

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 6th January 1992.

p Cllr. J.E. Coles - Chairman  
p Cllr. Mrs. J.K. Vernon-Jackson, MBE JP - Vice Chairman

Councillors:

p Mrs. N.E. Alldridge  
p K.E. Austin  
p Mrs. O.A.M. Badland  
p S. Bailey  
p P.A. Baker  
p Mrs. P.D. Baker  
p Mrs. M.J. Bannister  
p Major C. Beeton MBE  
p Wg. Cdr. H.E. Bennett, MBE  
p W.E.B. Boothby  
p E.R. Bowring  
p D.S. Burdle  
p R.J. Burnett  
p Mrs. D.M. Brooks  
p Miss S.A. Cooke  
p D.E. Cracknell  
p J.G. Craig  
p W.F. Croydon  
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  
p L.P. Gibbs  
p W.J. Greer  
p A.J.C. Griffiths  
p R.C.H. Hale  
p F.R. Harrison

Councillors:

p Mrs. Y.P. Holloway  
p Mrs. A.M. Howe  
p J.M. Hoy  
p J.A.G. Hutchins, JP  
p J. Lovering  
p J. Maynard  
p Mrs. M. McLean  
p N.D.M. McGeorge  
p Miss G.E. Meaden  
p R.F. Orton  
p P.G. Pearce-Smith  
p C.G. Ramsden  
p A.W. Rice, TD  
p Miss G.M. Rickus, CBE  
p Mrs. M.J. Robinson  
p D.N. Scott  
p Lieut. Col. M.J. Shand  
p S.A. Shepherd  
p A.J. Simmons  
p Mrs. B. Smith  
p Mrs. L.P. Snashall  
p G. Spikins  
p R.G. Vernon-Jackson  
p S.S. Wade  
p G.H. Wales  
p Mrs. D. Wilson  
p Mrs. P.A. Wyeth

Apologies:

were received from Cllr. Mrs. Wilson.

Officers Attending:

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

52. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11th November 1991, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the amendment of minute 39 to refer to the Royal British Legion, and the deletion of Cllr.

Croydon from those Members listed in minute 48 as being present during the afternoon.

53. JONATHAN GATTY.

The Chairman reported, with regret, the death of Jonathan Gatty who had represented Milford Ward from 1976 until 1979.

All those present stood in silence in tribute to his memory.

54. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

(a) New Year's Honours List

The Chairman was pleased to announce that four local people had received awards in the New Year's Honours List.

Iris Nedderman, former Chairman of this Council and Mayor of Lymington Borough Council, had been awarded the M.B.E., in recognition of her work for housing and for the mentally handicapped. Cllr. Wg. Cdr. Bennett spoke of his respect for the community work undertaken by Mrs. Nedderman and of her clear concise chairmanship.

All those present stood and applauded Mrs. Nedderman in recognition of her achievements.

Eric Ashby, the wild life photographer and conservationist had also received the M.B.E., while David Perry, Deputy Surveyor of the New Forest had received the O.B.E. and County Councillor Ken Thornber the C.B.E..

The Chairman reported that he had sent a letter of congratulation in each case.

(b) Hythe Fire Station

Despite strong representations from this Council and Hythe and Dibden Parish Council, the County Public Protection Committee were being recommended to close Hythe Fire Station on 31st March 1992. The Chairman advised Members that he had written to the Secretary of State urging him to refuse consent to the closure. A press release, enclosing a copy of the letter, would be issued.

55. PLANNING COMMITTEE.

Cllr. G. Dawson presented the minutes of the meetings held on 13th November and 11th December 1991.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

(a) 1992/93 Transport Policy and Programme (Minute 130)

In answer to a question from Cllr. Wales, Members were advised that resolution (a) (11) should be amended by the substitution of the word "should" for the word "to" in the second line.

Cllr. Mrs. Bannister expressed her concern that, although the County Council were paying greater attention to cyclist

and pedestrian safety, these two elements were not compatible when, as in West Totton, both pedestrians and cyclists had to share the pavement. In some instances pedestrians were having to walk in the road to avoid large groups of teenagers leaving the secondary schools.

(b) Charging for Informal Advice (Minute 150(c))

Cllr. Burdle referred to the Planning Committee's decision not to charge for informal pre-application advice. He welcomed the recent decision in the House of Lords that local planning authorities had no power to make such a charge.

(c) Webbs Country Foods, Bridge Road, Lymington (Application 47975) (Minute 160)

Cllr. Wales expressed the hope that the landscaping requirements would be properly carried out in an attempt to ameliorate the visual effects of this building in a sensitive riverside location.

Cllr. Rice did not consider that it was possible to provide sufficient landscaping to hide the building and regretted the decision to grant permission for the development.

Cllrs. Burdle and R.G. Vernon-Jackson considered that the local authority had a duty to safeguard local employment. The applicant was a major employer who had been established on the site for a number of years. Cllr. Mrs. Robinson cautioned that the loss of such an employer could be fundamentally detrimental to the town.

Cllr. Scott accepted the need to safeguard local jobs but considered this should be weighed against the environmental impact of the proposals, which must be properly controlled.

(d) Adjournment and Resumption of Meetings (Minute 163)

Cllr. Lovering advised Members that he had not been present during the afternoon of the meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received subject to the deletion of Cllr. Lovering from the list of those attending the afternoon of the meeting held on 11th December 1991 and the substitution of the word "should" for "to" in minute 130(a)(11).

56. LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Hutchins presented the minutes of the meeting held on 19th November 1991.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

(a) Seasonal Review of Charges (Minute 63)

Cllr. Mrs. Vernon-Jackson advised that the schedule should be amended by the substitution of Family

Income Support with its successor benefit, Family Credit;

(b) Grant Aid (Minute 66)

Cllr. McGeorge welcomed the support for pre-school education at Ringwood and hoped that it would be extended throughout the District. Recent research in America had established that money spent on pre-school education was repaid five times over in later savings to the community.

(NOTE: Cllr. Miss Rickus disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in minute 66 insofar as it related to the Avon Tyrrell Residential Centre, but there being no discussion did not leave the meeting).

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received subject to the amendment of the schedule by the substitution of Family Income Support with Family Credit.

57. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Mrs. Vernon-Jackson presented the minutes of the meeting held on 21st November 1991.

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

(a) Urban Grass Cutting (Minute 70)

Cllr. Griffiths thanked Cllr. Mrs. Vernon-Jackson for her letter which had set out the reasons why the Environmental Services Committee had decided not to support a pilot project for collecting highway grass cuttings at Barton-on-Sea. This matter had been referred back to the Committee for further consideration at the last meeting of the Council (minute 42 refers). Cllr. Griffiths considered that there was a duty to provide the services that the public demanded. There had been a large number of complaints on this matter during the summer and it was plain that an acceptable standard of service was not being provided. A pilot project would establish the effectiveness and cost of a grass collection service, which could be extended throughout the District. He moved that

"action be taken to introduce a pilot scheme for collecting highway's grass cuttings at Barton-on-Sea".

The amendment was seconded by Cllr. Austin.

Other Members noted that the highway agency area currently enjoyed a higher level of service than the rest of the District and was being subsidised by other areas. Although many parts of the District would like to have a grass collection service, the cost of extending the scheme would be prohibitive. The view was expressed that the limited funds available should first be used to bring the rest of the District up to the standard already enjoyed at Barton-on-Sea.

Cllr Burdle drew attention to the fact that collecting grass cuttings would improve the appearance of the streets, and pointed out that it was a holiday area with many visitors. Several Members spoke strongly in favour of a pilot scheme.

Following debate of the issues, Cllr. Mrs. Vernon-Jackson reminded Members that it had already been accepted that the grass cutting service had been poor in some areas as the result of the wet spring. At present, the District received a basic service of seven grass cuttings per annum on a contract let by the County Council. The highway agency area enjoyed a further three cuts per annum. The Environmental Services Committee budget included a sum of 30,000 to extend this enhanced service to the rest of the District. The Committee had decided to examine in detail the grass cutting service as part of their performance measurement, but had decided not to undertake the pilot at this stage. A grass collection service for the District would cost in the region of 345,000 per annum and there would be supplementary cost arising from the disposal of the clippings and the subsequent need to fertilise verges. The cost of a pilot project, which would involve investment in equipment, could not be justified unless there was a realistic possibility that the scheme would be continued.

With 14 Members voting in favour of the amendment, and the majority voting against, the amendment was declared lost.

(b) Garden Refuse Sacks (Minute 71)

Cllr. Mrs. Errington considered that the elderly would suffer most from the increase in charges for garden refuse sacks and would prefer to see them given extra sacks, rather than a pilot scheme of some type being introduced.

Cllr. Lovering believed that the sacks were expensive for the amount that could be put in them for disposal and suggested that it might be more consistent to take the view that the Council do not wish to provide this service at all.

Cllr. Mrs. Rickus also noted that the cost of disposing of garden refuse was substantial.

Cllr. Mrs. Vernon-Jackson invited all Members to submit their views and concerns to the Performance Review Working Party who would be looking at the service in detail.

(c) Development Programme Bids 1992/93 - Further Review by Policy and Resources Committee (Minute 75)

Cllr. R.G. Vernon-Jackson welcomed the suggestion that the Policy and Resources Committee should consider allocating resources between committees on the basis of current needs rather than historic projects. Cllr. Craig noted that each committee should also be reviewing its services on the basis of current needs.

(d) Brabant Oil Exploration - Buckland Road, Lymington (Minute 79)

In answer to a question from Cllr. McGeorge, Cllr. Mrs.

Vernon-Jackson advised Members that there had been two breaches of the planning conditions attached to this consent. A bund which had been built too near to a stream had now been moved and action had been taken to prevent the breach of the hours condition for lorry movements.

In addition it was understood that there had been some overrun at the edge of Sway Road, which the oil company had promised to put right at the end of the exploration period.

- (e) Beach Hut Wardening (Minute 88)

Cllr. Griffiths welcomed the proposed warden scheme.

- (f) Condition of Footways - New Milton (Minute 89)

Cllr. Miss Rickus welcomed this response to public opinion regarding the condition of public footways in New Milton.

- (g) 1 Cannon Street, Lymington (Minute 90)

In answer to a question from Cllr. McGeorge, Cllr. Mrs. Bannister advised Members that the Housing Committee considered that 1 Cannon Street, Lymington was not suitable for homeless families and had rejected the opportunity to acquire it. The property was however being discussed with a Housing Association who were considering its suitability for single homeless people.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendations be adopted.

58. HOUSING COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Mrs. Bannister presented the minutes of the meeting held on 26th November 1991.

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

- (a) Mortgage Rescue Scheme (Minute 57)

In answer to a question from Cllr. Miss Cooke, Cllr. Mrs. Bannister advised Members that the Government's Mortgage Rescue Scheme appeared to be of greatest benefit to people who were still in employment but on reduced income. It was not expected to help the majority of families facing homelessness in this District. A paper would be submitted to a future meeting of the Committee on a local scheme when more information was available.

- (b) Nos. 5 & 6 Crete Cottages, Dibden (Minute 69)

Cllr. Mrs. Robinson reminded Members that Crete Cottages were located in Butts Ash.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and recommendations be

adopted.

59. LICENSING COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Rice presented the minutes of the meetings held on 28th November and 20th December 1991.

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

(a) Amusement Arcade - Totton (Minute 37)

Cllr. Harrison expressed his thanks for the prompt action by the Officers and the Police to close this unlicensed amusement arcade.

(b) Public Entertainment in the Open Air (Minute 43)

Cllr. Craig was concerned at the recommendation not to adopt paragraphs 3 and 4 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982. In declining to grant an injunction against a threatened event, the Judge had referred to the failure of the Council to adopt these provisions. A future attempt to gain an injunction could fail for the same reasons and the District might therefore be perceived as vulnerable to this type of event. He moved that the matter be referred back for further consideration. The amendment was seconded by Cllr. Miss Drake.

Cllr. Mrs. Errington advised Members that the Forestry Commission were unlikely to be able to play a constructive role in controlling events of this type as they were constrained to consult widely on any such proposals, which prevented a prompt response.

Cllrs. Mrs. Bannister, Burdle and Burnett referred to the careful and detailed consideration which the Committee had given to this matter. Adopting the provisions would bring a number of small charitable local events under licensing control. The conditions to be applied to a licence were potentially onerous and might deter applications. However, should the licence fee be waived, it would entail significant administrative costs for the authority to bear. They considered that the decision to seek a change in the legislation, through the auspices of the A.D.C., was the correct course of action.

Cllr. J.J. Dawson shared this view and expressed his fear that licensing such events would prejudice the rich variety of activities which currently took place in the District. Cllr Burdle pointed out these had been going on for centuries, and any licensing system would have to be enforced.

Cllr. Rice cautioned Members that it might be necessary to adopt these provisions later as a matter of urgency.

With two Members voting in favour of the amendment and the majority voting against, the amendment was declared lost.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendation be adopted.

60. CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Wade presented the minutes of the meeting held on 2nd December 1991.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

(a) Council Tax (Minute 36)

In answer to a question from Cllr. McGeorge, Members were advised that there was no additional information available as yet on the impact of the proposed Council Tax on this District.

(b) Development Programme Bids 1992/93 - Further Review by Policy and Resources Committee (Minute 37)

Cllr. Griffiths expressed his concern at the production of the New Forest calendar during a period of financial restraint, and questioned whether the money might have been better spent on other activities. This view was supported by Cllr. R.G. Vernon-Jackson who also questioned the production of car stickers.

Cllrs. Wales and Wade advised Members that the calendar had been funded from the District Strategy budget and would not be charged to the reduced public relations fund.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

61. STRATEGIC GROWTH IN TOTTON ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Harrison presented the minutes of the meeting held on 17th December 1991.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

(a) Hollyhatch Road/Testbourne Road Link Totton (Minute 30)

Cllr. Burdle pointed out that the site visit would be held on Tuesday, 17th March 1992.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

62. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

Cllr. Maynard presented the minutes of the meeting held on 10th December 1991.

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

(a) Development Programme 1992/93 to 1995/96 and Budget Strategy



1992/93 (Minute 62)

Cllr. Burdle asked whether provision had been made in the budget for a contribution towards the cost of assisting the Calshot Activity Centre. Cllr. Lovering also supported funding the Centre and suggested that unitary authority status would require the ability to resolve problems of this scale. The possibility of running the Centre as an Enabling Authority should be investigated.

The Chairman reported that the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Branch of the A.D.C. had expressed their support for the Centre and were seeking a meeting with the County Council to discuss the future of Calshot.

Cllr. Maynard advised Members that there was no provision in the current budget, but earnest consideration would be given to this matter. The Centre had only won a temporary reprieve. The possibility of local government reorganisation added further uncertainty.

- (b) Standing Order 13 as to Meetings and Proceedings - Petitions, Memorials Etc (Minute 65)

Cllr. Craig did not favour the proposed change to Standing Orders. He could not identify a clear purpose which would be achieved by the change. The underlying purpose ought to be known. He also questioned whether there would be a difference between a petition and a complaint, particularly as the latter could lead to the involvement of the Ombudsman.

Cllrs. Cullers and Miss Cooke referred to public support for public participation at meetings. Cllr. Mrs. Baker also considered that this was a good means to attract public to attend meetings which would not incur any costs.

Cllr. Greer asked that where more than two petitions were received they should be referred to local members to deal with in the normal way.

- (c) Smoking - Policy Implementation (Minute 70)

Cllrs. Lovering and Burnett did not consider that there was adequate provision for staff who wished to smoke at Appletree Court. Cllr. Burnett was also concerned that the original questionnaire had been strongly biased against seeking the views of smokers.

Cllrs. Craig and Miss Rickus reminded Members that the staff had been consulted through the Joint Industrial Relations Committee and the Staff Consultative Committee and were satisfied that the needs of the non-smoking majority should prevail and the provision for smokers was as good as possible in the circumstances.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendations be adopted.

63. QUESTION UNDER STANDING ORDER NO 9.

Cllr. R.G. Vernon-Jackson asked the Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee:-

- (a) To what extent Dibden Golf Course was trading in surplus in 1990/91?
- (b) The anticipated surplus for the current year 1991/92 and
- (c) How much of the surplus would be transferred to the general fund.

Cllr. Hutchins, Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee advised Members that in 1990/91 Dibden Golf Course had a trading surplus of 34,423.00.

In the current year it was anticipated that the surplus would be 88,190.00. The substantial rise was due to the opening of the new driving range and new nine hole course which began operation in July last year. That surplus was expected to reach 180,860 in 1992/93 when there would be the benefit of a full year of operation of the new facilities. Members might wish to note that the financial performance of the driving range and nine hole course was already performing above the targets set out and the business plan put before the Council in 1989.

Finally all the trading surplus was available to the general fund.

Cllr Hutchins stated that the Leisure Services Committee were well satisfied with the investment in the golf course.

64. 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 decisions made at this meeting.

CHAIRMAN