

7 NOVEMBER 1994

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, on Monday, 7 November 1994.

p Cllr Mrs J K Vernon-Jackson, MBE JP - Chairman  
p Cllr S S Wade - 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  
e Mrs M J Bannister  
p Major C Beeton, MBE  
p E R Bowring  
p Mrs D M Brooks  
p D S Burdle  
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 B D Dash  
p G Dawson  
p J J Dawson  
e Miss P A Drake  
p B C Earwicker  
p Major S S Elvery  
p Mrs L K Errington  
p L P Gibbs  
e W J Greer  
p A J C Griffiths  
p R C H Hale

Councillors:

p D Harrison  
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  
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 Lt 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 G H Wales  
p Mrs D Wilson  
p Mrs P Wyeth

Officers Attending:

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

38. MINUTES.

(1) Leisure Services Committee (Minute 29)

The following insertion after minute 29 (b) was moved and seconded:

"(c) Regional Recreation Strategy 1994-1999 -  
Consultation Draft (Minute 11)

Cllr Scott protested at not being allowed to speak, although he had risen to do so. He left the meeting saying he would be making a formal complaint."

The Chairman apologized for not having seen Cllr Scott to call on him to speak. However, she did not think it would be helpful to accept the insertion. Minutes served a particular purpose; they were not intended to record when members left meetings for various reasons.

The amendment was defeated by twenty-seven votes to sixteen.

(2) Policy and Resources Committee (Minute 33)

Under "(b) Local Government Review (Minute 7(1))", it was moved and seconded that the penultimate paragraph on page 17 be amended to read as follows:

"Cllr Scott was called by the Chairman to speak and had risen, but Cllr R G Vernon-Jackson moved and Cllr Mrs Bannister seconded that the question be now put. With twenty-one members voting in favour and twenty against, the motion was carried, which the Chairman accepted."

The Chairman did not recollect having called on Cllr Scott to speak.

Cllr Scott said he had raised issues that he considered to be serious. He was clear about having been called by the Chairman and had wished to speak.

With two members voting in favour and a greater number against, the amendment was overwhelmingly defeated.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 25 July 1994, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

39. CLLRS W E B BOOTHBY AND R J BURNETT.

The Chairman reported formally, with regret, the deaths of Cllrs Boothby and Burnett, who had represented the Totton South and Hythe South wards respectively since 1987. Members spoke with affection of the contribution by Cllrs Boothby and Burnett to the work of the Council and to their respective local communities, and their charitable activities at home and abroad.

40. RETURNING OFFICER'S REPORT.

The Returning Officer reported that, on 3 November 1994, Brian David Dash and David Harrison had been elected to

represent the Hythe South and Totton South wards respectively and had signed their declarations of acceptance of office.

The Chairman welcomed Cllrs Dash and D Harrison to their first meeting of the Council.

41. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

(1) Mr D Pyle

The Chairman reported with regret the death of Mr D Pyle, who had worked for Lymington Borough Council since 1936 and then this Council until his retirement from full time employment in June 1976. He was subsequently re-employed part time until 1980.

All present stood as a mark of respect for Cllrs Boothby, Burnett and Mr Pyle.

(2) Cllr Mrs M J Robinson

The Chairman was pleased to announce that Cllr Mrs Robinson had recently been presented with a distinguished service award by the South and West Regional Health Authority. The award was in recognition of Cllr Mrs Robinson's achievements and hard work for Southampton and South West Hampshire Community Health Council, together with her outstanding contribution to the National Health Service over the years.

(3) New Forest Contract Services

The Chairman referred to the profitable trading result that New Forest Contract Services had achieved again in 1993/94. The Chairman of the Contract Services Committee presented the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee with a cheque for 87,000, representing a contribution towards the Council's General Fund, and thanked the Contract Services General Manager and his staff for the excellent way in which they ran their business. The Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee expressed his appreciation and referred to the considerable contributions New Forest Contract Services had made to the General Fund over the years. This was a notable achievement having regard to the experiences of other Councils.

(4) Customer Care Awards

The Chairman presented individual awards to Mrs J Arnold, Planning Reception and Ms S Hewlett, Lymington Information Office and Lyndhurst Tourist Information Office, and a team award to the staff of Lyndhurst Tourist Information Office.

(5) Cllrs Miss Drake and Greer

Cllrs Miss Drake and Greer would be discharged from hospital that day.

42. HOUSING COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Housing Committee presented the minutes of the meetings held on 19 July and 13 September 1994.

On the motion that the minutes be received:

(1) New Forest Housing Partnership (Minute 43)

It was suggested that the "Introduction" to the partnership agreement should not specify individual housing associations; it should be open to any housing association in the Country to participate. Also, the "The purpose of the Partnership" should include a reference to the effective, efficient and economical use of all resources. A reference back was moved as an amendment and seconded.

The Chairman of the Committee said the partnership agreement had been developed in consultation with the Housing Corporation and existing partner housing associations. The Council would welcome any other housing associations provided they could meet the targets set. She drew attention to section 4 of the partnership agreement, which set out clearly what would be required of the Council and a partner housing association. It also avoided the situation whereby two housing associations might prepare proposals for one site instead of separate sites. As there had been considerable discussion on the issues at Housing Committee, she was not prepared to accept a reference back.

With fourteen members voting in favour and a greater number against, the amendment was defeated.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

43. LICENSING COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Licensing Committee presented the minutes of the meetings held on 28 July and 22 September 1994.

On the motion that the minutes be received:

(1) Licensed Vehicles (Minute 40)

A member welcomed the revocation of the licence holder's operator, driver and both vehicle licences, because of the poor condition of vehicles. However, it would have been preferable if the Committee had

imposed a complete ban on the licence holder for five years. It was hoped that the licence holder would not be permitted to operate again within a matter of months. Licensing Committee should consider imposing complete bans in similar circumstances in future.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

44. PLANNING COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Planning Committee presented the minutes of the meetings held on 10 August, 14 September and 12 October 1994.

On the motion that the minutes be received:

- (1) Chairman's Announcements - Planning Appeal (Minute 53(c))

Reference was made to the recent Government statement about possible controls on out-of-town shopping centres. The Chairman of the Committee reported that, apparently, these would relate to the type of shopping complex at Hedge End rather than individual supermarket developments like those at Dibden, New Milton and Totton.

- (2) Land Adjacent Gordleton Pit, Sway Road, Lymington (Application 54656) (Minute 64)

Several members reported the receipt of a letter from the applicant. It was hoped that the matter could be resolved amicably. Individual members were prepared to discuss the issues with the applicant on site.

The Chairman of the Committee replied to a specific question concerning different levels of screening for planning application 54656 and a previous application in respect of an adjacent plot. He stated that the previous application had been in accordance with the Local Plan; application 54656 had not been so. Members were reminded that the draft New Forest District Local Plan had been published the previous week. If the provisions of the existing Local Plan were considered to be wrong, members should make their views known so that changes might be made. The Council had acted even-handedly on application 54656. He, personally, wanted industrial sites put to maximum use for employment, but the Council had to comply with the Local Plan.

- (3) Chairman's Announcements - Comments by Town and Parish Councils (Minute 71(b))

Fellow councillors' attention was drawn by a member

to the fact that the person who had written to the local Press, stating that Netley Marsh Parish Council's comments on planning applications were mainly ignored by the Planning Committee, had not been a member of the Parish Council for over two years. Therefore, his remarks were not representative of the Parish Council's views.

(4) Rural Exception Schemes (Minute 74)

A member was pleased to note that some tenants had been successful in appealing against the council tax bands for their properties. It was hoped that the Council would help all tenants in this position.

(5) Land of Manor Farm Nursery, Manor Road, Milford-on-Sea (Application 55001) (Minute 86)

Several members expressed concern about the possible proliferation of aerial towers in the District. It was suggested that as many antennae as possible should be fixed to individual masts to keep the overall number of towers to the minimum. There was also concern about electromagnetic radiation from such installations.

The Chairman of the Committee shared fellow members' views about telecommunication towers and fears about electromagnetic radiation emitted from them. It was disgraceful that Department of the Environment Inspectors should say that possible health risks were not relevant planning considerations. He was not aware of intentions by various telecommunication companies to affix several antennae to a single tower. Nevertheless, he was sure Planning Committee would welcome any such proposals to confine the number of towers. Because of the proximity of the proposed tower at Manor Farm Nursery to the local school, the concern of people in the vicinity would be taken up with the developer.

There would be a report by the Chief Environmental Health Officer to Environmental Services Committee early in the new year on health and safety aspects of telecommunication towers.

(6) Transport Policy and Programme 1995/96 (Minute 99)

The Chairman of the Committee replied to a question about the "Headstart" campaign by explaining that Planning Committee felt the Government needed to take a longer term view on funding public transport if such means of transport were to become more attractive to possible users.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

The Chairman of the Environmental Services Committee presented the minutes of the meeting held on 1 September 1994.

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

(1) Concessionary Travel Scheme (Minute 33)

In reply to a question, the Chairman of the Committee explained that current legislation defined the pensionable age for women as sixty years and sixty-five years for men. Under the extended concessionary travel scheme, faresaver passes would be available to all persons who did not currently qualify under the scheme between pensionable age and seventy-nine years of age at a charge of 15 per person, representing approximately one-half of the normal price.

(2) Report of Advisory Steering Group Expenditure Plans 1995/96 to 1998/99 (Minute 36)

(a) Rodent Control

The Chairman of the Committee reported that the introduction in 1995/96 of a charge of 10 for domestic premises had been proposed by the Steering Group in accordance with the Council's guidelines to Committees on the review of expenditure plans. A number of other councils had rescinded such a charge. There would be a report to Environmental Services Committee in January 1995 recommending that a charge for rodent control in domestic premises should not be introduced.

The decisions of other local authorities were welcomed and the view was expressed that this Council should continue to provide the service free of charge. Indeed, members took the view that the Committee should take such a decision at its next meeting rather than in January 1995. It was moved as an amendment and seconded that the proposed charge for rodent control in domestic premises be referred back for further consideration.

The Chairman of the Committee indicated that she was prepared to accept a reference back of this item.

(b) Amenity Car Parks - Charges

An amendment was moved and seconded that the proposed increases in charges in the Council's amenity car parks be referred back for further consideration. In moving the amendment, the view was expressed that charges were far too high and had led to indiscriminate parking of

vehicles on public roads by those who were not prepared to pay them. The Committee should instead consider removing charges in amenity car parks completely, halving them or issuing residents' passes.

Some members spoke in support of the amendment, suggesting that reductions in charges would lead to increased use of amenity car parks. Raising charges did not necessarily increase income. The proposed increases were excessive in percentage terms, having regard to the current rate of inflation.

Other members referred to the high cost of providing and maintaining car parks. Charges in amenity car parks were a significant source of income, comprising about 250,000 a year. This income was all the more important with the Council's finances already severely stretched. If charges were abolished, serious decisions would have to be taken by Environmental Services Committee, as the shortfall in income would have to be found from other sources.

The Chairman of the Committee drew attention to members' concern expressed in the minute that fewer motorists might use the amenity car parks as a result of the increases in charges. The proposals provided for an overall increase of 8% over two years. The charges were fair and compared favourably with those of neighbouring authorities. She was not prepared to accept a reference back.

The amendment was defeated by twenty-seven votes to twenty.

(c) Garden Refuse Sacks

Replying to a question, the Chairman of the Committee stated that the Council was obliged by law to charge the actual cost of collecting garden refuse. That was why garden refuse sacks were priced at what might seem a relatively high level. As space in the Autumn edition was at a premium, the Public Relations Sub-Committee had postponed the insertion of a relevant item in District News until next Spring, as the timing was considered more appropriate.

(3) Emergency Ambulance Response Time (Minute 44)

The Council was concerned at the inability of the emergency ambulance service to meet target response times within the New Forest. While members acknowledged the service was provided by a skilled and dedicated staff, there appeared to be a lack of funds by the Southampton and South West Hampshire Health Commission to maintain adequate service



levels.

Reference was made to a recent fatality at Fawley. It had taken an ambulance twenty-five minutes to arrive, apparently from Totton, and the doctor had taken longer. The Parish Council would be taking up the matter.

The Chairman of the Committee reported that there would be a meeting with the Chairman of the Ambulance Trust in the near future. She would inform members of the outcome. Meanwhile, she urged members to enlist the support of their respective parish or town councils by getting them to make representations to the Health Commission for a better service.

(4) Coast Protection - Shoreline Management Plans  
(Minute 53)

In reply to questions from members about possible deferment of works at Hurst Spit, the Chairman of the Committee stated that the Council had been asked to invite tenders for alternative sources of marine aggregate. This could entail a re-design of the scheme and, if so, the works might not start for another year.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendation be adopted, subject to the proposed introduction of a charge for rodent control in domestic premises at minute 36 being referred back for further consideration.

46. ADJOURNMENT AND RESUMPTION OF MEETING.

During consideration of "Coast Protection - Shoreline Management Plans (Minute 53)" above, the meeting was adjourned for lunch at 12.27 p.m. and resumed at 1.17 p.m.

p Cllr Mrs J K Vernon-Jackson, MBE JP - Chairman  
p Cllr S S Wade - 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  
e Mrs M J Bannister  
p Major C Beeton, MBE  
p E R Bowring  
p Mrs D M Brooks  
p D S Burdle  
p J E Coles  
p Miss S A Cooke

Councillors:

p D Harrison  
p F R Harrison  
p Mrs Y P Holloway  
p Mrs A M Howe  
e 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  
p P G Pearce-Smith

p D E Cracknell	p C G Ramsden
p J G Craig	p A W Rice, TD
W F Croydon	p Miss G M Rickus, CBE
p B A Cullers	p Mrs M J Robinson
p B D Dash	p D N Scott
p G Dawson	p Lt Col M J Shand
p J J Dawson	p S A Shepherd
e Miss P A Drake	p A J Simmons
p B C Earwicker	p Mrs B Smith
p Major S S Elvery	p Mrs L P Snashall
Mrs L K Errington	G Spikins
e L P Gibbs	p R G Vernon-Jackson
e W J Greer	G H Wales
A J C Griffiths	p Mrs D Wilson
p R C H Hale	p Mrs P Wyeth

Officers Attending:

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

47. LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of Leisure Services Committee presented the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 1994.

On the motion that the minutes be received:

(1) Totton Museum Working Party (Minute 25)

The Chairman of the Committee replied to questions by stating that the Council had been invited by Totton & Eling Town Council to appoint a representative on the Working Party. The payment of all allowances for attendance at meetings was in accordance with the Council's scheme.

(2) Totton Recreation Centre Phase II - Developments (Minute 29)

At a time of financial stringency, one member considered it irresponsible of Leisure Services Committee to put forward expenditure of this magnitude for a scheme that would probably make a loss. It was hoped that Officers' Management Team would look critically at this proposed scheme when it reported to Policy and Resources Committee in December 1994 on capital expenditure.

Reference was made to a recreation scheme undertaken by another authority in Hampshire that had been financed at no capital cost to taxpayers. It was suggested that this Council might well follow that example. It was moved as an amendment and seconded that this matter be referred back for further consideration.

The Chairman of the Committee reminded members that a commitment had been made by the Council in 1987 to

the second phase developments at Totton Recreation Centre. The Council had always made it known that a dry sports facility was required at Totton and would be income producing. It would be for Policy and Resources Committee to recommend the Council on the method of financing the developments. In the circumstances, it would have been irresponsible of Leisure Services Committee not to have put forward the scheme.

With eight members voting in favour and a greater number against, the amendment was defeated.

(3) Brockenhurst College Joint Project (Minute 30)

Cllr Miss Rickus, the Chief Executive, Director of Community Services and the Head of Central Administration disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in this item and left the meeting before consideration thereof.

Concern was expressed by a member about the precedent this project might set. An assurance was sought that this would not be the case and that financial input had the support of the Director of Finance and Administration. There was a need for a business plan.

Some other members were also concerned that Leisure Services Committee had taken a decision without due consideration of a business plan. Reference was made to possible effects of the project on custom at the Council's recreation centres.

A reference back was moved as an amendment and seconded.

A number of members did not accept that the project would set a precedent, having regard to joint schemes elsewhere in the District and the County.

The Chairman of the Committee regretted that some members should suggest that Leisure Services Committee had not considered carefully expenditure on the project. On the question of precedent, a number of joint facilities already existed in the District. The project would proceed regardless of whether this Council contributed towards it. The scheme provided the opportunity for this Council's customers to participate in leisure facilities in Brockenhurst. Financing the scheme would be a matter for Policy and Resources Committee and the Council. He was reluctant to accept a reference back.

With nine members voting in favour and a greater number against, the amendment was defeated.

(4) Lymington Museum (Minute 32)

The Chairman of the Council disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in this item and, having left the

meeting, took no part in the discussion thereon.

The Vice-Chairman of the Council in the Chair

The Chairman of the Committee responded to comments from a member that the eventual cost of the museum was likely to be out of all proportion with what the Council could afford to spend. He explained that the funding of the museum was a matter for the Lymington Museum Trust. Because the District Council was managing the refurbishment of the building, the funds that the Trust raised were actually applied through the Council. This arrangement had the advantage of the Council maintaining an overview of expenditure. It was an effective way for the Council to assist in securing the museum scheme at no net cost to local tax payers.

The Chairman of the Council in the Chair

- (5) Forest Forge Theatre Company - Acquisition of Accommodation (Minute 33)

Cllr Orton disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in this item, but there was no discussion thereon.

- (6) New Forest Arts Studio (Minute 34)

Cllr Miss Meaden disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in this item, but there was no discussion thereon.

- (7) Programming of Developers' Contributions (Minute 36)

In response to comments by a member regarding a specific site, the Chairman of the Committee said the decision set out a process for dealing with the spending of developers' contributions and achieving the aspirations of Leisure Services Committee in the provision of public open space. The arrangements provided for consultation with town and parish councils.

- (8) Blashford Lakes (Minute 40)

The Chairman of the Committee agreed with comments by a member that there had been a lack of communication with local people on the possible acquisition and future management of lakes in the Poulner area. It had been assumed that local people had been kept informed at parish level.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

48. STRATEGIC GROWTH IN TOTTON ADVISORY COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Strategic Growth in Totton Advisory Committee presented the minutes of the meeting held on 6 September 1994.

On the motion that the minutes be received:

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

49. CONTRACT SERVICES COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Contract Services Committee presented the minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 1994.

On the motion that the minutes be received:

- (1) New Forest Contract Services General Manager's Report (Minutes 18 and 20)

The Chairman of the Committee informed the Council that matters raised in a letter from the District Auditor were still under consideration. There would be a report to the next meeting of the Committee.

The delay in preparing the future business strategy had been due to a heavy workload. Preparation of the strategy would proceed as soon as practicable.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

50. CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Central Services Committee presented the minutes of the meeting held on 27 September 1994.

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

- (1) The Meeting House, Ringwood (Minute 34)

The Chairman of the Committee disclosed a pecuniary interest in this item and, having left the meeting, took no part in the discussion thereon.

In reply to a question, the Vice-Chairman of the Committee said the under-lessee of the Meeting House was the Ringwood Meeting House Association.

- (2) New Forest Industrial Association (Minute 40)

Cllr Burdle disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in this item, but had been granted a dispensation by the Secretary of State for the Environment to speak but not to vote thereon.

- (3) Information Technology Division - Review (Minute 42)

Cllr Mrs Smith disclosed a pecuniary interest in this item, but there was no discussion thereon.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendation be adopted.

51. EMERGENCIES COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of Emergencies Committee presented the minutes of the meeting held on 10 October 1994.

On the motion that the minutes be received:

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

52. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee presented the minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 1994.

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

- (1) Citizens' Advice Bureaux - Grants 1995/96 (Minute 37(1))

Reference was made to the decision that the Council should not grant aid at this time the post of a second deputy manager for Ringwood and Fordingbridge Citizens' Advice Bureau. It was understood that one of the main reasons for rejecting the request from the Bureau was the ten-year partnership agreement on funding the Council had with the National Association of Citizens' Advice Bureaux (NACAB). It was suggested that the agreement might be re-considered, particularly if developments were not allowed within the ten-year period. It was difficult to manage two bureaux from one centre. A reference back of this decision was moved as an amendment and seconded.

The Chairman of the Voluntary and Charitable Organisations Sub-Committee referred to the high standards maintained by the five citizens' advice bureaux throughout the District and the invaluable work done for the community and the Council. Over the remaining period of the agreement with NACAB, the cost to the Council would increase substantially. When the agreement was entered into, it had been confirmed by NACAB that there would be no increase in demands placed on the Council. If the Council approved the funding of a second deputy manager for Ringwood and Fordingbridge Citizens' Advice Bureau, it was possible that other bureaux might make similar requests. While acknowledging some difficulties, it would not be prudent to propose any change in the agreement with NACAB.

The Chairman of the Committee indicated that he was not prepared to accept a reference back.

The amendment was defeated.

(2) Future of the New Forest Heritage Area (Minute 43)

The Chairman of the Committee informed the Council that he was prepared to accept a reference back of resolution (c) and had apologised to the Member of Parliament for the New Forest for any embarrassment it had caused him. He referred to a letter, dated 3 November 1994, from the Member of Parliament, copies of which had been circulated to all councillors. In the letter, the Member drew attention to a previous public statement that he did not oppose National Park equivalent status for the New Forest, but that he opposed granting statutory powers to the New Forest Committee.

Views were expressed that councillors had a duty not to make statements at meetings based on hearsay and to check beforehand that information provided was factually correct. To have not done so only led to a lowering of standards.

Two members indicated their objection to the continuation of the New Forest Committee and hoped the Council would withdraw its support for it at the earliest opportunity.

The Chairman of the Committee replied to a question by stating that the outcome of the review of the New Forest Committee would be known shortly.

(3) Treasury Management - Authorised Categories of Approved Organisations for Investments (Minute 46)

A member questioned the information with which he had been provided compared with that referred to in the resolutions to the minute. A reference back was moved as an amendment and seconded.

The Chairman of the Committee replied that the Council had taken professional advice on the credit ranking of approved organisations. He repeated the specific short and long term credit ratings that applied to different types of approved organisations shown in Appendix 2 to the report to the Committee and referred to in the minute. He was not prepared to accept a reference back, as it would impede the work of the Director of Finance and Administration in maximising opportunities for temporary investments.

The amendment was defeated.

(4) Pay and Reward Strategy (Minute 47)

Cllr Mrs Smith disclosed a pecuniary interest in

this item and, having left the meeting, took no part in the discussion thereon.

A proposed amendment to the wording in the preamble to the minute would be dealt with at the Committee's next meeting.

- (5) Gypsy Sites Designation under Caravan Sites Act 1968 (Minute 49)

Members were informed that the Council would not be able to pursue designation under the Act as the statutory provisions had been repealed. It was unfortunate that Hampshire County Council had held information about transit sites in the District since August 1994 but had not kept this Council informed, otherwise action might have been taken in time.

- (6) Outside Bodies (Minute 53)

It was explained that Policy and Resources Committee had changed representation on the Standing Conference from the Chairman of Environmental Services Committee to a nominated member on the recommendation of that Committee.

The Chairman of the Committee rejected an allegation of devious conduct during the debate at Policy and Resources Committee on suggested alternative representation on Salisbury Community Health Council.

The payment of no allowances for attendance at meetings of Hythe and Romsey Under Eights' Forum and Southampton Post and Telecommunications Advisory Committee was in accordance with the Council's scheme.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendations be adopted, subject to the reference back of resolution (c) at minute 43.

53. LOCAL GOVERNMENT REVIEW.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the Council welcomes the Local Government Commission's recommendation for a New Forest unitary authority, which fairly reflects the expression of public opinion in Hampshire; and,
- (b) That the Secretary of State for the Environment be urged to lay an order before Parliament to approve the Local Government Commission's final recommendations for the future local government of Hampshire at the earliest opportunity, and that the order provide for creation of new unitary



authorities on 1 April 1996.

54. APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEES.

RESOLVED:

That the following members be appointed to the Committees shown to fill the vacancies caused by the deaths of Cllrs Boothby and Burnett:

Central Services Committee	Cllr Dash
Emergencies Committee	Cllr Mrs Baker
Housing Committee	Cllr D Harrison Cllr Maynard
Leisure Services Committee	Cllr Dash
Licensing Committee	Cllr Hale Cllr D Harrison
Strategic Growth in Totton Advisory Committee	Cllr D Harrison

55. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 9.

(1) Chairman's Announcements - Planning Appeal (Planning Committee - Minute 53(c))

Cllr Scott asked:

- "(a) Why did the Chairman of Planning Committee not approach the member impugned, as well as the named councillors, before making the announcement in minute 53(c)?
- (b) Why did the Chairman of Planning Committee not invite the member, who was present at this Planning Committee Meeting on 10 August 1994, to reply?
- (c) Would the Chairman of the Planning Committee in future accord the right of reply to fellow councillors when he makes remarks about them and wherever possible, inform them in advance of such intended announcements?
- (d) How many letters of the letters received by the Planning Department and quoted at the planning inquiry were identical letters topped and tailed by the senders (in some cases separate identical letters by two people in the same household)?
- (e) When was the Chairman of the Planning Committee able to confirm that the public document in Planning Department files, that had been tabled at the public inquiry by the member, was dated and received on 13 April 1993, was signed by the Chairman of the Council, who is also a

member of the Planning Committee, and subscribed New Forest Liberal Democrats?"

The Chairman of the Planning Committee replied:

- "(a) and (b) I was responding to public statements allegedly made by a councillor and reported in the local Press. My intention was to make it absolutely clear that the decision taken by the Planning Committee was taken in accordance with normal practices on the basis of the Development Plan and other material considerations. My comments were entirely factual and supported by all shades of political opinion on the Planning Committee.
- (c) I will take the appropriate action which will, in appropriate circumstances, include that suggested by the member. In this case, my comments were to establish the actions taken by the Planning Committee as right and proper.
- (d) I have here the 434 third party representations which the Council received and reported at the public local inquiry. I have not been prepared to use officers' time by asking them to produce the detail requested by the member. They are part of the Council's record and may be inspected by any councillor in the legitimate discharge of the councillor role. I invite the councillor to inspect the representations and establish for himself the answer to the question raised. I also draw to the councillor's attention that the use of proforma letters is a common occurrence.
- (e) I confirm that a document with a date stamp of 13 April 1993 was signed by Cllr Jean Vernon-Jackson, who is a member of the Planning Committee and is known by the electorate to have been elected to this Council as a Liberal Democrat. The letter in question was written in respect of a previous application which was not the subject of the appeal. I do not recall having seen this particular document, although the Council will note that it is dated some eighteen months ago."

Cllr Scott asked a supplementary question, to which the Chairman of the Planning Committee again replied.

(2) Financial Information

Cllr Simmons asked:

"Why did Public Relations Sub-Committee, at its last meeting, decide against putting simplified financial information from the Council's Annual Report and Accounts in the November edition of District News,

the principle of which had previously been agreed?"

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee replied:

"At the meeting of the Public Relations Working Party (now Public Relations Sub-Committee) on 9.9.93, it was decided that '[Financial] Information would be published initially in the February 1994 edition of District News and annually thereafter'. There was no specific commitment to publish in November 1994. Financial Information was published in the Easter '94 edition of District News (centre page double spread). It is intended to publish updated financial information in the March 1995 edition the most appropriate time at the end of the financial year. The November edition of District News had a copy deadline of 7 October. The Annual Report and Accounts which went out with the Policy and Resources Committee agenda on 11 October was not available to meet the deadline of 7 October and it had not been approved by Policy and Resources Committee."

Cllr Simmons asked a supplementary question, to which the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee again replied.

- (3) Future of the New Forest Heritage Area (Policy and Resources Committee - Minute 43)

Cllr Scott asked:

- "(a) Who is pressing for the continuation of the New Forest Committee?
- (b) Why?
- (c) What does equivalent National Park status mean to the New Forest District Council?
- (d) What are the additional benefits likely to accrue from the direct public funding of the New Forest Committee of over 100,000?
- (e) What area does it apply to the New Forest Heritage Area (its original brief and title) or the whole of the New Forest area?"

The Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee replied:

- "(a) and (b) At its meeting on 16 August 1994, the New Forest Committee received the Government's decision and invited the participating bodies to consider the situation and bring forward ideas for the way ahead to a future meeting. The response from the participating bodies will be considered by the New Forest Committee at its meeting on 6 December 1994. The

Council's view is set out in minute 43 and, particularly, in the context of these questions, sub-sections (d) to (g).

- (c) This is a matter of concern not just for this Council but for all those who value the New Forest Heritage Area, particularly those who live or work here, or visit. National Park equivalent status would secure all the benefits currently enjoyed by existing National Parks and, in particular, additional funding and status in the eyes of any agency or individual with proposals which might impact upon the Heritage Area.
- (d) It should be remembered that, in the Government consultation document of September 1992, the proposals for a tailor-made solution for the administration of the New Forest Heritage Area, with executive powers being left with the existing agencies, was specifically devised to avoid creating a new bureaucracy. The New Forest Committee is currently funded by this Council, Hampshire County Council, the Forestry Commission, English Nature and the Countryside Commission, with additional grants from the Department of the Environment. This Council's contribution in the current year is 18,900. This is a very modest sum when compared with the budgets in other National Parks, the total budgets of the principal agencies and the cost of resolving conflicts resulting from lack of co-operation. There are also other issues which are not the direct responsibility of any of the existing agencies. A New Forest Management Plan is being prepared by the New Forest Committee for public consultation. This will highlight these issues.
- (e) The area in question is the New Forest Heritage Area, the boundary of which is being defined through the local plan process. The boundary has been agreed within this District except for short sections within the Avon Valley between Ibsley and Fordingbridge and north of Totton. The Planning Committee will be addressing these outstanding sections shortly."

Cllr Scott asked a supplementary question, to which the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee again replied.

#### 56. 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

(CO071194.doc)