

24 MAY 1993

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of the annual meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 24 May 1993.

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 W E B Boothby
p E R Bowring
p Mrs D M Brooks
p D S Burdle
p R J Burnett
p J E Coles
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 B C Earwicker
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

Councillors:

p F R Harrison
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 N D M McGeorge
p Mrs M McLean
p Miss G E Meaden
p R F Orton
a 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 Mrs J K Vernon-Jackson MBE JP
p R G Vernon-Jackson
p S S Wade
p G H Wales
p Mrs D Wilson
p Mrs P A Wyeth

Officers Attending:

P A D Hyde, N J Gibbs, D A Gurney, Mrs M Holmes, I B Mackintosh, M Dean, T R Simpson, Miss J Debnam, and for part of the morning session, Mrs C Bennett, K Smith, Mrs P Smith and Mrs J Ward.

The Chairman of the Council (Cllr J E Coles) in the Chair

1. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN.

The Chairman of the Council (Cllr J E Coles) moved, Cllr McGeorge seconded and it was unanimously

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Mrs J K Vernon-Jackson MBE JP be elected Chairman of the Council to hold office until her successor becomes entitled to act as Chairman at the next Annual Meeting of the Council on 23 May 1994.

Cllr Mrs Vernon-Jackson then took the Chair and made her declaration of acceptance of office which was formally witnessed by the Director of Finance and Administration.

Cllr Coles invested the Chairman with the chain and badge of office. He also gave her a bouquet of flowers.

On behalf of all the staff the Chief Executive congratulated the Chairman on her election.

In congratulating the Chairman on her election, Cllr Greer spoke of the new division of functions between the Chairman and the Leader of the Council. The chairmanship should be above party considerations and he hoped the principle now being established would continue in the new unitary authority. He hoped the Chairman would have a very happy and enjoyable term of office.

In thanking members for her election, and Cllr Greer for his kind words, the Chairman pledged to work for all members of the Council. She would not be designating an official consort for the year but would be asking a number of fellow members to fulfil the role. She hoped they would find an involvement in the civic side of the Council's business enjoyable and rewarding. The Chairman spoke of the period of change facing this and the other local authorities in Hampshire, but believed that New Forest had a strong case to become an unitary authority. Her theme for her period of office would be to prove that local government should be close to the people, and she looked forward to working with a wide range of voluntary and statutory organisations.

The Chairman (Cllr Mrs Vernon-Jackson) in the Chair.

2. VOTE OF THANKS TO CLLR COLES.

It was moved by the Chairman of the Council, seconded by Cllr Cullers and unanimously

RESOLVED:

That the best thanks of this Council be accorded to Cllr John Coles for his outstanding service during his term of office as Chairman of the Council and also to Mrs Kathie Coles for her able help as Chairman's consort and that they be wished every success in the future.

The Chairman presented Cllr Coles with a Past-Chairman's badge and an album of mementoes to remind him of his period of office. The Chairman presented Mrs Coles with a Past-Chairman's Consort's badge and a bouquet of flowers.

On behalf of the whole staff, the Chief Executive expressed thanks and good wishes to Cllr and Mrs Coles.

In reply, Cllr Coles recalled that it was twenty years since he had been first elected to this Council. Only Cllrs Mrs Bannister, Burdle, Craig, Mrs Errington, Rice and himself remained from the original membership. The last two years had been particularly busy with the

start of the Local Government Review, and Cllr Coles spoke of the support given by the other political groups and particularly by Cllr Greer. There had been other changes in the District, and Cllr Coles recalled some of particular significance, including the farewell to the Hampshire Regiment and the continuing battle against homelessness. Cllr Coles was, however, pleased to report that during his period of office there had been progress in the consideration of the need to update the Pier and Harbour Order (Lymington) Confirmation Act 1951.

Cllr Coles presented Christine Bennett, Jenny Ward and Pauline Smith with flower arrangements as a token of his appreciation for the hard work and support they had given him in his role of Chairman.

3. APPOINTMENT OF VICE-CHAIRMAN.

The Chairman of the Council moved, Cllr Mrs Smith seconded and it was unanimously

RESOLVED:

That Cllr S S Wade be appointed Vice-Chairman of the Council to hold office until immediately after the election of the Chairman at the next annual meeting of the Council on 23 May 1994.

The Vice-Chairman made his declaration of acceptance of office, which was formally witnessed by the Director of Finance and Administration. The Chairman invested Cllr Wade with his badge of office, and Mrs Wade with her badge of office and a bouquet of flowers.

In thanking members for his appointment, Cllr Wade recalled the support he had received from his fellow Councillors and also from his wife.

Cllr Greer wished Cllr Wade a happy and successful term of office as Vice-Chairman of the Council.

Cllrs Mrs Wilson and Lovering spoke of the fairness and impartiality of the new Vice-Chairman. He was an experienced and talented Councillor who had remained above politics, which would prove of great value in his new role.

4. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 March 1993, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

5. LIEUT COL M NICOL ERD.

The Chairman was sad to report the death of former Councillor Lieut Col Malcolm Nicol ERD. Col Nicol was elected to this Council in 1976 and retired in 1983 but was then subsequently co-opted onto the Emergency Planning Committee. Col Nicol had previously served as a Borough Councillor at Fulham and had enjoyed a long and successful career in the oil industry. The Chairman had been honoured to attend his funeral on the Council's behalf.

6. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

(a) Mr Chris Lanham - It was with great sadness that the Chairman

advised members of the death, in a road accident, of Chris Lanham, the Maintenance Technician for Lymington and New Milton Recreation Centres.

- (b) Robert Adley MP - The Chairman also recalled the death of the Member of Parliament for Christchurch, Robert Adley.

All those present stood in silence as a mark of respect for Lieut Col Nicol, Chris Lanham and Robert Adley MP.

- (c) Ben Buchanan - The Chairman was pleased to announce that the Council's Chief Solicitor, Ben Buchanan, had been married on 8 April 1993. A card was circulated for members to sign.

- (d) Cllr Jack Maynard - The Chairman congratulated Jack Maynard on his election as Chairman of Hampshire County Council.

7. CONTRACT SERVICES COMMITTEE.

Cllr Miss Rickus presented the minutes of the meetings held on 2 March and 21 April 1993.

On the motion that the minutes be received:

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

8. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES COMMITTEE.

Cllr Hoy presented the minutes of the meetings held on 4 March and 26 April 1993.

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

- (a) Opening Times of Public Service Counters at Police Stations (Minute 126)

Cllr Burdle supported the decision to raise no objections to proposals to close the public service counters at Police Stations earlier, on the basis that it would increase the number of police officers on the beat, but considered nonetheless that police stations should be open twenty-four hours a day. Contact by telephone was not always adequate for members of the public seeking help and assistance. He hoped this would be merely an experiment and he considered it a retrograde step in a period of rising crime.

Cllr Shand believed the opportunity had been lost to convey the important message that the public should dial 999 immediately on the suspicion of a crime. They would receive immediate help.

- (b) Car Parking Strategy for the Future (Minute 143)

Cllr Shepherd expressed his concern at the parking problems in Totton caused by DSS staff parking all day in the Council's Elingfield, long term car park. This problem would be exacerbated if plans to transfer additional work to the office were implemented. He believed the DSS should be made aware to

the effects of their proposals and should assume their responsibilities to provide adequate parking for their staff and visitors.

Cllr Hoy supported these concerns, and the proposal to contact the DSS on this matter. This Council would be improving lighting at the Rumbridge Street Car Park and increasing signposting to try to encourage drivers to use this alternative area.

Cllr McGeorge asked that the Town Council and Chamber of Commerce be included in the proposed meeting to discuss on-street parking in Lyminster. Cllr Hoy agreed that this would be done.

- (c) Hampshire County Council Street Lighting Maintenance Contract - 1993/1998 - Footway Lighting Costs (Minute 147)

Cllr Burdle considered that the draft Street Lighting Policy, which would mean that fewer new street lights would be provided in villages, should be resisted. The increasing crime rate was being reflected in country villages as well as towns. He also hoped that this would not lead to the Council's street lighting contract being curtailed.

- (d) A31 Rufus Stone - Closure of Central Reserve Gap (Minute 148)

Cllr Burdle concurred with the view that the closure of the gap to Rufus Stone should be opposed unless it was first replaced by a grade separated junction in the vicinity. He considered that this Council should be expressing grave reservations about the closure, which would result in motorists having to make a detour of sixteen miles.

Cllr Hoy agreed that this would be done.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendations be adopted.

9. PLANNING COMMITTEE.

Cllr G Dawson presented the minutes of the meetings held on 10 March, 14 April and 12 May 1993.

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

- (a) Supermarket Proposals Along A326 (Minute 253)

Cllr Burdle referred to recent press reports that supermarkets were buying planning permissions through funding planning gains. In this case the developer had overcome a planning objection by funding highway works for the County Council. He hoped this would not be the start of a trend which would destroy the shopping centres.

Cllr G Dawson agreed that no developer should have the right to buy planning permissions. This had not happened in Totton, but it would have been irresponsible to have allowed the development to proceed without securing improvements to the roads.

- (b) The Wykeham Site, Stanford Hill, Lymington (Application 50342)
(Minute 254)

Cllr McGeorge was saddened by the County Council's decision regarding the provision of a pedestrian crossing over Stanford Hill. The new development was specifically for older people, who would need to cross this busy main road to the supermarket. He hoped there would be a further survey on completion of the development, if the matter was not resolved beforehand.

Cllr R G Vernon-Jackson concurred with this view and remarked that the survey had been taken at a place which was so dangerous that people were not trying to cross. He hoped that County Councillors would press for this matter to be rethought to achieve a sensible solution for Lymington.

Cllr G Dawson agreed, and reminded members that the Committee had been constrained by the County Council's views. The situation would be monitored and best efforts made to secure a pedestrian crossing.

- (c) Adjournment and Resumption of Meeting (Minute 280)

Cllr Craig remarked that the present system of minuting did not truly reflect those members who were present for individual items, particularly applications on the C Schedule.

Cllr Lovering did not think this was a problem of great relevance, but Cllr Coles concurred with the view that the minutes should be a correct record of the proceedings of the meeting.

Members were advised that this would be given further consideration.

- (d) The White House, Milford-on-Sea: Position Statement (Minute 281)

Cllr Lovering drew members' attention to the undesirable consequences of buildings being listed without adequate consultation with the public, the town or parish council and the officers.

Cllr Burdle reminded members that the decision on whether to list a building did not rest with this authority. He was concerned that the report on the White House had been deferred, and recalled other instances when listed buildings had progressively deteriorated during periods of delay in taking action. He noted that Milford-on-Sea was a responsible parish council which was asking for the building to be demolished. He considered that the longer the problem was left unresolved, the more expensive it would become.

Cllr Rice considered the site should be left as open space when the building was demolished. This is one of the few areas with good access to the beach for the disabled. He questioned the grounds under which the building had been listed and believed it would be more marketable if the listing was removed.

Cllr Mrs Bannister recalled that the building had been in a poor

state of repair when it had been operated by the Tatchbury Hospital and was surprised that it was capable of being restored.

Cllr Major Beeton reminded members that the building was in private hands and was expected to cost in the region of 1 million to purchase. He agreed that there was a need for an urgent solution.

- (e) Designation of Conservation Area: Old Milton Green, New Milton (Minute 290)

Cllr Lovering reiterated his concern that there should be adequate consultation with town and parish councils before such matters were brought before committee.

Cllr Earwicker advised members that he had been involved in the proposals to designate a conservation area at Old Milton for some time. A recent threat of development had prompted the officers to bring the matter before the committee. The Town Council had now been consulted and were unanimous in their support which he considered vindicated the decision to bring the matter forward.

Cllr G Dawson considered that the officers had been in a difficult position. There had been some consultations with the Town Council in association with the town centre meeting for the Local Plan Panel, and the officers had therefore had a good view of their requirements. He shared Cllr Lovering's concerns but believed the officers had had reason to act promptly, even though the development threat had not materialised in the interim period. He welcomed the support of the Town Council.

- (f) Sarieta, Spring Lane, Ashley, New Milton (Reference 114/158/91) (Minute 293)

Cllrs Bailey, Major Elvery and Lovering regretted the weakness in planning controls which allow the construction and retention of such an unsightly structure.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendations be adopted.

10. LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE.

Cllr J J Dawson presented the minutes of the meeting held 16 March 1993. He thanked the Director of Community Services and the officers for their success in attracting income to the leisure centres during a difficult financial year.

On the motion that the minutes be received:

- (a) Grant Aid Applications (Minute 90)

Cllrs McGeorge and Griffiths welcomed the reasonable interpretation being placed on the requirements for kitchens in public halls imposed by the Food Safety Act. An onerous interpretation of the new regulations would prevent the use of the kitchens in many public halls in the District.

Cllr J J Dawson advised members that the requirements were not

now believed to be as onerous as originally reported and there would be a further report to a future meeting of the Committee.

(b) Recreation Centres Review (Minute 97)

Cllr Burdle referred to the forthcoming meeting at Applemore Recreation Centre which would discuss a users' survey and the targetting of the children's Saturday Supersports. He expressed his surprise at the responses which had been given to some of the suggestions made by the public. He did not think that it was adequate merely to pass a complaint about the price of catering onto the contractors; and he did not concur with the view that it was not possible to arrange advance sales of tickets. He believed that this response had been unduly negative. Advance sales were the best way in which to maximise income.

Cllr J J Dawson agreed with these comments and assured members that these points would be looked at by the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

11. HOUSING COMMITTEE.

Cllr Mrs Bannister presented the minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 1993.

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

(a) Chairman (Minute 118)

On behalf of all members of the Council, the Chairman concurred with the views expressed by the Housing Committee regarding the work of Cllr Mrs Bannister in her period of office as Chairman of the Committee.

(b) Smoke Detectors - Provision in Council Dwellings (Minute 124)

While welcoming proposals to install smoke detectors and fire resistant entrance doors in blocks of flats, Cllr Griffiths expressed his concern at the programme to install mains operated smoke detectors in all Council dwellings. He considered battery operated smoke alarms would be as effective, but at only a fraction of the cost. The majority of Council tenants were capable of changing batteries and arrangements could be made for elderly or infirm tenants to receive assistance. The Council's legal position could be safeguarded through a clear disclaimer that maintenance of the smoke alarm was the tenants' responsibility. He also considered that the tenants should have been consulted before the decision to incur this expenditure had been taken. He moved as an amendment that this matter be referred back for further consideration.

The amendment was seconded by Cllr Mrs Wilson, who concurred with the views put forward by Cllr Griffiths.

Cllr Mrs Robinson reported that there was now case law whereby landlords were held responsible for ensuring that the detectors

they installed were in working order. Money saved by installing battery operated alarms could be lost in legal fees if this was not done properly. In addition, she believed that elderly tenants would not be able to change the batteries themselves. The Council should act as a responsible and caring landlord.

Cllr Coles referred to a social housing scheme he had recently opened in Beaulieu. The smoke detector outside the kitchen in one property had been disabled by removing the battery as it went off too easily in response to cooking. This demonstrated both the need for mains operated alarms, which were not so easily disabled, and for care to be given to the siting of the alarms so that they were not a nuisance. The concern about siting of the alarms was shared by Cllr Greer.

Cllrs Boothby and Earwicker supported the need for mains operated alarms to ensure they remained operational in the longer term.

Cllr Craig noted that the installation of mains operated alarms would be spread over a number of years because of the cost. He considered the Council should act more promptly. Installing battery operated alarms would allow all properties to be covered in the coming year.

Cllr Lt Col Shand regretted that persons refusing to have alarms installed in their properties would put other people's lives at risk.

Cllr Mrs Bannister opposed this matter being referred back. A full debate at the Housing Committee had been preceded by the Tenants' Liaison Meeting when attending representatives had expressed their support for the proposed expenditure. This Council was behind many others in installing alarms, which might have prevented serious fires in Council dwellings in other parts of the country. She believed that few tenants would refuse to have the alarms installed, and the majority of these would be where the tenant had already installed their own alarms. Case law placed the onus for the maintenance of the alarms on the landlord. It would be expensive and difficult to ensure proper maintenance of battery alarms when the contract was subject to compulsory competitive tendering.

With twenty-one members voting in favour and thirty against the amendment was lost.

- (c) Minutes 125, 126 and 127

Cllr Mrs Bannister advised members that the text relating to declarations of interest and who had occupied the chair referred to minutes 126 and 127 respectively.

- (d) Freephone Service for Reporting Housing Repairs (Minute 125)

Cllr Beeton was surprised at this decision as he believed the tenants' representative had thought the installation of a freephone service to be a waste of money.

Cllr Mrs Bannister advised members that the Tenants' Liaison Officer would be assessing the need for the service in the course of his normal duties as he visited Council properties.

(e) Rural Housing Special Programme 1992/93 (Minute 128)

Cllr Burdle questioned when the boards outside the recently opened Woodlands Social Housing Scheme would be removed. Cllr Mrs Bannister advised members that their removal was the responsibility of the Housing Association.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendations be adopted.

12. STRATEGIC GROWTH IN TOTTON ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

Cllr Harrison presented the minutes of the meeting held on 23 March 1993.

On the motion that the minutes be received:

(a) Calmore Road, Totton - Flooding (Minute 46)

Cllr Shepherd was pleased to note that the intermediate works appeared to have resolved the immediate problem of flooding and he thanked the officers for their prompt response.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

13. LICENSING COMMITTEE.

Cllr Burnett presented the minutes of the meeting held on 25 March 1993.

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

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendation be adopted.

14. CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE.

Cllr Wade presented the minutes of the meeting held on 5 April 1993.

On the motion that the minutes be received:

(a) One-Stop Shop at Lyndhurst (Minute 71)

Cllr Lovering considered that the introduction of a One Stop Shop at Lyndhurst would be a waste of money. People rarely came to the offices with more than one problem and it would not be possible to train the receptionists to have the same level of knowledge on a number of subject areas as they presently offered on individual specialisms. He considered the present level of service was excellent.

Cllr Wade advised members that a Working Party was investigating all the options available.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

15. ADJOURNMENT AND RESUMPTION OF MEETING.

The meeting adjourned for lunch at 12.25 pm and resumed at 1.30 pm with the following members present:

Mrs J K Vernon-Jackson MBE JP - Chairman
S S Wade - Vice-Chairman

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
E R Bowring
Mrs D M Brooks
D S Burdle
R J Burnett
J E Coles
Miss S A Cooke
D E Cracknell
J G Craig
W F Croydon
B A Cullers
G Dawson
J J Dawson
Miss P A Drake
B C Earwicker
Major S S Elvery
Mrs L K Errington
L P Gibbs
W J Greer
A J C Griffiths

Councillors:

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

Officers Attending:

P A D Hyde, N J Gibbs, D A Gurney, Mrs M Holmes, I B Mackintosh, M Dean, T R Simpson, and Miss J Debnam.

16. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

Cllr Maynard presented the minutes of the meeting held on 21 April 1993.

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

(a) Applications for Grants (Minute 123)

Cllr Maynard advised members that he would welcome Section 4 of this minute, relating to the Lord Mayor Treloar Hospital being referred back for further consideration. It now appeared that alternative sources of funding were being sought to keep this hospital open, and it was recognised that it provided a valuable service to residents of this District.

Cllr Mrs Robinson believed that information should be sought on the services which would be offered to people in this District.

Cllr Bailey spoke of his personal gratitude for the specialist services offered by this hospital, which were not available at the General Hospital. In supporting a reference back, Cllr Burdle regretted that it had been necessary over such a small sum of money.

Cllr Mrs Wilson spoke on the general principle of giving discretionary grants to voluntary organisations. She considered this was the only opportunity for local people and organisations to make a direct plea to the Council for grant aid and it should not be cut from the budget. Savings should be made elsewhere. Cllr Lovering supported the need for critical review of other budget heads.

Cllr Mrs Bannister supported the giving of grants, but cautioned that this Authority might lose the discretion if the budgets were capped.

Cllr Miss Rickus believed that grants should be seen as a short term, pump priming exercise. Too many organisations came to rely on grants as a regular source of income, and this prevented funds being available to start new voluntary groups. They should be advised not to rely on grants in future.

Cllr Craig emphasised that the money spent on grants either came from Council Tax payers or from Government grants. It should, therefore, be spent wisely.

Cllr Maynard believed that Government policy might widen the scope of applications that the Council received for grant aid. The only just remedy, within a limited budget, was to critically evaluate all applications and advise recipients that they cannot rely on grant income in future.

(b) Tenant Participation and Co-option of Tenants to Housing Committee (Minute 130)

Cllr Wales opposed the co-option of a tenants' representative onto the Housing Committee. He considered that this was analogous to leisure users being co-opted onto Leisure Services Committee, or taxi drivers to Licensing Committee. The Public Participation Period would allow tenants' views to be heard, but he believed that the Councillors were elected to represent the views of their communities. In addition, if tenants were to be represented, then so should Housing Associations, in recognition of the enabling role of the Council. He moved that this recommendation be not approved.

The amendment was seconded by Cllr Austin.

Cllr Mrs Bannister indicated that she had wanted the co-option of a tenants' representative to the Housing Committee for a number of years and believed that the time was now right. Tenant co-option was practised by a number of local authorities already, including those with a majority of Conservative members. It had been proved to work well and to provide valuable input into the deliberations of the Committee. This was the only avenue through which the tenants could contribute to private session items and she was confident that they would respect the privacy of these matters. The tenants' voice was needed on the Housing Committee and this was the democratic way forward. The need for the Tenants' Liaison Meeting would be assessed when the co-option was in place.

Cllr Earwicker supported tenant co-option. The Housing Committee was different in that it controlled tenants' money. Cllr Mrs Robinson believed that the Council could not resist the direction of public opinion towards greater participation. The customers, in this case tenants, could offer a particular viewpoint.

In answer to concerns expressed by a number of members, they were advised that the tenants' representative could not, by law, have any voting rights.

Cllr Scott believed that private house owners would also have to be represented on the Housing Committee. In answer to a question from Cllr Griffiths, members were advised that the Housing Committee was responsible for money received by way of Government grant, as well as income from tenants.

Cllr Maynard did not support reference back as he believed that input was necessary from the tenants.

With twenty-one members voting in favour and twenty-nine against, the amendment was lost.

(c) Forestry Commission - National Review of Ownership and Management (Minute 133)

Cllr Coles expressed his dismay at the Government's review of the ownership and management of Forestry Commission woodlands. This was particularly unsatisfactory as there was no forum for public consultation. He offered to give the address for representations to the press. He was confident that the Verderers and New Forest Committee would be making separate representations to Government.

Cllr Mrs Errington considered that this was a worrying first sign and that the lucrative forests in Scotland would be the first to be privatised. She believed that Crown Lands in the New Forest should remain separate, an autonomous area under the management of someone with the status of the Deputy Surveyor.

Cllr R G Vernon-Jackson considered the prospect of a breakup and sale of forest lands to private enterprise would be horrifying to anyone with a regard for the New Forest. There was a fear that public access might be lost, and that the sale could be to undesirable organisations. Conservation and leisure interests must be placed before profit. This matter must be pursued through all possible channels.

These concerns were shared by Cllrs Cullers, Mrs Alldridge and Mrs Baker who believed that the Council should be making the strongest possible representations to safeguard the present management of the Forest.

Cllr Lovering suggested that these concerns might be premature. The survival of the Forest was not dependant on the Forestry Commission, having been managed successfully for centuries before the Forestry Commission was founded. Cllr Shand did not believe, however, that members were over-reacting. There had been no reassurance in Earl Howe's reply to the Chairman's letter.

Cllr Griffiths advised members that the local Member of Parliament had expressed his total opposition to the proposals and suggested that the Council support his campaign. The Member of Parliament would have the direct ear of Government. Cllr Rice believed that public representations should also be raised through the Verderers' Court and by contacting the Forestry Commission.

Cllr Miss Cooke suggested that assistance should be sought for protection for the Forest under the European Environmental Protection Directives.

Cllr Maynard believed that all members were opposed to the privatisation of Forest land. It was an example of private greed being placed above public need. He also considered it worrying that Earl Howe had given no reassurances in his reply to the Chairman's letter.

(d) Appointments to Outside Bodies (Minute 134)

Cllr Mrs Robinson referred to the appointment of Cllr Mrs Bannister to serve on the Swaythling Housing Association and pointed out that tenants' representatives were also appointed onto their management committees.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendations be adopted, subject to Minute 123(4) being referred back for further consideration.

17. ELECTION OF CHAIRMAN OF POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

That Cllr J E Coles be elected Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee to hold office until the annual meeting in 1994.

18. VISIT TO ROMANIA.

Cllr Burnett presented a plaque from the Mayor of Breaza in Romania, which he had visited recently.

The Chairman reported that she would be writing to the Mayor and would send the Council's best wishes.

19. 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