

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on 24th February 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
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
J. Lovering
p J. Maynard
p Mrs. M. McLean
p N.D.M. McGeorge
p J. Lovering
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
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 Cllrs. Wg Cd Bennett, Lovering and Spikins.

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, D Hill, T R Simpson.

65. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 6th January 1992, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

66. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

(a) Cllr Ramsden

The Chairman welcomed Cllr Colin Ramsden to his first meeting following his recent illness. Cllr Ramsden thanked members and officers for the letters and good wishes which they had sent to him.

(b) Minister's Statement on National Park Status

The Chairman reported that Maldwin Drummond, Chairman of the New Forest Committee, had replied to his letter of congratulation following the Minister's statements on the future of the New Forest. Maldwin Drummond had welcomed the progress made and had congratulated the Chairman and the Council's representatives on the New Forest Committee for the contribution they had made to the success of this project.

The Chairman believed that this Council had therefore achieved its two primary aims, of status for the New Forest equivalent to a National Park and a tailor-made constitution which would recognise that the statutory responsibilities should remain with the existing agencies. The New Forest Committee was still discussing the details of the tailor-made constitution with the Department of the Environment as the basis for public consultation, but the Minister's reassurance on these points was most welcome.

(c) Obituaries

It was with regret that the Chairman announced the deaths of former Councillors Jeffrey Williams, Mrs Pamela Oldfield and Donald McLean. Jeffrey Williams had represented the Sway Ward between 1976 and 1983. Mrs Oldfield was a founder member of the Council, serving as the representative of the Forest North Ward until May 1987 when she did not seek re-election. Mrs Oldfield had been Chairman of the Amenities Committee. Donald McLean had represented Hythe South Ward from 1976 to 1979.

The Chairman also reported the death of Miss Margaret Bedford who had served this Council and the former Lymington Borough Council for 48 years. Between 1957 and 1974 Miss Bedford was secretary to thirteen Mayors at the former Borough of Lymington.

All those present stood in silence as a token of respect.

(d) Tree Planting Ceremony

The Chairman reminded members that the 6th February 1992 had marked the 40th anniversary of the succession to the throne of Her Majesty the Queen. He had sent a message of good wishes to Her Majesty from the Council and people of New Forest District and had received a letter of appreciation from Buckingham Palace.

The Chairman invited members to join him in the planting of an English oak tree in the grounds of Appletree Court to commemorate the occasion, following the conclusion of the morning's business.

67. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC (INCLUDING THE PRESS).

Cllr Rice considered that the press and public should not be excluded from the meeting during the debate on the item on the Future Management Strategy. Much information in respect of this matter was already in the public domain and he therefore considered it incongruous to exclude

the press and public when the Council's own aims were specifically leading towards greater public involvement. He moved that Standing Order 15 be suspended and the press and public be not excluded. The motion was seconded by Cllr Cullers who spoke of the duty of each individual Councillor to act in the interests of the whole local community. He referred to the National Code of Local Government Conduct. He also considered that democracy would be served better by the debate on this matter being conducted in public.

Cllr Miss Rickus supported openness in local government decision-making but did not consider it was appropriate, in the interests of natural justice, to hold a debate, including specific personnel issues, in public.

Cllr Cullers asked that a recorded vote be taken, but with only 14 members standing to signify their support the request did not fulfil the requirements of Standing Order 19 with respect to voting.

The Chairman of the Council moved that, in accordance with Standing Order 15 the press and public be excluded. The amendment was seconded by the Vice-Chairman of the Council and was duly put without discussion. With 34 Members voting in favour of the amendment, and fewer voting against, the amendment was declared carried.

RESOLVED:

That under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972 the public (including the press) be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraph 1 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Act.

68. FUTURE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY.

Cllr Maynard presented Minute 102 of the meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 5th February 1992 and moved that the recommendations contained therein be adopted. The motion was seconded by Cllr Miss Cooke.

The Chairman submitted a letter from Cllr Wg Cdr Bennett on the Future Management Strategy.

Cllr. Burdle spoke of his concern at the timing and the manner in which the proposals had been brought before Councillors, and moved as an amendment that recommendations (a) to (i) of Minute 102 be deleted and the following inserted:

"Whilst welcoming and supporting in principle the Chief Executive's initiatives to reduce costs and examine the Council's management structures in the light of the Government's review of the structure of Local Government and the extension of compulsory competitive tendering, the Council is concerned to ensure that such fundamental proposals for change are given in-depth consideration at Member level. The Council therefore resolves:

- (a) That the Council's management structure be considered by a Management Review Committee of 10 members, appointed proportionately, to be chaired by the Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee and advised by the Chief Executive. Their aim being to reduce costs substantially.

- (b) That the members of the Review Committee be appointed at the next meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee.
- (c) That the existing senior management team shall be fully involved with the Review Committee's deliberations.
- (d) That the Review Committee be requested to report its proposals for the future management structure to the Policy and Resources Committee meeting on July 7th and thence to the full Council meeting on July 27th.
- (e) During the course of the Review full consultation with appropriate Trade Unions, employees, and, if appropriate, with tenant representatives shall take place.
- (f) That no further action be taken on the recommendations of the Policy and Resources Committee."

The amendment was seconded by Cllr Cullers.

Members discussed the amendment in detail. Some members considered that there had been insufficient opportunity for them to discuss the proposed Management Strategy or to participate in its formulation. There had been no response to their earlier request for other options to be brought forward for discussion, and a special informal meeting of Members to discuss the matter, without officers being present, had been cancelled. There was also concern that statements to staff and to the press had presented the Management Strategy as a fait accompli at an early stage. There was a danger that the Council would lose credibility and influence at a national level through the hasty adoption of a staffing structure with the loss of senior officers.

Other members believed that the Management Strategy before members was the best and most viable option to meet the forthcoming changes in local government finance and responsibilities. The Strategy had been commended to members by the Officers Management Team and other options could only be second best. The special informal meeting had been cancelled by the Chairman of the Council following consultation between the leaders of the political groups. It was suggested that many of members' concerns related to the manner in which the proposals had been progressed, but this should not be allowed to confuse the central issue. Delay to discuss other options, which were unlikely to prove viable or acceptable would, at this late stage, damage the Council's credibility and prolong the period of uncertainty for staff.

Cllr Mrs Wilson moved that the question be now put. The motion was seconded by Cllr Miss Cooke. The Chairman, being satisfied that the matter before the meeting had been sufficiently discussed, put the question to the meeting. With 37 members voting in favour of the motion and fewer voting against, the motion was carried.

Cllr Burdle exercised his right of reply under Paragraph 12 of Standing Order 14.

With 11 members voting in favour of the amendment and the majority voting against, the amendment was declared lost.

The Chairman thereupon put the original motion and with 38 members voting in favour and fewer voting against the motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED:

That the minute be received and the recommendations be adopted.

Subsequent to the decision recorded above, a number of Members expressed their dissatisfaction with the way in which the proceedings had been conducted.

69. ADMISSION OF THE PUBLIC (INCLUDING THE PRESS).

The Chairman moved, it was seconded and subsequently,

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be readmitted to the meeting.

70. BUDGET FOR 1992/93.

Cllr Maynard presented the minutes of the special meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee held on 17th February 1992.

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

Cllr Mrs P D Baker advised members that she was present at the meeting but Cllr P A Baker had been included in the list of those in attendance by mistake. Cllr Mrs Wilson also advised members that she was not present during the afternoon session.

(a) General Fund Revenue Budget 1992/93 (Minute 104)

Cllr Greer moved that Standing Order 14(4) be suspended to remove the time limit on speeches during this debate. The motion was seconded by Cllr Major Beeton and it was unanimously agreed.

Cllr Burdle expressed his concern at the size of the budget put forward by the Policy and Resources Committee. He did not consider that an increase in the budget of 18.4% could be justified when inflation was running at 4.1%. Much of the increase could be avoided by the deletion or deferral of discretionary items which had been put forward by the Committees.

He presented an alternative budget, as reproduced at Appendix 1 to these minutes, which represented an increase of 9.92% over 1991/92. He moved that the revised budget be adopted. The amendment was seconded by Cllr Craig.

Some members expressed regret that the budget had been submitted at this late date and considered that it would have provided a valuable basis for further discussion at the special meeting of the Policy and Resources Committee. Cllr Greer advised members that it had only been possible to produce the revised budget after the Policy and Resources Committee had produced their budget, which some members felt was unacceptably high. The amended budget was based on the same format to allow ease of comparison. In answer to a question from Cllr Mrs Wyeth, who felt the community charge should be kept as low as possible with the minimum impact on services, members were advised that this was a workable budget.

Cllr Mrs Bannister considered that there was merit in deleting some of the items included in the Policy and Resources

Committee's budget. She did not however accept the deferral of a surveyor to inspect unfit dwellings. The Housing Committee had included this post at the suggestion of the District Auditor who had recommended that more than one post would be needed to provide a proper evaluation of housing structural problems, in particular in respect of houses in multiple occupation.

Cllr Burnett advised members that the savings over budget for the Licensing Committee should read 1,750.

Cllr Wales was concerned at proposals to delete the public relations budget from the Central Services Committee. This had already been reduced from 45,000 to 30,000. The publicity programme envisaged was not of a political nature and formed an important part of the functions of the Authority.

Cllr G Dawson advised members that the discretionary items included in the Planning Committee's budget were to meet the Council's aims as set out in New Forest 2000. To have any value the Council's policies must receive sufficient resources for their implementation. The majority of the items were designed to protect the long term future of the Forest, which was a sensitive and valuable landscape worthy of preservation. He was also concerned at the proposals to defer again the production of a town centre redevelopment brief for Hythe. This had been put back over a number of years and was now long overdue. He considered that a greater cost would arise to the Council through not having adequate design guidance in place. This concern was shared by Cllr Mrs Robinson. She also concurred with Cllr Mrs Bannister that the Housing Committee's inclusion of a surveyor for unfit dwellings was necessary. She referred to reports by the Audit Commission and the District Auditor all of which called for survey work of this kind to be carried out.

Cllr Mrs J K Vernon-Jackson advised members that the Environmental Services Committee budget had been subject to detailed discussions. Deferral of a survey into car parking requirements would mean that there was no accurate statistical information available for the formulation of policy on car parking in the District Wide Local Plan. The recycling of commercial glass would cost 7,700 in this year but was a vital first step in achieving the Government's requirement of 25% recycling by the end of the century and after this year was expected to generate income. The Environmental Protection Act 1990 classified dog excreta as litter and there was an obligation on local authorities to ensure its collection. The provision of dog bins would be more cost effective than responding to complaints and sending officers out to clean areas. Expenditure on the Coastal Management Plan followed from the aims set out in New Forest 2000. It was essential to evaluate properly how best to safeguard the District's coast-line. Proposed expenditure on land drainage would be cost effective in the long run in preventing the problems which arose when inadequate infrastructure was installed in developments. In addition the proposal to enhance the grass cutting service throughout the District to the standard presently enjoyed by the agency area was only fair as the agency area was presently subsidised by these other parishes.

Cllr Miss Cooke thanked all members who had worked hard in the preparation of the Planning Committee's budget. She reminded

members that part of the discretionary expenditure arose from the need to respond to changes in the planning legislation and would be valueless if deferred. She also opposed the deletion of the general grant aid budget from the Policy and Resources Committee.

This was the only remaining element of disposable budget. The Care in the Community project would be coming forward and the Council would not be able to participate if no funds were available. In addition the District Strategy Promotion Budget would be used in the seeking of unitary authority status and was essential. She was also concerned that the Council's stance on racial equality might need to be re-evaluated which would incur expenditure.

Cllr Griffiths did not consider that the budget proposed by the Policy and Resources Committee was acceptable in the present economic climate. The alternative budget presented by Cllr Burdle contained expenditure without cutting existing services. It merely proposed to limit the increase to mandatory items, together with a limited number of discretionary projects. He suggested the requirements of the Planning Committee could be met by redeployment of staff from Development Control, where the workload was now much reduced. The budget should protect the Forest, but also the wellbeing of the Community Chargepayer. He also suggested that the Committee structure should be reviewed and the need for the Emergencies and Strategic Growth in Totton Advisory Committees critically evaluated.

Cllrs Rice and Mrs Errington referred to the precepts raised by other bodies. The County Council budget increase had risen from 7.8% to only 8.1% following the teachers' pay settlement. Items in this Council's budget could be deferred without harming present services. It was not proposed to cut services, but only not to meet aspirations. The financial strain being experienced by local people should be recognised. This view was shared by Cllr Mrs Wilson who considered the Council must show increasing commercial awareness, and also recognise the financial pressures on local people and industry. A budget increase of 18.4% could not be justified when inflation was only 4.1%. Cllr Simmons concurred, and highlighted the present cost of the planning function, which had more than doubled in three years, and was higher than the group average.

Cllr J J Dawson advised members that authorities generally were having to raise their precepts by more than the inflation rate, and the top six authorities in the south were proposing increases of 30-40%. Some were in danger of charge capping. Part of the increase also arose from a reduction of 1100 in the number of chargepayers on the register. The budget was 1m below the standard spending assessment, which was not generous, and the Council had a poor record for contributions to the arts and leisure.

Cllr R G Vernon-Jackson was concerned that cutting the budget for information technology would reduce the Council's efficiency and hamper proposed changes to the management structure and operating procedures. He was also concerned that the amended budget included unspecified cuts of 192,000. Cllr Mrs Holloway did not consider it was wise to defer expenditure on items which were essential in the long run, and might subsequently cost more. She did not believe the savings justified the deferral.

Cllr Scott would have preferred an increase of no greater than 5% and favoured the early establishment of cost centres to allow proper evaluation of the cost of specific services. He was concerned that leisure activities were being subsidised at a time when there was a priority need for housing.

Cllr Wade considered that the Policy and Resources Committee budget represented a spending level roughly equivalent to the past year. He was concerned at proposals to fund expenditure in the suggested budget from reserves. Funds were necessary to meet contingencies, such as a pay award above 5%. He also believed the budget for tree safety under the Central Services Committee was essential to public safety.

Cllr Pearce-Smith emphasised that the recommended budget by the Policy and Resources Committee was an honest one.

Cllr Craig reminded members that the previous administration had issued guidelines for the preparation of the budget which effectively said there should be no additional discretionary expenditure unless there was some very strong argument in support. There was presently a good level of service and no cuts were proposed, merely a limit on increased aspirations. There was a continuing recession and the Council must respond to the economic situation in the community. This was not the right time to increase the community charge. The Council had funded expenditure from reserves in the past and had recovered. He considered an increase in expenditure of 18.4% was outrageous. Limiting the budget would give urgency to the review of all the Council's functions following the Management Strategy.

Cllr Burdle reiterated his belief that in a time of world recession, the Council should not increase their budgets by 18.4%. The amended budget he had put forward would include all mandatory items and allowed some growth, but the Council must be realistic in its requirements. He was an avid supporter of New Forest 2000 and its continuation, but did not consider that it could be kept at the high profile it had previously enjoyed. National Park status had been achieved and much work in future would be done through the New Forest Committee. Other items such as the Local Plan at Hythe, the car park survey and grass cutting could not be justified at this time. He welcomed the full debate which had taken place on this issue and commended the amended budget.

In reply, Cllr Maynard could see no benefit in deferring expenditure in the hope that the financial climate would improve. The increase in the budget had been reduced from 24% to 18.4% following a rigorous review and effectively only maintained the level of service offered by the Council. He did not consider it wise to reduce expenditure suddenly at this stage but favoured the progressive review to be undertaken in the following year. Reserves were necessary to meet contingencies, in particular any pay award above 5%. There was also likely to be additional expenditure arising from the County Council's reimbursement procedures for coast protection and also from insurance premiums. The budget could be considered in isolation from the previous one. He spoke of his concern in general at the present system of financing local government.

With 24 members voting in favour of the amendment, and 30 voting

against, the amendment was declared lost.

In answer to a question from Cllr Craig, Cllr Wade advised members that 120,000 of the 207,000 set aside by the Central Services Committee for computer equipment would meet the cost of updating the mainframe processing. They were further advised that the first year's contribution of 50,000 towards the GIS fund contribution had been deleted. A networking system for technical systems in the Technical Services Department had been retained at the cost of 37,000 leaving a total expenditure on computer systems of 157,000.

(Cllr Mrs B Smith was not present during the discussion on computer equipment and systems.)

In the following debate members were also advised that expenditure on the fabric of the Town Hall, Lymington was essential maintenance and the flat roof was in need of essential repair. They were also advised on the sources of funding and controls on borrowing with respect to capital expenditure.

Cllr Burdle asked that the budget presented by the Policy and Resources Committee should be determined by a recorded vote. More than 15 members stood in their places to signify their support. The vote was taken as following:-

For	Against	Abstentions
Mrs N E Alldridge	K E Austin	
P A Baker	Mrs O A M Badland	
Mrs P D Baker	S Bailey	
W E B Boothby	Major C Beeton, MBE	
R J Burnett	E R Bowring	
J E Coles	D S Burdle	
Miss S A Cooke	J G Craig	
D E Cracknell	Miss P A Drake	
W F Croydon	Major S S Elvery	
B A Cullers	Mrs L K Errington	
G Dawson	W J Greer	
J J Dawson	A J C Griffiths	
L P Gibbs	J M Hoy	
R C H Hale	J A G Hutchins, JP	
F R Harrison	Miss G E Meaden	
Mrs Y P Holloway	R F Orton	
Mrs A M Howe	C G Ramsden	
J Maynard	A W Rice, TD	
Mrs M McLean	D M Scott	
N D M McGeorge	A J Simmons	
P J Pearce-Smith	G H Wales	
Miss G M Rickus, CBE	Mrs D Wilson	
Mrs M C Robinson	Mrs P Wyeth	
Lt Col M J Shand		
S A Shepherd		
Mrs B Smith		
Mrs L P Snashall		
Mrs J K Vernon-Jackson		
MBE, JP		
R G Vernon-Jackson		
S S Wade		

(Note: Cllrs Mrs Bannister and Mrs Brooks were absent during the

taking of this vote.)

With 30 members voting in favour of the motion and 23 voting against, the substantive motion was declared carried.

(b) Capital Estimates 1991/92 and 1992/93 (Minute 105)

With 31 members voting in favour of the motion and 21 voting against, the motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED:

That, subject to the amendment of the attendance list, the minutes be received and the recommendations be adopted.

71. 1992/93 COMMUNITY CHARGE (REPORT A).

The Chairman advised members that the District Secretary had confirmed that he had received the County Council's precept. The Director of Finance had also confirmed that he had received all the necessary precepts from Town and Parish Councils in the District. The Council had therefore received the last precept capable of being issued to it and was in a position to set the community charge.

Cllr Maynard moved that the recommendations set out in paragraph 7 to Report A be adopted. The motion was seconded by Cllr Miss Cooke.

With 29 members voting in favour of the motion and 23 members voting against the motion was declared carried.

RESOLVED:

(1) That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for 1992/93 in accordance with Section 95 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988:-

(a)	Aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 95(2)(a) to (e) thereof	51,435,250
(b)	Aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 95(3)(a) to (c) thereof	38,896,910
(c)	Calculation under Section 95(4), being the amount by which the aggregate at 1(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 1(b) above	12,538,340

(2) That having taken into account, and, where appropriate, having calculated the following items:-

- (a) the precepts issued to the Council for 1992/93, including any precept or portion of a precept applicable to a part only of the Council's area;
- (b) the Council's estimate of the aggregate of the payments to be met from its Collection Fund in 1992/93 under Section 90(2)(b) to (g) of the said Act;

- (c) the amount calculated above by the Council for 1992/93 in accordance with Section 95(4) of the said Act; and
- (d) the Council's estimate of the amount to be transferred from its Collection Fund in 1992/93 under Section 98(4) of the said Act, the Council, in accordance with Sections 32 and 33 of the said Act, hereby sets for the chargeable financial year beginning with 1st April 1992 as the personal community charge for each part of its area mentioned below the respective amounts set out below:-

Parish	Community Charge
Ashurst & Colbury	222.75
Beaulieu	223.58
Boldre	223.15
Bramshaw	218.93
Bransgore	219.72
Breamore	220.96
Brockenhurst	221.91
Burley	219.49
Copythorne	219.05
Damerham	219.78
Denny Lodge	218.98
East Boldre	219.98
Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley	220.20
Exbury & Lepe	218.68
Fawley	240.19
Fordingbridge	233.75
Hale	221.81
Hyde	219.51
Hythe & Dibden	231.56
Hordle	222.51
Lymington & Pennington	233.44
Lyndhurst	219.95
Marchwood	235.50
Martin	220.38
Milford-on-Sea	224.08
Minstead	220.09
Netley Marsh	217.12
New Milton	232.38
Ringwood	227.16
Rockbourne	218.83
Sandleheath	218.90
Sopley	224.14
Sway	220.34
Totton & Eling	233.47
Whitsbury	217.95
Woodgreen	221.80

being satisfied that, to the extent that they are not to be provided for by other means,

- (a) the total amount yielded by its community charges for the said chargeable financial year will be sufficient (so far as practicable) to provide for the items mentioned at (a) to (d) above; and
- (b) those amounts which relate to a part only of its area will secure

(so far as practicable) that the precept or portion of a precept relating to such part will be provided for only by the amounts yielded by such of its community charges as relate to that part.

72. ADJOURNMENT AND RESUMPTION OF MEETING.

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 1.40 pm and resumed at 2.30 pm with the following members present:-

Cllr J E Coles - Chairman of the Council
Mrs J K Vernon-Jackson, MBE, JP - Vice-Chairman of the Council

Councillors:

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

Councillors:

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

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, D Hill, T R Simpson.

73. PLANNING COMMITTEE.

Cllr G Dawson presented the minutes of the meetings held on 8th January and 12th February 1992.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

- (a) Picket Post Filling Station A31, Burley (Application 44286)
(Minute 180)

Cllr Rice believed that the lighting at the Picket Post Service Station should be directed to avoid it being unduly prominent in this sensitive location in the middle of the Forest. He had recently noted that the lighting was unrestricted.

Cllr G Dawson advised members that this matter would be investigated.

- (b) Land adjoining Southampton Road and New Inn Road, Copythorne - Erect 7 social housing units, access and parking (Application 48817) (Minute 193)

Cllr Ramsden advised members that he did not support the construction of more than 4 houses for social needs in the parish of Copythorne. He was particularly concerned about this site as it adjoined a dangerous junction where there had been three deaths in previous years. He concurred with local opinion that this proposal would make the junction more hazardous, and was concerned this view had been disregarded. He believed the Area Surveyor was incorrect in his evaluation of the junction's safety.

Cllr Burdle believed that the Council's policies stated that there should be no development of this site. In dismissing an appeal against residential development of this site in 1986 the Inspector had highlighted its vulnerability, the contribution it made to the character of Southampton Road and its proximity to the Forest. Cllr Burdle was concerned that a scheme had been progressed which did not have local support. He also considered that although the proposals had been amended to reduce the number of housing units from 19 to 7, there was a risk that the whole of the site would ultimately be developed for housing, in spite of the assurances given.

Cllr Cullers believed that local concerns had been met by the reduction in scale of the proposed development. He considered that this was the best solution to meeting the established housing need in Copythorne parish.

Cllr Mrs Bannister spoke of the role that social housing had come to play over the last three to four years. The Council's policies only recognised low cost homes which were usually for rent or rarely the subject of a shared ownership scheme. This type of development was defined by the Government as social housing and was designed to fill the gap left by local authorities who were no longer providing accommodation of this type. Social housing schemes were not designed to combat homelessness. Within this District they acted mainly to allow people to continue to live within a parish with which they had strong local connections. There was no foundation for the belief that the scheme would be used to flood Copythorne parish with homeless families from other parts of the District. She also advised members that the housing association who would be constructing the scheme had not included improvements to the junction of Southampton Road and New Inn Road, as this had not been a requirement of the Highways Authority and therefore funding was not available.

- (c) Fit for the Future: A statement by the Government on policies for National Parks (Minute 195)

Cllr Mrs Bannister expressed her concern at the proposed designation of the New Forest and considered there was a danger that a future government might not accept the presumption on the working arrangements and impose a standard National Park administration. She also drew attention to the statement that the Council's powers would be used to meet the local needs of the area which would become increasingly relevant in the provision of

social housing.

Cllr Burdle reminded members that the Council had achieved its long-established aim of achieving status equivalent to a National Park. The New Forest Committee was working steadily to progress this matter. The Council would not lose any of its statutory powers, which would have been the case if the New Forest Committee had not been actively promoting the solution which was now accepted. He considered that the granting of equivalent status was of great benefit to the District.

Cllr J J Dawson spoke of the widespread support for the designation of the area and hoped that the people of Totton would not be seen to be separate from the Forest itself. These people considered that they formed part of the Forest and shared the general pleasure at the Government's announcement.

(d) Prior to Minute 200

Amend to refer to Cllr Miss Cooke.

(e) TCPA Weekend School for Councillors - 13th-15th March 1992
(Minute 210)

Cllr G Dawson advised members that no members of the Committee had expressed an interest in attending this conference during the meeting. Cllr Scott had subsequently offered to do so. The Chairman thanked him for his interest.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received, subject to the amendment of the text prior to Minute 200 to refer to Cllr Miss Cooke and the amendment of Minute 210 to read "no Members of the Committee expressed an interest in attending this event".

74. CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE.

Cllr Wales presented the minutes of the meeting held on 17th January 1992.

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

(a) Council Tax (Minute 47)

Cllr R G Vernon-Jackson noted that this Council would be penalised through its present inefficiency in collecting the community charge.

Cllr McGeorge advised members that a file would need to be kept of persons who qualified for a rebate against the Council tax. This was expected to include 40,000 names and there would be a significant cost implication in its maintenance. The Council tax was likely to be complex to administer and recent Government papers implied increasing complexity. He also believed that there would be a large number of appeals associated with the Council tax in its first year of operation.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendation be adopted.

75. LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE.

Cllr Hutchins presented the minutes of the meeting held on 14th January 1992.

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

(a) Catering Development Officer (Minute 88)

Cllr Scott considered that the post of Catering Development Officer was unnecessary and advised members that he had raised the matter with Robert Key, the appropriate Minister.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendation be adopted.

76. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE.

Cllr Mrs J K Vernon-Jackson, MBE, JP presented the minutes of the meeting held on 16th January 1992.

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

(a) Consultation from Hampshire County Council - Application by Hampshire Waste to Energy Limited for a 33MW Energy from Waste Facility at Portsmouth (Minute 93)

Cllr Burdle expressed his concern at proposals to construct an Energy from Waste Facility at Portsmouth. He considered that this Authority should express support for Portsmouth City Council in their opposition to these proposals, in the same terms as other authorities had assisted this Council over Fawley B. He also cautioned that there would be adverse implications for this District should the present Marchwood incinerator site be converted to a waste transfer station or if the County Council proposed that any of the ash produced should be disposed of in this District.

Cllr Cullers also expressed his reservation about the proposals. The Energy From Waste Plant was approximately half the size of the power station proposed at Fawley B and would be very close to this District across the Solent. The emissions from the plant would be carried over this District by prevailing winds for approximately 20% of the time. He considered that it was essential that any energy from waste facility should have good access arrangements and should be situated in an appropriate part of the countryside where it would not be unduly intrusive.

Cllr Mrs Alldridge expressed her gratitude for the concern expressed by members for Marchwood. She was also concerned that Marchwood Incinerator may be replaced by a smaller energy from waste facility. On balance she considered that a transfer station at Marchwood would be the lesser of the possible evils.

Cllr Dawson reminded members that this matter had also been considered by the Planning Committee on 8th January. Both

Committees had been clear in their view that any proposals should not increase road traffic generation or pollution in the vicinity of Marchwood. He also remarked that an increase in the recycling of materials and reuse of resources would reduce the fuel available for an incinerator but this would be a welcome development.

Cllr Rice advised members that he believed it was possible that consideration of this application would be deferred by the County Council.

Cllr Mrs Vernon-Jackson advised members that the Environmental Services Committee had received a very technical presentation on this matter and congratulated the Committee Administrator on the detailed but succinct account which had been produced. She concurred with the view that there should be no increase in traffic generation or pollution at Marchwood. She had not heard that there were any proposals to replace the incinerator at Marchwood although the County Council were considering their options. Their policies with respect to the disposal of ash had not yet been formulated.

(b) Environmental Charter for New Forest District Council (Minute 95)

Cllr Mrs Smith welcomed the proposals to integrate the Environmental Charter into the District Strategy.

(c) Health for All (Minute 96)

Cllr Wales referred to the proposal to invite the Salisbury and Southampton and South West Area Health Authorities to provide joint financing for the possible inclusion of the 38 Aims for Health as a health strategy within the District Strategy. He raised the point as to whether the leading role should be taken by those bodies.

Cllr Mrs Vernon-Jackson reminded members that the 38 Aims for Health was a United Nations document. The Council had looked at the "Look After Your Heart" document from an employers' standpoint, and had considered what additional action needed to be taken. It was the aim of all District Health Authorities to encourage preventative medicine and they had therefore been invited to lend their support. She was however also concerned that there might be a duplication of effort and this commitment would be kept under review in future.

(d) Tobacco Advertising and Promotion (Minute 97)

Cllr Major Elvery was dissatisfied that the Committee had not had the opportunity to comment on this matter prior to the Chairman of the Committee writing to the Government.

Cllr Mrs Vernon-Jackson advised members that the letters were written prior to the meeting in order to meet a Parliamentary deadline. The reply had been couched in the terms of the Council's smoking policy.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendation be adopted.

77. EMERGENCIES COMMITTEE.

Cllr Lt Col Shand presented the minutes of the meeting held on 20th January 1992.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

78. HOUSING COMMITTEE.

Cllr Mrs Bannister presented the minutes of the meeting held on 21st January 1992.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

- (a) Planned Maintenance, Phased Improvements and Capital Repairs Budgets (Minute 80)

Cllr Mrs Bannister advised members that this item should refer to the Netley View Estate, not Netley Marsh Estate.

- (b) County Boundary Review - Christchurch (Minute 84)

Cllr McGeorge referred to the decision by Christchurch Borough Council not to exercise their statutory right to take over land and properties in the Plantation Drive area. This decision had been greeted with relief by local residents. He considered that this boded well for public support for this Council as a unitary authority.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

79. LICENSING COMMITTEE.

Cllr Rice presented the minutes of the meeting held on 23rd January 1992.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

- (a) Application for Gaming Machine Licences - Bashley Park (Minute 48)

Cllr Rice emphasised that his comments on the ethical aspects of granting gaming licences to premises where children had access had been of a general nature. He considered that Bashley Park was a well-run establishment and there had been no implication that he was criticising their operating procedures; his concern was about arcades.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

80. WORKS COMMITTEE.

Cllr Miss Rickus presented the minutes of the meeting held on 28th

January 1992.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

81. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

Cllr Maynard presented the minutes of the meeting held on 5th February 1992 with the exception of Minute 102 which was dealt with under Minute 68 above.

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

(a) Audit of Account 1990/91 (Minute 80)

Cllr Simmons referred to the fifth line of the second paragraph which referred to 800,000 of the community charge remaining outstanding. He did not consider that the word "only" was appropriate. There were significant costs involved in collection and the Council lost both interest and the Government's contributions with respect to non-payers.

(b) Pier and Harbour Order (Lyminster) Confirmation Act 1951 (Minute 92)

Cllr Wales suggested that the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Harbour Commissioners should be present at the proposed meeting. Cllr Maynard agreed that this was a helpful suggestion and would be adopted.

Cllr Scott questioned whether the local members referred to would be the local District Councillors as the majority of the Council's representatives were no longer serving members. He was advised by Cllr Maynard that it would be possible for him to attend.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendations be adopted subject to the deletion of the word "only" from the fifth line of the second paragraph of Minute 80, and that the Chairman or Vice-Chairman of the Harbour Commissioners be invited to attend the meeting referred to at Minute 92.

82. SEALING OF DOCUMENTS.

RESOLVED:

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

CHAIRMAN