

30TH JULY 1990

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the Meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 30th July 1990.

Councillors:

p Mrs. N.E. Alldridge  
p A.E. Avery  
p Mrs. O.A.M. Badland  
p Mrs. M.J. Bannister  
p Wg. Cdr. H.E. Bennett, MBE  
p W.E.B. Boothby  
p E.R. Bowring  
p P. Brown  
p D.S. Burdle  
p R.J. Burnett  
p Miss M.A. Clarke  
p J.E. Coles  
p M.R. Cox  
p Miss S.A. Cooke  
p J.G. Craig  
B.A. Cullers  
G. Dawson  
p J.J. Dawson  
p Miss P.A. Drake  
p Major S.S. Elvery  
p Mrs. L.K. Errington  
p M.G. Galpin  
p L.P. Gibbs  
p A.D. Goodall  
p W.J. Greer  
p A.J.C. Griffiths  
S.S. Hayes  
p Group Capt. M. Hermiston, MBE  
p R.C.H. Hale

Councillors:

p J.M. Hoy  
p J.A.G. Hutchins, JP  
A.A. Joyce  
J.D. Keating  
D.W. Killen  
p Mrs. M.C. King  
M.J. Knill  
p A. Lee  
p J. Lovering  
p Mrs. P.J. Marlow  
p J. Maynard  
p R.F. Orton  
p Mrs. S. Paton  
p R.A. Penny  
R.E. Podesta  
Mrs. E.I. Pugh  
p C.G. Ramsden  
p Mrs. E.M.F. Randall  
p A.W. Rice, TD  
p M.H.G. Richards  
p W.S. Rippon-Swaine  
p Mrs. M.J. Robinson  
p Mrs. J.C. Safe  
Mrs. J.K. Vernon-Jackson, JP  
S.S. Wade  
p G.H. Wales  
p J.C. Webb, DFC  
p Mrs. D. Wilson  
p Mrs. P.A. Wyeth

Officers Attending:

P.A.D. Hyde, R. Carver, N.J. Gibbs, D. Gurney, E.W. Hughes, E.S. Johnson, I.B. Mackintosh, Mrs. M. Ollis, T. Simpson, and Miss J. Debnam.

Apologies:

were received from Cllrs. Cullers, G Dawson, Hayes, Keating, Killen, Mrs Pugh and Mrs Vernon-Jackson.

17. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 21st May 1990, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

18. QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS.

The Chairman was pleased to announce that in the Queen's Birthday Honours List, Maldwin Drummond had been awarded the OBE for public service and services to conservation; Lieutenant Colonel Jonathan Collins had been awarded the OBE for masterminding the first phase of redevelopment at Marchwood Military Port; and Doug Baverstock had been awarded the British Empire Medal in recognition of his outstanding service to yachting.

19. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

(a) Councillors recovering from illness

The Chairman was pleased to report that Cllrs. Cullers, Wing Cdr. Bennett and Major Elvery had all resumed their duties with the Council following recent admission to hospital.

He was also pleased to welcome Cllr. Shirley Cooke to her first meeting of the Council. Cllr. Miss Cooke had been elected some months previously, but had been prevented from attending a previous Council meeting through illness. The Chairman hoped that she would continue to recover from her illness, and would be able to take a more active part in Council affairs.

The Chairman also was pleased that Cllr. Miss Ann Drake was present in spite of her recent accident in which her arm had been broken.

(b) The Chairman announced that, on behalf of the Council, he had been presented with an award for glass recycling by David Heathcote-Amory who was a Junior Minister in the Department of the Environment. The Council had recently opened its fifteenth bottle bank, and at the Opening Ceremony Rockware had presented the Council with an award for recycling 6,000 tons of glass. The Chairman congratulated Group Capt. Hermiston and the Environmental Services Committee.

(c) Everton Under-14's Football Team

The Chairman presented representatives of Everton Under-14's Football Team with an engraved Georgian Goblet in recognition of their achievements in a major world-wide tournament in Italy in July. They were the overall runners-up, having beaten teams from many nationalities, including an Italian professional team.

(d) Duke of Edinburgh's Award Scheme

The Chairman was delighted to announce that 8 local young people had been amongst the 40 recipients of the Duke of Edinburgh's Gold Award at a ceremony that he had attended recently in Winchester.

(e) E M Electronics

The Chairman was delighted to present a certificate and plaque to the Moore family of E M Electronics who had won the Queen's Award for Technological Achievement in 1990. This Brockenhurst based company were leading designers of electronic components.

(f) Parker Baths Developments

The Chairman was also pleased to present representatives of the

Parker family with a certificate and plaque. Trading as Parker Bath Developments, they had received the Queen's Award for Export Achievement 1990 and the Prince of Wales Award for Industrial Innovation for the 1980's. Parker Baths were based in New Milton.

(g) Cllr. Mrs. Safe

The Chairman was pleased to announce that Cllr. Mrs. Jane Safe had been re-elected to the Executive Committee of the Southern Provincial Employers' Organisation, and also the Management Committee. In addition Mrs. Safe had recently been elected as the Vice-Chairman of the Hampshire Branch of the Association of District Councils. On behalf of those present, the Chairman congratulated Cllr. Mrs. Safe on her election and thanked her for her continued service both to this Authority and local government in general through the Southern Provincial Employers Organisation and the Association of District Councils.

(h) The Queen Mother's 90th Birthday

The Chairman announced that a special illuminated message of good wishes would be sent to the Queen Mother from the people of the New Forest to mark the occasion of her 90th birthday.

(i) Chairman's Charity Appeals

The Chairman announced that the present total for his appeal for the dialysis unit at Totton was 3,798, and for the Battle of Britain Appeal about 2,000. The fund-raising efforts would continue until the end of September.

(j) Ron Goodwin and Glen Sargeant

The Chairman referred with regret to the death of Ron Goodwin, a resident of Totton who had been killed in an incident in Totton following one of the world cup matches, and also to the death of Glen Sargeant, the first Town Mayor of Lymington after it had been made a Parish.

All those present stood in silent tribute to their memory.

(k) Ian Gow, MP

The Chairman was advised during the meeting that Ian Gow, the Member of Parliament for Eastbourne, had been killed by a car bomb earlier in the morning. The Chairman expressed his deep regret at this incident. Mr Gow had been a former Parliamentary Private Secretary to the Prime Minister.

Cllr. Mrs. Bannister reminded Members that Ian Gow had visited this District while he was Minister for Housing. She considered that the death of a man of such intelligence and integrity was a severe loss. Cllrs. Griffiths, Mrs. Safe and Mrs. Alldridge also spoke in memory of his achievements and qualities.

All those present stood in silent tribute to his memory.

20. CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Lee presented the minutes of the meetings held on 21st May and 2nd July 1990.

On the motion that the minutes be received and the recommendations adopted:-

(a) Community Charge and National Non-Domestic Rate (Minute 13)

Cllr. Maynard referred to the difficulties being experienced by local businesses following increases in their rates because of the uniform business rate. In addition the owners paid the community charge, which increased their burden. He requested the Chairman to make a statement.

Cllr. Lee supported the concerns expressed by Cllr. Maynard. The Council had no control over either the rateable values, or the multiplier, and acted purely as an agent for Central Government in collection. There was no power for the Council to waive or reduce the rates, and there was a legal obligation to collect the money. The Council would, however, consider extended payment facilities in the case of hardship.

The Secretary of State considered that it would be inappropriate to change fundamentally the liability for either the Community Charge or the business rate for people who happen to live on their business premises. He did recognise, however, that this group of payers might need more time to adapt to higher bills under the new system, and he proposed to amend the business rate transitional arrangements, so that from 1991/92 annual increases in the business rate would be limited to 10% in real terms instead of the current maximum of 15%. A report would be submitted to the Central Services Committee when further information became available.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendations adopted.

21. EMERGENCIES COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Coles presented the minutes of the meetings held on 21st May and 9th July 1990.

On the motion that the minutes be received and the recommendation adopted:-

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendation adopted.

22. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Group Capt. Hermiston presented the minutes of the meetings held on 21st May and 7th June 1990.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

(a) Control of Street Trading - High Street and Environs, Lyminster (Minute 10)

Cllr. Coles expressed concern that controls on street trading in Lyminster might jeopardise the operation of the market.

Cllr. Group Capt Hermiston advised members that the market

operated by charter and would not be affected by controls on independent street traders.

(b) Highways Agency (Minute 22)

Cllr. Wg Cdr Bennett reiterated the concern expressed by members at Hampshire County Council's proposals to discontinue the present "island" agency agreement in the District, in particular resuming traffic management responsibility. Cllr. Wg Cdr Bennett was concerned at the bureaucratic indecision that was being demonstrated.

He considered that the District Council was in a better position to judge the needs of the local community. He hoped that there would be a strong campaign to maintain not only the present agency arrangements, but also to extend the agency throughout the District.

Cllr. Group Capt Hermiston thanked Wg Cdr Bennett for raising this issue. The three other island agencies in Hampshire had attended a joint meeting at which all had expressed strong concern at the County Council's proposals. Cllr Group Capt Hermiston concurred that local issues were resolved most cost-effectively through the District Council. This Council would continue to press most strongly to maintain the agency area, even if it could not be extended.

(c) Acquisition of 2 Elm Avenue, New Milton (Minute 25)

Cllr. Cox was concerned at the loss of a house which he considered could be used to house homeless persons. He also considered that this was not a cost-effective method of providing additional parking.

Cllr. Group Capt Hermiston advised members that car parking and housing should not be considered as operating in conflict. There was a need for the provision of both. He agreed the cost of this particular area of land was high, but it did provide the last land parcel necessary to undertake a complete redevelopment of that area. He also advised members that 2 Elm Avenue was in very poor condition.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

23. HOUSING COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Mrs. Bannister presented the minutes of the meetings held on 21st May and 26th June 1990.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

(a) New Forest/Help the Aged Lifeline Appeal (Minute 13)

Cllr. Wg Cdr Bennett reminded members that the Royal British Legion were very supportive in providing lifelines for ex-service personnel, or their dependants. He commended the Royal British Legion as a quick and efficient source of funding, which would save appeal funds for others. Cllr. Major Elvery, who was Chairman of the New Milton Branch of the British Legion, endorsed

this view. Cllr. Mrs. Bannister advised members that the Housing Committee acknowledged the valuable assistance provided by the British Legion in this and other matters. The present appeal would help the many people throughout the District who did not qualify for help from the British Legion.

(b) Properties in Totton (Minute 17)

Cllr. Mrs Randall referred to a proposal for redevelopment which had been received from solicitors representing some of the owner/occupiers on this estate. She considered this was a small minority of the owners, and the tenants and majority of other owners welcomed the Council's proposals.

Cllr. Mrs. Bannister confirmed that the Housing Committee were aware of these factors.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

24. LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Hutchins presented the minutes of the meetings held on 21st May and 19th June 1990.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

25. LICENSING COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Rice presented the minutes of the meetings held on 21st May, 31st May and 17th July 1990.

Cllr. Rice welcomed the support given at the ADC Conference for this Council's motion that local authorities should have access to information contained in police criminal and DVLC records to assist in determining applications for Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicle Drivers Licences.

On the motion that the minutes be received and the recommendation adopted:-

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendation adopted.

26. PLANNING COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Miss Drake presented the minutes of the meetings held on 21st May, 13th June, 3rd July and 11th July.

Cllr. Miss Drake thanked everyone for their good wishes and cards on the occasion of her recent accident.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

(a) Planning Committee Advisory Working Party (Minute 43)

Cllr. Wg Cdr Bennett expressed concern at the new arrangements for site visits which he considered were unsatisfactory. He did not consider there had been any benefit in an objector being present at a recent site visit.

Cllr. Mrs. Errington supported the new arrangements which she considered would allow greater discussion of such applications and operate in a more democratic manner. She considered that neighbour representation could be very valuable in appropriate cases. Cllrs. Lovering and Mrs. Randall also supported the new arrangements. Cllr. Mrs. Randall considered that neighbour representation was particularly important as they could not appeal against a decision they disliked.

Cllr. Miss Drake reminded members of the limitations of the previous site visit arrangements which had been considered by the Planning Committee Advisory Working Party, together with a number of options for the future operation. She hoped that the new system would increase member involvement and bring a greater mix of opinion to bear on the determination of these applications.

- (b) Environmental Improvement Grant: Memorial Hall Garden, Pilley, Boldre (Minute 45)

Cllr. Goodall, on behalf of Boldre Parish Council, thanked the Committee for this grant which would make a valuable contribution to the works at the Memorial Hall Garden.

RESOLVED

That the minutes be received.

27. STRATEGIC GROWTH IN TOTTON COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Mrs. Paton presented the minutes of the meetings held on 21st May and 30th May 1990.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

28. WORKS COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Richards presented the minutes of the meetings held on 21st May and 3rd July 1990.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

29. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Webb presented the minutes of the meetings held on 21st May and 10th July 1990, and indicated that he wished to make a statement under minute 9.

On the motion that the minutes be received and the recommendations adopted:-

(a) Members' Allowances (Minute 9)

Cllr. Webb advised members that the Department of the Environment had recently advised the Council that the proposed implementation date for the new allowances scheme had been postponed from 1st August 1990. As the revised implementation date had not been announced, and could be prior to the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, he considered it advisable that the proposed arrangements should be adopted, with the starting date only reserved. The proposals would not increase expenditure on members' allowances, and over a full year the allowances received by most members would be largely unchanged. The scheme would be reviewed in February 1991.

Cllr. Burnett considered that the proposed changes would cause considerable financial loss to members on invalidity and disability benefit, and also that a flat rate would not accurately reflect the costs incurred by members in attending meetings. This would be a retrograde step, which would prevent working people from standing as Councillors. He moved an amendment that the basic allowance (to include telephone rental) should be fixed at 240 per annum (Recommendation (c)); and that the rate of attendance allowance be fixed at 14 for a full day and 7 for a half day (Recommendation (e)). He advised members that the District Secretary had confirmed that the proposed amendment would not increase the overall expenditure on allowances, and would not infringe the anticipated statutory requirements.

The amendment was seconded by Cllr. J.J. Dawson, who considered that attendance at meetings should be encouraged, with members paid only for attendance.

Cllr. Mrs. Errington had sympathy with members on invalidity or disability benefits being penalised through attendance allowances. The DHSS could, however, change their regulations and she considered that this matter should be pursued at a national level through the ADC. She also considered that attendance at meetings was the least part of a Councillor's duties, and a larger basic allowance would provide a better recognition of these additional duties. This view was supported by Cllr. Mrs. Randall.

Cllr. Lovering also sympathised with members who would lose disability benefit, and considered that those most disadvantaged would be ordinary members who attended regularly. He believed, however, that there was merit in trying the proposed scheme for a year.

Cllr. Mrs. Bannister considered that attendance at meetings should be rewarded, as a measure of members taking their duties seriously. Attendance at additional visits and briefing meetings were a valuable means of training new Councillors and it would be appropriate for an attendance allowance to be made. She suggested that payment under these circumstances could be at the discretion of the District Secretary under Recommendation (g)(ii). Cllr. Mrs. Alldridge also considered that attendance at meetings should be encouraged and highlighted the financial loss that might be incurred by representatives of single member wards should they be working.



Cllr. Coles advised members that the County Council had delayed the implementation of their scheme. The regulations might be radically revised in the light of representations being received, and the scheme now proposed might ultimately be inappropriate. He also considered that in the long term the new scheme would cost more.

Cllr. Boothby was also concerned at the possible loss of invalidity and disability benefits under the proposed scheme.

In answer to a question from Cllr. Wg Cdr Bennett members were advised that a basic rate allowance of 240 would meet the statutory minimum percentage of allowances.

Cllr. Mrs. Safe advised members that the Association of District Councils had been critical of the regulations, and notification of the delay in implementation had been received at the ADC meeting the previous Wednesday evening. The ADC debate had included the Consultative Council for Local Government Finance. There was particular concern that should all authorities take up their full allowances there would be a significant increase in local government expenditure, when the Government was seeking a significant reduction. There was also concern that allowances for County Council representatives were significantly higher than for District Councillors. She also advised members that the loss of benefits had been raised by the ADC, but had not been heeded by the DHSS.

Cllr. Craig considered that the proposals had taken account of envisaged changes to the regulations, and the District Secretary had accordingly been given discretion to amend the scheme if necessary. He hoped that the loss of benefits would be pursued, but commended the adoption of the scheme as recommended. Cllr. Griffiths also considered the scheme was suitable, and would properly recompense members for work in their Wards.

Cllr. Webb considered that the proposed scheme was the most appropriate under the circumstances, and would maintain expenditure on allowances to within 1,000 of that originally envisaged for this year. He thanked Cllr. Mrs. Safe for her information on the concerns of the ADC.

With 17 members voting in favour, and 24 voting against, the amendment was declared lost.

Cllr. Coles considered, that in the light of the postponement of the implementation date of the allowances scheme, this matter should be deferred until the revised regulations, including guidance on implementation, were received. Cllr. Coles moved an amendment that this matter be deferred. The amendment was seconded by Cllr. Galpin, who considered that, should the implementation date be before the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee, there would be no need for a special meeting, but that allowances could be backdated.

Cllr. J.J. Dawson considered that deferral would be appropriate as the regulations might ultimately recommend a completely different scheme.

Cllr. Craig pointed out that members would not be able to claim

any allowances in the interim period.

Cllr. Webb reminded members that the recommendation took account of the need to change the system should the regulations be different.

With 20 members voting in favour, and 24 voting against the amendment was declared lost.

Cllr. Mrs. Bannister moved that Recommendation (g) should be amended so that travel and attendance allowances would be payable to those who were not members of a particular Committee or Sub-Committee but who attended under the circumstances specified. The amendment was seconded by Cllr. Lovering.

Cllr. Craig was concerned at the suggestion that members would only attend meetings if they were paid to do so. This view was supported by Cllr. Wg Cdr Bennett who referred to the restriction placed on budgets by the Policy and Resources Committee.

With 11 members voting in favour and a greater number voting against the amendment was declared lost.

Subject to the amendment of Recommendation (i) for the implementation date to be that advised by the Secretary of State the substantive motion was put to the vote. With 25 members voting in favour, and 11 voting against, the motion was declared carried.

(b) District Strategy Implementation (Progress Report) (Minute 14)

In answer to a question from Cllr. Rice the Chairman ruled that a matter relating to the magazine "Housing Choice" was not appropriate for discussion at this meeting, but advised that an item would be included on the agenda for the next Planning Meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendations adopted subject to the amendment of Minute 9(i) as outlined above.

30. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS.

RESOLVED:

That the Common Seal of the Council be affixed to any Orders, Deeds or documents necessary to give effect to any decision made at this meeting.

CHAIRMAN