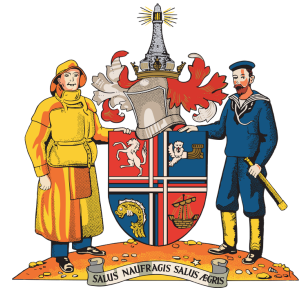


# ANNUAL REPORT

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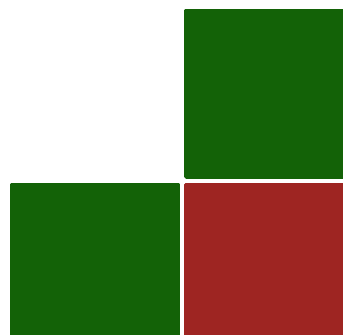
**Ramsgate  
Town Council**

# 2025/2026



Photo credit: Louis McLaren Photography

**Presented by**  
Ramsgate Town Council



# Mayor of Ramsgate



## Councillor Laurie Hudson

During the past year, our town has come together for several significant occasions—moments that not only honour our history but also strengthen the bonds within our community.

One of the most meaningful was our commemoration of Operation Dynamo, during which we celebrated Ramsgate's vital role in the evacuation effort during World War II. The town was privileged to welcome Prince Michael of Kent, along with many other distinguished guests, who honoured our community with their presence and joined us in remembering the courage and service shown during those pivotal days.

We also gathered for Armed Forces Day, where—under bright sunshine and in remarkable heat—our military personnel, veterans, and cadet organisations proudly paraded around the harbour.

As always, Remembrance Sunday stood as one of the most significant events. Veterans, military representatives, and cadet organisations marched in unity to pay tribute to those who have served our country, those who gave everything, and those who made the ultimate sacrifice. The community came together in deep respect, ensuring their legacy continues to be remembered.

I also stood alongside the Deputy Lieutenant of Kent and representatives of the Salvation Army as the Ukrainian community marked the fourth year of the war in Ukraine. The vigil was deeply affecting, with prayers, and testimonies highlighting the pain of displacement and the strength of families living in uncertainty. This gathering was a powerful expression of solidarity and hope, and a reminder of Ramsgate's commitment to supporting those seeking safety and peace.

In January 2026, I joined residents, faith leaders, students and veterans at the Holocaust Memorial Day service, held at the Ramsgate and Broadstairs Sea Cadets. Despite cold and windy weather, the turnout was remarkable. I was especially proud of the young people who contributed readings, and music, bringing poignancy and insight to an event of deep importance to our community.

A particular honour of the mayoral year was being invited to Walmer Castle on 10 July 2025, where I introduced representatives from Pie Factory Music and the Ramsgate Salvation Army to His Royal Highness King Charles III. Their work—supporting young people, families, and vulnerable members of our community—reflects the very best of Ramsgate's values, and it was a privilege to see their contributions recognised at such a distinguished event.

Throughout 2025 and 2026, I have continued to champion the charitable, cultural and civic life of our town—attending community events, supporting voluntary groups, and celebrating the achievements of our residents. I remain immensely proud of Ramsgate and grateful for the kindness and determination shown by so many people who work tirelessly to strengthen our community.

# Full Council

- The Council has set its **2026/2027 precept at £1,180,659, a 3% increase** on the previous year, to support essential services, community grants, and ongoing local projects while maintaining financial stability. For residents, the impact remains minimal: the annual charge for a **Band D property will be £90.85—an increase of just £2.65 per year**, or less than **22p a month**. The rise helps the Council meet inflationary pressures, fund key initiatives, and make prudent long-term investments, supported by an expanded tax base and the Council's conservative budgeting approach, which underestimates income and overestimates expenditure to ensure resilience.
- The Annual Governance Statement and Accounting Statements for AGAR 2024–25 were inspected by an internal and external auditor, with no criticisms or questions raised.
- The Council has set ambitions to achieve Local Council Award Scheme Silver level within a year, and Gold within two years.
- The Council supported the 85th anniversary commemorations of Operation Dynamo in May 2025 by designating the Return of the Dunkirk Little Ships as the main event for the year and allocated £24,380 to prepare the harbour and coordinate activities with local partners. The programme, delivered with the Royal Temple Yacht Club, the Association of Dunkirk Little Ships, and community groups, included the arrival of the Little Ships and a series of heritage-themed events celebrating Ramsgate's central role in the evacuation.
- The Council has also taken over management of several small green areas from Thanet District Council, which we refer to as “pocket parks”, where our Technicians can shape attractive, welcoming areas for local residents.

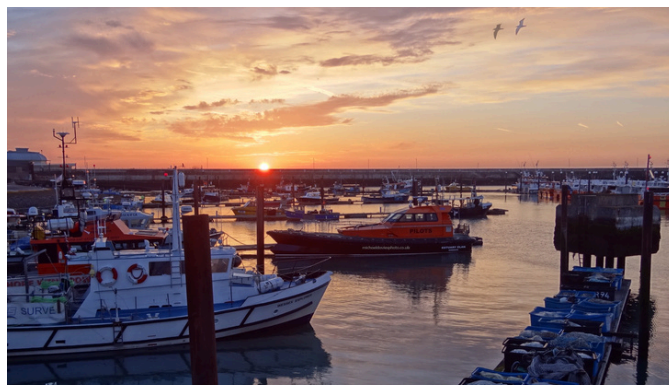


Photo credit: Michael Davis

# Full Council

Ramsgate Town Council (RTC) provided substantial financial and organisational support to the 2025/26 Ramsgate Winter Festival, awarding £10,000 from the Events Fund to GB Carnival CIC, St George's Church and JH Events Ltd for the main six-week programme of creative workshops, illuminated installations, performances, and community engagement activities running from November 2025 to January 2026. Alongside this, the Light Up Ramsgate Trail, formed a key illuminated feature for the festival and contributed to town-wide cultural activity during the winter season.

In addition, RTC allocated £7,000 from the Town Promotion Committee's New Year's Eve budget specifically to support the New Year's Eve event component of the festival, including lantern workshops, parade production, artistic commissions, and event management costs with £3,000 towards promotion.

The Council, guided by a Grant Scrutiny Panel, approved various grants under the Events Fund, Ramsgate Fund, and Community Services Fund. Examples include:

## **Events Fund approvals:**

- Bowling Club £1,000
- Ramsgate Week £2,000
- Festival of Sound £8,600
- Heritage Open Day £750
- St George's Church £2,500
- Royal British Legion £1,500
- AJD Solutions £750
- Starlings £3,000

## **Ramsgate Fund approvals:**

- Ramsgate Society £1,250
- Brunswick Court; Sea Cadets; Bags of Taste £2,000
- Screaming Alley £2,000
- Thanet Community Development Trust £2,000

## **Community Services Fund approvals:**

- Awards to Autism Apprentice, Mind in Bexley, The Hive, Sammy's Foundation, Bfitforever Ltd, Autistic Girls Network, and others.
- Supported mental health engagement project with East Kent Health & Care Partnership.
- Paid for a volunteer co-ordinator at the Citizens Advice Bureau to allow residents to see advisors face-to-face.
- Supported youth activities at Pie Factory Music.
- Approved hiring two security officers (Probe Security) in the town centre for six months due to anti-social behaviour concerns.

# Finance & General Purposes Committee

- Oversees the administration of the council's grants, which in 2025/2026 exceeded £85k. Improved procedures included:
  - A new "easy-to-access grants" scheme was established for grants of up to £300 that can be approved quickly.
  - The grant budget is weighted so that more money is available in the year when it is required by the community.
  - New controls adopted requires applicants to report alternative funding to prevent duplication.
  - Transparency improvements approved for grant-funded events involving paid services.
- Monitors the councils budget throughout the year and makes recommendations for how to respond to underspends and overspends. One such underspend resulted in an additional £80k for the Highways Improvement Plan.
- Drafts the Council budget over several months in conjunction with the other Committees. Budget updates for 2026/27 included:
  - Appointment of a fixed-term Project Manager to expedite a number of projects.
  - Implementation of staffing changes following a staffing review by the Local Council Consultancy Service - to ensure that we've got the right staff doing the right things.
  - Increased grant budgets.
  - Savings and cuts across all budgets where possible.
- Reviews and updates most Council policies, for example, this year the committee approved changes to the capitalisation value in the Asset register, and implemented a new Civic & Community Award Policy.
- Councils now need to provide explicit assurance regarding compliance with UK GDPR, the Data Protection Act 2018 and statutory website requirement - we can confirm that we meet all the required standards.

# Asset Management Committee

## Allotments

The Council manages over **400 allotment plots across five sites.**

- The allotment waiting list remains open, the council has never closed it, the number of people waiting is currently **194 people** (beginning of February), up 19 people from last year. The Council continues to look out for new allotment land opportunities.
- Burning rules were updated to allow green waste burning only within one week either side of Bonfire Night, and any allotment events involving BBQs will require prior approval with strict waste removal requirements. Fires on allotments were banned.
- Communications guidance for allotment holders was adopted, with amendments to rules and role document. A Volunteer Agreement was formally approved.

## Custom House

- Updates on external repairs to the Custom House were noted and the lightning protection system has been upgraded to British Standards. Works continue for the repairs and conservation of the terracotta brickwork.
- For Custom House leases, the RNLI has been offered a new three-year lease at nil rent, and the Wandering Hut restaurant will receive a new three-year lease following a commercial rent review.

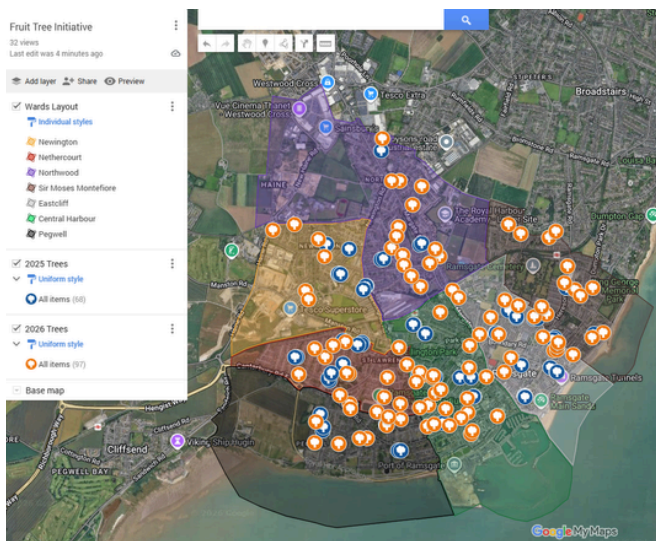
## Radford House

- The newly appointed Project Manager will be leading on the progress and development of Radford House.
- Plans for the new Technicians Depot at the rear of the site are awaiting pre-application advice from Thanet District Council (TDC).
- The building continued to be trialled with different community activities and events throughout the year.



# Climate Change Task Group

- 40 abandoned bicycles are to be brought from Ashford to Ramsgate for refurbishment through the Repair Café, with community groups approached to assist with temporary storage.
- Work continues to develop local e-bike trial opportunities, with discussions underway to link these to Active Ramsgate Week.
- The Repair Café a Ramsgate Town Council initiative is now based at the Pie Factory and runs on the second Sunday morning of the month, 11am - 1pm. This was introduced as part of the reuse, recycle scheme.
- The Ramsgate Town Shed has now started operating at 12 School Lane and will be open on Mondays 10am - 1pm.



- The Tree Initiative is now in its second year, and 98 subsidised fruit trees were delivered to residents in February, this year the scheme was expanded to encourage applications from churches and community groups.
- In total **167 fruit trees** have been planted in gardens across Ramsgate.

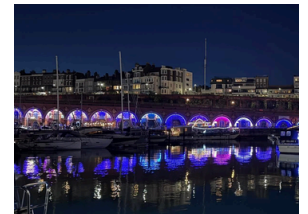
- Ramsgate Town Council reduced its carbon footprint by 91% from 2020 to 2022. 2023 onwards is being calculated and will be published this year.
- Held ongoing discussions with Stagecoach about the Number 34 bus service, with a meeting arranged for March to address future service plans.
- Followed up on concerns regarding the loss of Tetrapak recycling at Tesco Manston, with escalation steps agreed if no response is received.
- Raised issues around the clarity of recycling information, with actions taken to include TDC's recycling criteria in the Community Ad Magazine.
- The group has been working with the Ramsgate Litter Forum and Town Team to repair damaged bins and reduce unnecessary waste. Additionally, the council is engaging with TDC on waste management strategies.
- The group promoted the work of others for example, the TDC's Home Energy Team, and community minibus scheme.
- Ramsgate has signed up to the Refill Scheme, and new coastal water fountains have been installed, reducing the need for single-use plastic bottles. A grant application has been submitted for another drinking water fountain at the West Cliff.

# Planning & Infrastructure Committee

- **Consulted on 178** planning applications this year, of which the committee **commented on 33 applications**.
- Raised objections to proposals on grounds of overdevelopment, harm to conservation areas, parking concerns, impact on neighbouring properties and highways access.
- The Highways Improvement Plan (HIP) is still progressing. Problems raised by residents were noted, and actions added into the HIP (e.g., motorhome parking, school safety railings, signage improvements).
- A public consultation was carried out on the Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) in the town centre. Responses of this consultation were shared with Thanet District Council and Kent County Council (KCC).
- Pavement condition in the town centre to be raised formally with Kent County Council.
- Previous comments from the council for the National Grid / Sea Link Project were re-submitted, with additional concerns added, especially regarding migratory bird flight paths. The Council agreed to challenge elements of the DCO and prepare a formal objection. Members attended open-floor hearings in person and online to represent Ramsgate's interest.
- The Neighbourhood Plan is progressing and soon the public will be consulted on the plan, formally starting the Regulation 14 consultation.
- Adopted a new approach for feeding into S106 agreements. Applications that include 10 or more dwellings are considered by the Planning and Infrastructure Committee. The council has requested annual spending information to be provided by TDC on S106 payments in Ramsgate.
- The Council is going to commission pedestrian-flow and movement pattern data from Thanet District Council to help inform where dropped kerbs would be beneficial; this information will also be helpful for various other council initiatives.

# Town Promotion Committee

- A refreshed What's On Ramsgate? calendar has been launched, replacing the old version with improved design, layout and distribution.
- Decorative lighting projects continue to progress, including new installations, maintenance actions and work on the Obelisk lighting.
- The Christmas lights, banners and festive lighting were installed within the town centre.
- Progress continues on signage improvements, with new harbour signs and an additional fingerpost arm approved.
- Approved the 'We Are Ramsgate' loyalty campaign, aimed at boosting local engagement.
- Ongoing monitoring and support were noted for vandalism-affected businesses.
- Work is underway on a new Visit Ramsgate leaflet (around 20 pages) incorporating Active, Culture and Heritage strands.
- Active Ramsgate Week continues to grow, with strong participation and positive feedback.
- There is continued partnership work with Ramsgate Football Club on HAF (holiday, activity & food) events and outreach to disadvantaged children.
- Work continues with Community Payback on town improvements such as railings and steps.
- Planters and new benches have been installed across the town.
- A strong working relationship has been maintained with TDC, leading to progress on joint projects such as creative workshops, art trails, and heritage tourism initiatives.



# New for 2026/2027

- The Council has approved a six-week 'Standing With Giants' (SWG) large-scale installation featuring 338 steel 'Tommy' silhouettes mounted around the Royal Harbour railings, symbolically reflecting the 338,000 soldiers rescued at Dunkirk. The installation will be scheduled to coincide with the Operation Dynamo weekend and Armed Forces Day Commemorations. The installation promises strong national media interest, substantial visitor footfall, volunteer involvement, and community integration opportunities, further strengthening Ramsgate's position as a central Operation Dynamo commemorative destination.



- Planning has also begun for major 2026 events, including the return of the Dunkirk Little Ships and two new 2026 events RTC are supporting: Ramsgate Pirate Day and Great British Stand-Up Paddleboard (GBSUP) Championship Finals.
- The Council has financially supported creation of the Ramsgate Shed, and we hope to enable the Shed to establish themselves as a separate legal entity in 2026.
- Anchor funding has been allocated to the Miss Ramsgate Organisation and GB Carnival for 2026/27.
- The Climate Change Task Group (CCTG) has secured a trial of three bike hangars for Ramsgate: one at Ramsgate Station, one in Staffordshire Street Car Park, and one along the seafront.
- A scheme to provide new planters and window boxes to residents, is being considered by the CCTG.
- Food Growing Opportunities – A new initiative is being explored to identify land for community-led food growing projects.
- Councillors are considering how to improve areas of the larger parks to perhaps make sensory gardens or seating areas.
- Repairs to Eastcliff shelters are scheduled for autumn 2026.
- The Council is currently running a consultation to find out the public's views on the private security officers that RTC have been trialing for six months - details can be found on our website or at the Custom House.

