



30 October 2024

Dear Sir/Madam,

As Town and Parish Councils, we know that communities are under incredible pressure and that those doing excellent work to aid those most in need are buckling under the strain through no fault of their own.

We also know that a remit to help those members of the community who are struggling is a key tenet to everything we do. Because this is such a gargantuan task we often have to work together in partnership with a range of agencies to ensure that as many people as possible are able to access the assistance they need.

As a very quick example an astonishing £54 million in benefits goes unclaimed every year on the Isle of Wight.

That is £54 million that doesn't help those who need it and doesn't go back into the Island economy where it helps all of us.

I believe that everyone can agree that the time has come for a concerted effort to change this at a local level.

Ryde Town Council are committed to a pilot scheme initially for 6 months for an Information Support Service based in Ryde Library that will act as the hub for the entire East Wight area. The remit is to supplement and compliment the wonderful work that Citizens Advice Bureau are already doing.


The main purposes of the Support Service are:

- Triage queries and give a basic holistic review of client's current situation (where appropriate)
- To signpost clients to the correct advice and support where necessary
- Support clients to access information online using the library computers (i.e. benefits calculator)
- Spend time with clients who have limited IT skills to guide them to access application forms
- Collate data of client requests to establish where the needs are

Ryde Town Council are delighted to have been given a grant from IWC of £10,000 to start the programme in November 2024 towards the total, initial 6-month cost of £38,660.

This covers the operating costs of two staff working a combined 36 hours a week.

Which, of course, leads to the requirement to seek further external funding for the second half of the year from April 2025.



When broken down by postcodes it is clear that 75% of people using the service currently live in the PO33 area but that signifies that 25% access the service from outside the wider Ryde area.

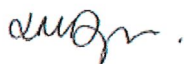
There we are writing to request that your Councillors consider a small grant payment towards the total cost of the project. In the past we have been very grateful for such a grant from a number of local councils however, given that the data backs up the fact that the people accessing the assistance are from across the board, we would hope that each Town and Parish Council will look upon this request for partnership funding favourably.

Without such a grant the project may be forced into excluding people from outside the Ryde boundaries as it is not fair for the community of Ryde to 100% supplement these provisions for everyone.

What Ryde Town Council is hoping for is that 25% of the total cost for the service can be gained by grants from all of the Town and Parish Councils while Ryde fund the other 75%.

I would very much appreciate the opportunity to discuss this further with either Town Council Officers or Councillors in order to answer any questions that you might have and I hope that you will consider this opportunity to help some of those in your community who need it most in the spirit in which it is offered.

Yours sincerely,



Lisa Dyer  
Clerk – Ryde Town Council