

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 7th January 1991.

p Cllr. D.S. Burdle - Chairman
p Cllr. J.A.G. Hutchins, JP - Vice-Chairman

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
E.R. Bowring
p P. Brown
p R.J. Burnett
p Miss M.A. Clarke
p J.E. Coles
M.R. Cox
p Miss S.A. Cooke
p J.G. Craig
p B.A. Cullers
p G. Dawson
p J.J. Dawson
p Miss P.A. Drake
p Major S.S. Elvery
p Mrs. L.K. Errington
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
A.A. Joyce
J.D. Keating
D.W. Killen
p Mrs. M.C. King
p M.J. Knill
p A. Lee
J. Lovering
p Mrs. P.J. Marlow
p J. Maynard
p R.F. Orton
p R.A. Penny
p R.E. Podesta
p 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
p Mrs. J.K. Vernon-Jackson, JP
p S.S. Wade
p G.H. Wales
p J.C. Webb, DFC
p Mrs. D. Wilson
p Mrs. P.A. Wyeth

Apologies:

for absence were received from Cllrs. Bowring, Hayes and Lovering.

Officers Attending:

P.A.D. Hyde, R. Carver, N.J. Gibbs, D. Gurney, E.W. Hughes, E.S. Johnson, I.B. Mackintosh, T. Simpson, G. Ainley, Miss J. Debnam, D.Squires-Jones.

47. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 12th November 1990, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

48. COUNCILLOR MRS SYBIL PATON.

The Chairman, with deep regret, formally reported the death of Cllr.

Mrs. Sybil Paton.

Cllr. Mrs. Paton had joined the Council at the last elections. She served on the Housing Committee and Strategic Growth in Totton Committee, of which she was the Chairman for the past year. The Chairman referred to her work with other organisations, including the formation of Ashurst & Colbury Parish Council, of which she was the first Chairman.

All those present stood in silent tribute to her memory.

49. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

(a) Derry Seaton

The Chairman announced that Derry Seaton, who had been Chairman of the New Forest Association for twelve years, had died on 3rd January at the age of 66.

(b) Cllr. Mrs. Jane Safe

The Chairman was pleased to announce that Cllr. Mrs. Safe had been selected as a Regional Representative to the Executive Committee of the Association of District Councils.

(c) New Year's Honours

The following local people had received Honours in the New Year's List:-

Dr Ivor Morgan, OBE	Esther Rantzen, OBE
Shirley Lockwood, MBE	Jack Clark, MBE
Cliff Fennell, BEM	Richard Simpkins, RVM

(d) Geoff Ainley

The Chairman was pleased to present Geoff Ainley with a silver salver to mark his retirement, and in recognition of forty-one years service in Local Government, thirty-nine and a half years of which had been with this or the predecessor authorities. He retired as a Principal Engineer. Mr Ainley thanked the members for their good wishes.

50. LICENSING COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Mrs. Pugh presented the minutes of the meetings held on 6th November, 29th November (two) and 17th December 1990.

Cllr. Mrs. Pugh advised members that the Hackney Carriage Inspector had been admitted to hospital during the previous week following a heart attack. It was agreed that the Chairman would write to him to express members' best wishes for a speedy recovery.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

(a) Application for Public Entertainment Licence - The Ventana, Marine Drive, Barton-on-Sea (Minute 28)

Cllr. Mrs. Pugh reported that these premises had closed, and were in the hands of the Official Receiver.

RESOLVED:-

That the minutes be received.

51. PLANNING COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Miss Drake presented the minutes of the meetings held on 14th November and 12th December 1990.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

(a) Draft County Structure Plan (Minute 131)

Cllr. Mrs. Randall regretted the County requirement for additional land for industrial and employment purposes which had necessitated the allocation of Durley Farm, to the rear of Newman's Copse at Hounslow.

In reply Cllr. Miss Drake advised members that the Hounslow allocation had fulfilled a shortfall against the requirements of the existing South Hampshire Structure Plan First Alteration, and had been necessary in order to obtain the Certificate of General Conformity for the draft New Forest District (East) Local Plan.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

52. LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Hutchins presented the minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 1990.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

(a) Seasonal Review of Charges (Minute 52)

Cllr. Mrs. Vernon-Jackson welcomed the concessionary membership schemes for recreation centres offered to certain categories of people, and wondered if consideration had been given to offering concessions to these people on activities also, during off-peak periods. To be economical the centres needed to be used by as many people as possible.

In reply Cllr. Hutchins advised members that this matter had been discussed at length, and would continue to be kept under constant review to ensure future viability of the centres.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

53. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Gp. Capt. Hermiston presented the minutes of the meeting held on 22nd November 1990. He advised members that the visit to Slowhill Copse Sewage Treatment Works referred to in Minute 57 had been rearranged and would now be held on Wednesday 30th January at 2.00 pm.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

- (a) This Common Inheritance - The White Paper on the Environment (Minute 61)

Cllr. Maynard congratulated the New Forest Environmental Protection Liaison Committee for their work, and shared their concern that new legislation would change the emphasis on pollution control to allow expense to be an argument for not undertaking pollution control measures. He also questioned whether there were any proposals under the new legislation to release to the public the results of tests undertaken by the Air Pollution Inspectorate.

Cllr. Gp. Capt. Hermiston welcomed the recognition given to the work of the New Forest Environmental Protection Liaison Committee.

He advised members that the results of the tests undertaken by the Air Pollution Inspectorate were available to the Council on request, and some figures were published through the Environmental Protection Liaison Committee. This Committee met in public and once a year convened on the Waterside in order to encourage further public participation.

- (b) North Street, Pennington (Minute 68)

Cllr. Mrs. Vernon-Jackson welcomed the public meeting which had been held, and asked when work would start to implement these measures.

Cllr. Gp. Capt. Hermiston advised members that the Committee fully recognised the valuable part that local, small-scale improvements of this type could play in resolving traffic problems and were fully committed to finding funds in order to carry out these measures. The County Council were being approached for funding, and current budgets were being reassessed to release funds should the County Council be unable to help. Members would be advised of the start date.

- (c) Hampshire County Council - 1990 Passenger Transport Report (Minute 69)

Cllr. Mrs. Bannister questioned the increase in public awareness of the need for public transport, which was being used less with time.

Cllr. Rice referred to the problems caused to rail passengers through platforms at forest stations being too short for the trains. Cllr. Gp. Capt. Hermiston supported these concerns, and the Chairman agreed to pursue this matter with British Rail.

- (d) 1991/92 Transport Policy and Programme - Reassessment of Transportation Programme Proposals (Minute 70)

Cllr. Killen emphasised the concern felt by Ringwood people over the lack of funding to improve the A338 to Salisbury. Improvements to the road system within Dorset, including the Ashley Heath roundabout where work would commence shortly, would increase the accessibility and therefore the popularity of this route from Poole to the Midlands.

- (e) Hythe Market (Minute 73)

Cllr. Mrs. Robinson did not consider St. John's Street car park

was an appropriate site for the preferred location of the market. Lack of car parking was a problem in Hythe and closure of one of the major areas was adversely affecting the business of

local shops on market day. She moved that this matter be referred back for further consideration of a preferred site for the longer term.

The amendment was seconded by Cllr. Miss Cooke, who reminded members that the weekly market would coincide with Christmas Eve this year, which would further exacerbate the parking problems.

In reply Cllr. Gp. Capt. Hermiston reassured members that the location of the market could in any event be reviewed in the light of future developments, such as the pedestrianisation of part of St. John's Street. As there was no urgency with this matter he was happy for it to be taken back for further consideration.

(f) Hampshire Rail Improvement Study (Minute 75)

Cllr. Mrs. Bannister was concerned that any study of rail improvements to the Waterside should include widespread local consultations and take account of the problems that would be caused. In particular she referred to the railway crossing at Junction Road which was closed for about a third of each hour. She considered that any increase in the delays to traffic in Totton would threaten the viability of Rumbridge Street shopping centre. Cllr. Mrs. Randall supported these concerns and moved that the matter be referred back for further consideration. She was satisfied that the study should be carried out, but believed that additional criteria should be added. The amendment was seconded by Cllr. Mrs. Bannister.

Cllrs. Mrs. Alldridge and Boothby were concerned at the possible impact of increased use of the railway line on people living in Totton and the Waterside. Cllr. Boothby stated that the crossing was already closed for 24 minutes per hour, which he felt caused disproportionate inconvenience to road users, bearing in mind the limited number of railway passengers.

Cllrs. Rice and Mrs. King emphasised that the County Council had merely enlisted support for a further study to be carried out, which would include the necessary consultations. Such study might well support the view that passenger use of the railway line on the Waterside was not viable or desirable.

The Chairman reminded members that they had already approved this matter under Minute 167 of the Planning Committee.

Cllr. Avery supported the need for the study which should investigate the feasibility, viability, and desirability of the options. He considered that problems at Junction Road could be overcome, for example by the installation of a road bridge. This view was supported by Cllr. Maynard, who foresaw increased use of public transport in the future. Cllr. Coles emphasised the need for any public transport system to be viable and advocated the exploration of alternatives such as rail buses which could collect passengers from within the residential areas, and lessen the need for car parking at stations.

Cllr. Miss Drake reminded members that the County Council had been

pressed strongly to resolve the problems of congestion on the A326 and they should be supported in their search for alternatives to road traffic.

Cllr. Gp. Capt. Hermiston emphasised that, at this stage the Council was welcoming an additional study and believed that the concerns raised were already covered by the points set out in the minute.

With three members voting in favour of the amendment and the majority voting against, the motion was declared lost.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received, with the exception of minute 73 which was referred back for further consideration.

(Cllr. Podesta disclosed a pecuniary interest in minute 73 relating to Hythe Market, but having a dispensation from the Department of the Environment remained in the meeting during the consideration.)

54. WORKS COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Richards presented the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd November 1990.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

55. HOUSING COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Mrs. Bannister presented the minutes of the meeting held on 27th November 1990.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

- (a) Proposed Housing Subsidy Changes in respect of Leased Properties (Minute 58)

Cllr. Mrs. Vernon-Jackson was concerned that changes to Government financial regulations would make it more difficult for the Council to lease houses for use by homeless families. She questioned whether there had been any subsequent alteration in the regulations to alleviate this difficulty.

Cllr. Mrs. Bannister advised members that, following the appointment of a new Minister for Housing, the regulations had been relaxed, but not as much as might have been hoped. A full report on this matter would be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

56. CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Lee presented the minutes of the meeting held on 3rd December

1990.

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

(a) Standard Community Charge (Minute 42)

Cllr. Griffiths considered that six months was not sufficient for the free period during which community charge was not levied against empty property owned by people who had removed, or where there had been a bereavement. In the present housing market properties were taking a considerably longer time to be sold. In some circumstances persons with large mortgages were unable to sell as the present reduction in house prices brought the value of their property below their mortgage. He moved that recommendation (c) be referred back for further consideration and to allow full evaluation of the financial implications of amending the free period to 12 months. The amendment was seconded by Cllr. Rice.

Cllr. Craig reminded members that house prices were continuing to fall and encouraging people to retain property, by waiving the community charge, may not be advantageous to them in the longer term. This view was supported by Cllr. Cullers who believed that property would sell if it were reduced to a realistic price.

Cllr. Lee advised members that the free period had been discussed in some detail by the Committee who had not accepted the argument for a longer free period. He was nonetheless happy that it should be taken back in order that further information could be submitted on the financial implications of amending the free period.

(b) Community Charge and Non-Domestic Rate Update (Minute 45)

In answer to a question by Cllr. Coles, members were advised that the figures were applicable to the end of the financial year.

(c) Allowances to the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Council (Minute 50)

Cllr. Coles was concerned that the wording of recommendation (b) was ambiguous and might lead to an open-ended commitment to expenditure on social events.

Cllr. Craig reminded members that the budget for expenses would be reviewed annually as part of the normal budgeting process. The Chairman reassured members that expenditure was adequately and properly controlled.

Members were advised that the new budgeting process, which would follow the adoption of the recommended policy, would enable members to discuss the allocation of funds in greater detail, as well as achieving full accountability.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendations be adopted with the exception of paragraph (c) of the recommendation in minute 42 which was referred back for further consideration.

Cllr. Webb presented the minutes of the meeting held on 11th December 1990.

On the motion

that the minutes be received and the recommendations adopted:-

- (a) Budget Strategy for the Council's Development Programme 1991/92 to 1994/95 (Minute 60)

Cllr. Coles drew members' attention to the items of expenditure included under recommendations (a)(ii) and (v) which would be funded from the reserves. He cautioned against reducing reserves in the light of possible future financial difficulties.

- (b) Extra-Statutory Holidays (Minute 71)

Cllr. Wales welcomed the amended arrangements for the taking of extra-statutory holidays.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendations adopted.

58. QUESTION UNDER STANDING ORDER 9.

In accordance with Standing Order 9, Cllr. Podesta asked the Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee whether a firm date had yet been fixed for a meeting of the Clayfields Consultative Group. At the last Council meeting it had been announced that a meeting would be held shortly.

In response Cllr. Hutchins advised members that it had not been possible to fix a date for the meeting of the Clayfields Consultative Group as further discussions had been required between the Leisure Services Officer and the Parish Council. A joint meeting would be held on 9th January 1991, and it was hoped that a Consultative Group Meeting would be fixed later in the week.

59. 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