

**ANNUAL PLAN 2022/23**

**Purpose**

1. Ripon Together was created to bring together the people and organisations in Ripon to support and improve the community, economic and environmental sustainability of the city. The theme for Ripon Together this year will be celebrating and supporting Ripon.

**What has Ripon Together achieved?**

1. In the past Ripon Together has:
* delivered the interpretation boards in Lavender Alley;
* coordinated and publicised the celebrations of the centenary of the end of World War I;
* run the Cycle to the Moon initiative, including an event for schoolchildren in the market place, to encourage greater interest in the UCI World Championships and encourage people away from their cars;
* delivered a Healthy Journeying initiative to carry that work forward;
* acted to ensure work on the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan and Ripon Renewal projects were properly coordinated;
* organised a Summer of Play to bring sports clubs and activity groups together with children to remake connections damaged due to covid; and
* instigated a new annual walk in September from the Cathedral to Fountains Abbey, with entertainments.
1. The common thread across these initiatives is that Ripon Together’s coordination has delivered a bigger or better final product. In some cases, notably the WW1 events, it has done so where there is already much happening. In others, it has instigated action by a number of groups around a new initiative.
2. Ripon Together is increasingly seen as a body which is plugged in to much of the community and is used by external bodies to gather coordinated views, or separate inputs, from a range of groups across the city. Bodies that have used Ripon Together in this way include Harrogate Borough Council, North Yorkshire County Council and Homes England. We can expect such requests for help or involvement in such exercises to continue in future.

**What changes are likely to affect Ripon Together?**

Local Government structure

1. From May 2023, Harrogate borough Council will disappear to be replaced by a new unitary council covering all of North Yorkshire. Such a large unitary council is likely to want to devolve some services to more local organisations.
2. It would be logical to devolve some powers to some parish councils, like Ripon City Council. However, the current proposition is to create 6 Area Committees of councillors based on Parliamentary constituencies, informed by or liaising with more than 20 local community networks based on market towns, like Ripon. The final model to be implemented will not be determined until the new councillors are in place after May 2022. However, if there is to be a local community network based on Ripon, it is highly likely that Ripon Together would form a significant part of that body.

Ripon Business Improvement District (BID)

1. Ripon Together is very much in favour of the BID and whilst it is in its early days, it is already seeking to work closely with it to deliver the best result for the city.

Ripon Renewal and the Local Walking and Infrastructure Plan

1. The York and North Yorkshire LEP identified several Yorkshire towns which were “failing”; Ripon was one of those. This has led Harrogate Borough Council to let a Ripon Renewal consultancy to assess what actions can be taken to improve the City. In part, this will be a further development of the Ripon City Plan and so is vital to future development and council decision taking locally. Similarly, the LCWIP has the potential to massively improve accessibility around the city.
2. At the start of these two initiatives, Ripon Together made successful efforts to ensure that the timing and content of these two important areas of work were coordinated. We also argued heavily for a general encouragement of accessibility to be part of the LCWIP work. The results of these two pieces of work were due to be published in October, and then again in February. Neither deadline has been met and Ripon Together is entirely unsighted on what the drivers are for the revision of these pieces of work or the consequent delays and has had no input to any changes that are being made.
3. Ripon Together will need to take a view on what emerges and cooperate with other bodies across the City to respond for the benefit of the city.

**What will Ripon Together do in 2022/23?**

1. Ripon Cathedral is celebrating its 1350th anniversary this year and there are lots of other opportunities to celebrate Ripon and the talents of Ripon people over the coming year, many of them created or supported by Ripon Together. Ripon Together will also continue to support the well-being and vibrancy of the local community. **So the theme for this year is celebrating and supporting Ripon.**

**Celebrating Ripon**

Celebrating Alice and public art in the ginnells

1. 27 December 2021 was the 150th anniversary of the publication of Alice Through the Looking Glass. Lewis Carroll had close connections with Ripon and is believed to have drawn significant inspiration for his Alice books from Ripon, so it was appropriate to celebrate the anniversary here.
2. Due at least in part to Ripon Together, several events took place in the autumn to celebrate the anniversary e.g. at the library and during the Poetry Festival. At the same time, both Ripon Together and the BID have identified the need to spruce up the ginnells running from the market place. The intention is to seek the necessary permissions and funding to install Alice-related public art in the ginnells. At the same time we hope to run a treasure hunt around local retailers and a puppet workshop to publicise Ripon’s connection to Lewis Carroll and the new artworks. We will also consider whether to reprint the booklet containing a trail around places in Ripon connected with Lewis Carroll.

St Wilfrid’s anniversary 2022

1. Ripon Together will support the cathedral and the city in celebrating the 1350th anniversary of the founding of St Wilfrid’s cathedral church in the city. As part of this, it will support and work with the St Wilfrid’s Procession Committee to ensure this year’s procession is a great success.

St Wilfrid’s stars

1. Ripon Together was approached with the idea of placing stars in the cathedral to recognise the contribution of people to our community. This may be combined with the St Wilfrid’s Procession in some way. Ripon Together is bringing the various parties together and is likely to help manage the nomination process.

The Queen’s platinum jubilee 2022

1. Ripon Together has been asked by the City Council to arrange the production of a birthday card for the Queen in her jubilee year. Designs have been sought from children at schools across Ripon and surrounding villages along with signed messages from the people of Ripon. Both the card and the book containing signatures will go to the Queen in time for her birthday.

Summer Theatre Festival

1. Ripon Together was approached last year for help with creating a first (in future annual) theatre festival in June. Ripon Together is very happy to support this initiative. It has introduced the organisers to the Ripon Festivals Charity Trust under which the festival will be delivered and paid for changes to the Ripon Together website to give the festival a web presence.

Ripon Historical Atlas

1. Ripon Together has agreed to support the production of an historical atlas of the city in the coming year. That will entail coordinating the efforts of local historians as well as helping to find the funding for the document.

**Supporting Ripon**

General coordination role

1. There are several important developments in train which are likely to require Ripon Together input. These include the Ripon Renewal project, the LCWIP, local government reorganisation, the Ripon Business Improvement District and the 2022 cathedral celebrations. There is no other body with the ability to keep the community involved and to try to ensure that these projects, and others, are aligned. It is a hugely important two years ahead for Ripon and Ripon Together must play its part.

Healthy Journeying

1. The Healthy Journeying initiative was adopted as a follow up to the work on cycling in 2019. Its aim is to encourage more people to cycle or walk in and around the city. The work on posting cycle routes and walks on the website will continue, as will Ripon Together’s support for the greenways project led by Ian Kendall. However, new tasks may emerge once the LCWIP is published, especially if there is significant funding remaining once the LCWIP planning work is completed.

Summer of Play

1. As a result of the pandemic, there were concerns last year about both children’s education and their social and mental well-being. Ripon Together responded by setting up a first Summer of Play comprising over 25 events. We learned a lot of lessons about how to make this work more effectively and as there was an appetite for it to be repeated, we will be running it again this year.

**How will we take these activities forward?**

Organisation

1. Ripon Together has no employees or standing secretariat. Currently, Board members take it in turns to support monthly Board meetings but we are engaging paid support for this function. It will also review how to increase the effectiveness in our communications.
2. Ripon Together pursues initiatives as separate streams of work, usually via community meetings to bring different groups and individuals across the city together to decide what to do and how to achieve it. Each workstream has a separate chair and secretary. This way of working has been paused to a large degree during covid but is likely to be used often in the future.
3. Ripon Together will agree project briefs for these workstreams, especially where they are likely to involve expenditure. They will need to identify whether income will be produced or whether funds will need to come from Ripon Together’s own resources, specific grants or sponsorship.
4. Ripon Together will continue to administer the community’s calendar of events, hosted on its website. There are still a great many events happening in Ripon that do not appear on this calendar, but it is increasingly used. We shall review how we might accelerate this growth in usage.

Finance

1. The only regular income comes from an annual grant from Ripon City Council. We hope this will continue for 2022/23. In the past, particular events have been financially supported by sponsorship or discounts from local businesses and by a grant from Ripon City Council. They have also been supported in kind by the voluntary efforts of community groups, Ripon Together volunteers and local businesses.
2. Ripon Together has a healthy bank balance as it has operated for two years without paid support. However, the policy is to retain enough funds to operate with paid support for a year. Possible calls on the remaining resources in 2022/23 include:
* Website costs;
* Events for the summer of play;
* Entertainments at Fountains at the end of the walk from the cathedral in September;
* Events associated with the Alice initiative (for example a puppet Troupe from Beverley, or reprinting the Carroll Trail booklet);
* Arranging for paid support to Ripon Together activities, particularly support for general administration and communications.

External relationships

1. Ripon Together has very good relationships with most sectors of the local community. It is also clear that national bodies, such as Homes England, and the county and borough councils recognise Ripon Together as a body which can help represent the community and which acts to deliver outcomes.
2. It is possible that Ripon Together will be involved in the creation of a local community network to play a part in the way local government works in future. If so, that could change its ways of working, its external relationships and the area it covers. We are also reviewing the membership of our Board to ensure we reflect the range of interests and bodies in the city.

Communications

1. Colour It In provides support to the website structure and programming. To date we have had support on its improvement and posting content from volunteer members. We will need to find someone to take this role on more regularly in future.
2. In general, communication of Ripon Together’s role, aims and achievements is poorer than it ought to be. We need to broaden our membership so more people receive our communications. We also need to use a wider range of media and use the existing media more effectively. A working group is being set up to address the communications issues. We will need to develop a strategy to increase membership.
3. There are now several different websites across the city, some of which are new, which could sensibly benefit from greater coordination and signposting to increase the effectiveness of each of them. Ripon Together will attempt to bring the owners of these websites together to enable all those organisations to have a greater impact for the benefit of the city.

**Conclusion**

1. In the coming year Ripon will be celebrating its heritage and its people and Ripon Together will play a full part in that whilst continuing to support its community. To do this it will continue to improve its links across the community and improve how it manages itself and communicates.

Ripon Together

April 2022