and corrected some of the misunderstandings and errors it makes in it. He said that it is clear that the leaflet is accusing Amber Valley Borough Council (AVBC) of financial mismanagement and not the Labour controlled Ripley Town Council (RTC). RTC has robust financial management in place and are well managed, allowing the Town Council to freeze Council Tax Precept for two consecutive years. He went on to say that it is interesting that over the last 22 years, the Conservative Party have been in control of AVBC, for 19 of those years. He quoted from the papers for Agenda Item 8 of the (Conservative) Borough Council Cabinet meeting on 8th February 2023 where they clearly state, 'the Council has faced a reduction in spending power of £4m a year since 2009/2010'. Cllr Lobley summarised that this meant that the Conservative Government has reduced its grant funding to AVBC by £4m a year since 2010. This has and does create some difficulty for AVBC, whoever is in power, in providing a balanced budget each year, but it clearly and unequivocally points the finger at the Conservative Government as the cause for the financial difficulty.

The leaflet states that the Conservatives inherited a Council in 2021 that under Labour had been overspending £3.4m annually. This does not agree with the audited statement of accounts. They show a General Fund balance which increased from £3.8m as at 31 March 2019 to almost £8.6m by 31 March 2021 – an increase of £4.8m. Cllr Lobley went on to talk about the unaudited accounts for 2021-2022 which show a relatively small increase of £402,000 in the General Fund Balance by 31 March 2022, due to a transfer of £812,000 from earmarked reserves. However, the current projection for the year 31 March 2023, as shown in the February 2023 Cabinet papers, is to use £1.7m from the General Fund to balance the books. He concluded that the leaflet also boasts about significant spending on green and energy efficient projects, many of which were instigated during the 2019-2021 Labour administration.

Cllr Holmes said he was amazed that the 'In Touch' leaflet talks about extra clubs and warm hubs at Greenwich Community Sports Hub and in Marehay. The Warm Wednesday at Greenwich has not been delivered by Derbyshire County Council – it has been organised and delivered by Ripley Town Council. He went on to say that Amber Valley Borough Council washed their hands of Greenwich and since RTC have taken over the management of it, it has been improved immensely and jobs only part completed there by AVBC, have been completed by RTC.

Cllr Allwood also referred to the 'In Touch' leaflet and said it was crass to be celebrating the success of a fish and chip evening when people are struggling with the cost of living crisis. He referred to a comment from a local resident he had read on Facebook recently, which he read out, *'Life at the moment makes me so angry! When a family member waits 3 hours for an ambulance to then be rang to say your not going to get one any time soon, can you make your own way to A&E. To then go to A&E and be there for over 13 hours. My son's school can't even apply for funding to help him because the local authority has closed all applications for funding because they have a backlog of 500 claims. To be told by my doctor's receptionist to look on the internet to see what my child's blood test results mean. But don't worry, according to the Conservative leaflet pushed through my door earlier this week, they have got the NHS and schools in hand. They are going to put on a fish and chip evening. Priorities!*

Cllr D Williams spoke about the impending closure of Lloyds Banks on Oxford Street, Ripley. A resident suggested having a 'bank hub' in the empty shops. The elderly struggle with online banking and having to go out of town to bank cash.

210223/5. To confirm the Non-Confidential Minutes of the Town Council's Monthly Meeting on January 17th 2023 (previously circulated electronically).

RESOLVED to confirm and agree to sign the minutes as a true and accurate record.

210223/6. To confirm the Non-Confidential Minutes of the Environment and Regeneration Committee Meeting on January 20th 2023 and accept the recommendations therein (previously circulated electronically).

RESOLVED to confirm and agree to sign the minutes as a true and accurate record and accept the recommendations therein.

210223/7. To confirm the Non-Confidential Minutes of the Events Committee Meeting on January 31st 2023 and accept the recommendations therein (previously circulated electronically).

RESOLVED to confirm and agree to sign the minutes as a true and accurate record and accept the recommendations therein.

210223/8. To confirm the Non-Confidential Minutes of the Finance and Management Committee Meeting on February 17th 2023 and accept the recommendations and resolutions therein (previously circulated electronically).

RESOLVED to confirm and agree to sign the minutes as a true and accurate record and accept the recommendations and resolutions therein.

210223/9. To determine which items if any part of the Agenda should be taken with the public excluded.

None

210223/10. Mayor Announcements

The Mayor and his Consort attended the following engagements:

28th January 2023 – The Ripley Morris Annual Ale Feast

30th January 2023 – Exhibition at Forbo Flooring in Codnor

7th February 2023 – Mayor of Ripley Charity Dinner and fundraising at Greenwich Community Sports Hub, where £900 was raised for Amber Valley Stroke Group and Derbyshire Air Ambulance.

210223/11. Town Clerk announcements:

a) Warm Wednesday update.

The Town Clerk reported that the sessions are a continuing success with between 40 – 50 people attending each week. Social interactions and the activities provided are welcomed and enjoyed by the attendees. The last session will be on Wednesday 29th March 2023.

NOTED

b) Hanging Basket and Planters update.

The Town Clerk reported that the hanging baskets and planters will be the same as last year, but we will be requesting peat free compost and that the flowers are red, white and blue to compliment the Kings Coronation. She also confirmed that we are in year two of a three-year contract with the current supplier.

NOTED

210223/12. Discuss location of Ripley SNT team

Cllr Freeborn reported that RTC has written to the Chief Constable and Police and Crime Commissioner at Derbyshire Police asking them to reconsider closing their town centre-based office in the old Town Hall. He said that we have approached the Divisional Command Team, offering a desk space in the Ripley Town Council office on Grosvenor Road, so that the Ripley SNT have a visibility to the general public and will be openly available for members of the public to drop in. We haven't received a response yet regarding our proposal. Cllr Freeborn added that there will still be a reduction in policing services in Ripley Town Centre as the Ripley SNT will be mainly based at Wyatts Way, at the Police Headquarters.

NOTED

210223/13. Discuss the Cost-of-Living Crisis

RESOLVED for the Town Clerk to review this year's budget to determine if Warm Wednesdays can continue in the winter of 2023.

210223/14. Discuss Greenwich Community Sports Hub

Cllr Freeborn reported that Ripley Town Council are developing partnership working with Butterley United Cricket Club and Ripley Town Football Club. Our ambition is to rewild some parts of the Sports Hub land, down by the pond. We will consult with the users of the land to see if they believe it to be a good idea to encourage wildlife.

NOTED

210223/15. Discuss traffic, road and footway issues in the Township.

RESOLVED to defer this item until the March 2023 Full Council meeting.

210223/16. Discuss Ripley Town Council Youth Initiatives

Cllr Freeborn asked members to refer to the minutes from the recent Finance and Management meeting, which resolved to support five nights per week with The Old Farm Bus and Blend Youth.

NOTED

210223/17. Planning Applications - NONE

210223/18. Exclusion of the Press and Public - NONE

210223/19. Meeting Closed at 7.28pm

Signed..... Date.....

Date for the Next Full Council Annual Meeting Tuesday 21st March 2023 at 7.00pm.

**RIPLEY TOWN COUNCIL
BHIB AWARD WINNER FOR DERBYSHIRE COUNCIL OF THE YEAR 2020
BHIB AWARD WINNER FOR DERBYSHIRE COUNCIL OF THE YEAR 2018
BHIB HIGHLY COMMENDED WINNER FOR DERBYSHIRE COUNCIL OF THE YEAR 2019 & 2022.**