

29 JULY 1996

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 29 July 1996.

p Cllr - Miss S A Cooke - Chairman
p J A G Hutchins JP - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

p K E Austin
p Mrs O A M Badland
p S Bailey
p P A Baker
p Mrs P D Baker
p Major C Beeton MBE
p Mrs C A Bianchi
p E R Bowring
p D S Burdle
p J E Coles
p M R Cox
p D E Cracknell
p W F Croydon
e B D Dash
e G Dawson
p J J Dawson
p Miss P A Drake
p K W Drew
p B C Earwicker
p A S Emery
p Mrs L K Errington
p R K Goodridge
p W J Greer
p R C H Hale
p L E Harris
p D Harrison
p F R Harrison
e S A Hayes

Councillors:

p Mrs A M Howe
p J M Hoy
e M R Jones
p M J Kendal
p G N D Locock
p Mrs B M Maynard
e N D M McGeorge
p Mrs M McLean
p S M Noel
p R F Orton
e P G Pearce-Smith
p C G Ramsden
p A W Rice TD
e B Rickman
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 Mrs B Smith
p Mrs L P Snashall
p G Spikins
p Mrs J K Vernon-Jackson MBE JP
p M S Wade
p S S Wade
p Dr M N Whitehead
p Mrs D Wilson
p Mrs P A Wyeth

Officers Attending:

I B Mackintosh, N J Gibbs, D A Gurney, Mrs M Holmes,
E S Johnson, Miss J Debnam, J Rainbow and T R Simpson.

12. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 1996, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

13. QUEEN'S BIRTHDAY HONOURS

The Chairman advised Members that the following honours had been awarded in the Queen's Birthday Honours list.

Mr Murray Walker OBE
Mr Tony Shaw OBE
Mr Philip Mobsby MBE
Ms Susan Ramsey MBE

14. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

(a) Mr Leslie Powells

The Chairman welcomed Mr Leslie Powells to the meeting. Mr Powells had recently returned to Lymington after his third solo voyage around the world. Mr Powells had been feared lost as he had failed to send any message since leaving New Zealand on Boxing Day. The Chairman presented Mr Powells with the Council's shield in recognition of his achievement.

(b) National Vocational Qualifications

The Chairman was delighted to announce that 21 officers had completed an NVQ programme and had achieved a 100% pass rate in Administration Levels 2 and 3 or Customer Services Level 3. The officers were Jayne Broomfield, Cheryl Soffe, Helen Mooney, Sue Jerram, Marilyn Grant, Yvonne De'Ath, Val Coley, Diane Paton, Jacquie Self, Suzanne Stopher, Jacqui Griffiths, Chris Armitage, Zoe Morris, Sarah Joint, Ruth Skeates, Pauline Longworth, Linda Coote, Carol Atkinson, Naomi Stone, Myra Jones and Nicky Jewel.

Members congratulated the officers on their achievements.

(c) Police Sub-Divisional Commander

The Chairman advised members that Superintendent Richard Stowe, the Police Officer who had been responsible for the New Forest Sub-Division for the last 2 years was moving in August to take over the North-East Hampshire Sub-Division. He would be replaced by Superintendent Ken Murray who had been the Sub-Divisional Commander for the Basingstoke Sub-Division. The Chairman would be writing to both officers and the Acting Head of Paid Service had arranged to meet Superintendent Murray before Richard Stowe left.

(d) Local Social Services Office

The Chairman was pleased to advise members that the County Council had agreed that the local Social Services Office would be known as the "New Forest Area".

(e) Committee Administration

The Chairman advised members that, following a re-allocation of duties, in future the Committee

Administrator for meetings of the Council would be Angie Allport. The Chairman thanked Jan Debnam for her work servicing meetings of the full Council over the last eight years.

(f) Gardens at Appletree Court

Members asked that the Gardener be congratulated on the pretty, informal style floral beds at Appletree Court.

15. BUSINESS SERVICES CONTRACTS COMMITTEE.

Cllr Cox presented the minutes of the meeting held on 20 May 1996.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

16. CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE

Cllr Snashall presented the minutes of the meetings held on 29 April, 20 May and 18 June 1996.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

17. DIRECT SERVICES CONTRACTS COMMITTEE.

Cllr Rickus presented the minutes of the meetings held on 25 April, 20 May and 25 June 1996.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

18. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE.

Cllr Smith presented the minutes of the meetings held on 20 May and 6 June 1996.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

19. HOUSING COMMITTEE.

Cllr Robinson presented the minutes of the meetings held on 20 May and 2 July 1996.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

20. LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE.

Cllr J J Dawson presented the minutes of the meetings held on 20 May and 4 June 1996.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

(a) Tenure and Management of Open Space (Minute 14)

Cllr J J Dawson advised members that, while in principle he supported a change in policy regarding the leasehold transfer of land to local councils, he considered that it would be proper for the officers to explain why the present policy was in place and the implications of any change. A presentation, open to all members of the Council, would be arranged shortly.

(b) Lymington Recreation Centre Phase II (Minute 15)

Cllr Beeton was advised that a question relating to County Council representation on recreation centre consultative committees was not relevant to this item but he would receive a reply in writing from the officers.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

21. PLANNING COMMITTEE.

Cllr P A Baker presented the minutes of the meeting held on 8 May 1996.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

(a) District Local Plan : Proposed Changes in Response to Representations (Minute 265)

Cllr F R Harrison asked the procedure for proposing further changes to the District Local Plan, either as a result of matters raised at the Inquiry, or from new ideas in the Council. He also asked if the Chairman of the Planning and Transportation Committee would be urging co-operative working arrangements between the District and County Council officers to ensure that there were not two waste handling facilities along the Waterside. The Minerals and Waste Local Plan should make it clear that the Marchwood Incinerator site should no longer be designated for waste disposal as soon as an energy from waste plant for the District came on stream.

Cllr Rice believed that the District Local Plan policies on cycling in the Forest were incompatible with the policies for cycle routes. He also believed that the policies should be amended to allow hotels in the Heritage Area to expand to compensate for bed spaces lost by the closure of other hotels.

Cllr Earwicker spoke of concerns about the lack of provision of community buildings in New Milton.

Cllr P A Baker advised members that any amendments to the Local Plan would be considered by the Inspector at the Local Plan Inquiry and dealt with in his report. The Planning and Transportation Committee would consider the Inspector's report on proposed changes in due course, and would publish proposed modifications for public consultation. The Council itself should only propose a major change of policy, at this stage, in very exceptional circumstances. The Planning and Transportation Committee would have to consider the matter and resolve to make a change of policy. The changes would then be advertised, in the same way as changes to the deposited Plan. In the light of the public response which was received, it might be necessary to programme representations by additional objectors into the Local Plan Inquiry, which could have significant cost implications.

With respect to co-operative working arrangements with the County Council officers, the District Council's officers would continue to liaise closely with them under the normal working arrangements. It was hoped that concerns about waste treatment facilities could be resolved, but ultimately the decision lay with the County Council as the responsible authority, and this Council's District Local Plan must take account of their decision.

(b) Monitoring of Car Boot Sales (Minute 271)

Cllr Scott did not believe that members of the general public should be asked to monitor car boot sales to ensure that they did not exceed the fourteen days permitted under the General Development Order. There was a considerable time commitment, and the public could be subject to threats. This was an important service to safeguard the New Forest Heritage Area, and he considered that 2,500 would be worthwhile expenditure to achieve this. He moved that this matter be referred back for further consideration. The amendment was seconded by Cllr Burdle.

Cllr Vernon-Jackson believed that local people only needed to keep a diary, and to quickly check that goods were being sold on each occasion. Cllr Earwicker considered that professional monitoring by officers would be more expensive than the 2,500 quoted. Car boot sales took place on weekends and bank holidays when officer time was expensive and,

in addition, the entire District, which was a large geographical area, would have to be covered. It would be more effective to use local people and the Parish Councils.

Cllr Burdle did not believe that the Council should pass off the responsibility of collecting evidence to enforce compliance with the fourteen day rule. There was full 24 hour cover on environmental health issues. Planning issues should be covered in the same way.

Cllr P A Baker expressed sympathy with local residents and local councils. The evidence on car boot sales must withstand scrutiny in Court if there was to be a successful prosecution. This Council gave detailed instructions and advice to help local people gather this evidence. The cost of professional monitoring had, however, been of great concern to the Planning and Transportation Committee.

In accordance with Standing Order 19 Cllr Scott requested that this matter be determined by recorded vote. However, fifteen members did not signify their support for a recorded vote.

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

- (c) Balmer Lawn Garage, 2-4 Sea Road, Barton-on-Sea (Application 58610) (Minute 275)

In answer to a question from Cllr Austin, Cllr P A Baker advised members that it was not possible to impose a condition requiring the installation of a warning notice about children as this was not a planning issue.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

22. PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE.

Cllr P A Baker presented the minutes of the meetings held on 20 May, 12 June and 17 July 1996.

On the motion that the minutes be received:-

- (a) Planning and Transportation Committee Site Visits (Minute 16)

In answer to a question from Cllr Cox, Cllr P A Baker reassured members that local Ward Councillors would continue to be invited to all site visits.

- (b) Government Green Paper - "Transport : The Way Forward" (Minute 36)

Cllr Rice believed that this Council's response in support of congestion charging has caused concern in the local community. He believed that the issue should be examined more closely, and a full explanation given to the public.

Cllr P A Baker reminded members that the Council had merely responded to the Government's Consultation Paper on the possibility of such measures.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received.

23. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

Cllr Coles presented the minutes of the meetings held on 20 May and 3 July 1996.

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

(a) Head of Paid Service (Minute 8)

Mr I B Mackintosh, Acting Head of Paid Service, disclosed a pecuniary interest in this item and left the meeting during the consideration.

(b) The Future Management Structure (Minute 9)

Following consideration of the recommendations in respect of this item, Cllr Snashall drew members' attention to this being the last Council meeting which the Director of Personnel and Management Development would attend before her retirement.

Moira Holmes had joined the Authority in June 1988 as Personnel Manager. Her career in Local Government had started in 1969 with Cardiff City Council. She had also worked for South Glamorgan County Council and Hampshire County Council.

During her period at New Forest she had brought about significant changes in the way that Personnel Services operated. Matters such as recruitment had been devolved to Directorates. Job evaluation had been introduced to provide a more objective way of comparing job weights and salary levels. Moira Holmes had achieved the top position in her profession. Over the last year she had been President of the Society of Chief Personnel Officers. As President she was able to raise the profile of this District at a national level and even at international level through visits to such places as the United States and South Africa. Cllr Snashall believed that Moira Holmes had contributed a great deal to the development of the personnel function in this Council. On behalf of all councillors, Cllr Snashall thanked her for her

service and wished her well for the future. In thanking members for their good wishes, Moira Holmes spoke of her enjoyment of her last eight years with the Authority. There was a remarkable partnership between officers and members which was held up as an example of good practice to be followed by other local authorities. She hoped the Authority would continue to go from strength to strength.

(c) Public Participation (Minute 11)

Cllr Coles drew members' attention to the presentation from Mr George Howe on the review by Central Government of HM Coast Guard manning and the helicopter search and rescue service. Cllr Coles reported that earlier in the day he had formed part of a deputation to Lord Gosham, the Minister of State for Aviation. The deputation had included representatives from Portsmouth, Havant, Gosport, the Isle of Wight and Fareham as well as this Authority. Lord Gosham had listened carefully to the points of view being put forward by the local authorities. He had emphasised that he must optimise the cover on the south coast and balance the budget for England as a whole. He had believed that the Solent was well-covered by other organisations. At present the helicopter service was provided by a contract with Bristows but this expired on 30 November of this year. The options currently being examined were to move one helicopter from Portland to Lee-on-Solent; to transfer the Portland helicopter to Hurn Airport and the Solent helicopter to Shoreham; or to transfer the Portland helicopter to Hurn and the Solent helicopter to Lydd. Cllr Coles believed that the second option, with helicopters at Hurn and Shoreham, was most likely. This would, in fact, benefit the coast in this District by reducing response times. The Minister would be making his decision in the next few weeks.

(d) Outside Bodies (Minute 27)

Cllr Coles advised members that the Policy and Resources Committee, when considering the appointment of Cllr Smith to the Southern Regional Environmental Protection Advisory Committee (REPAC), had been advised that her travelling and subsistence allowances would be paid by REPAC. The reference in the minute to her attendance ranking for the payment of travel and subsistence allowances should, therefore, be deleted. This would be done by the Committee when it confirmed the minutes at its next meeting on 16 October 1996. In the meantime, members should note that no travelling and subsistence allowances would be payable to Cllr Smith for attendance at meetings of REPAC.

(f) Millennium Fund (Minute 28)

Cllr Coles moved that this matter be referred back for further consideration on the ground that additional information had now been received and this matter should be given more mature reflection in this light. The majority of members indicated their support for this course of action.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes be received and the recommendations be adopted subject to Minute 28 relating to the Millennium Fund being referred back for further consideration.

24. QUESTION UNDER STANDING ORDER NUMBER 9.

In accordance with Standing Order Number 9, Cllr Scott asked the Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee the following question:-

"What are the sizes, in square metres, of:

- (a) The main hall area
- (b) The main swimming pool area
- (c) The total area

of each of the New Forest District Council's Leisure Recreation Centres at Applemore, Lymington, New Milton, Ringwood and Totton?"

Cllr J J Dawson, Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee, replied as follows:-

"Thank you for your question Cllr Scott. I am afraid that the statistics that you have asked for do not come in a very user-friendly form, and I have, therefore, arranged for copies of your question and the answer to be made available to all members of the Council.

The area of the Main Hall at each of the recreation centres is as follows:

Applemore 847 square metres; New Milton 509; Ringwood 598; Lymington 600 and Totton 250.

The Pool Hall at Applemore is 668 square metres, with the main pool having an area of 265 square metres, and the learner pool 92.5 square metres.

The Pool Hall at New Milton is 465 square metres, the main pool having an area of 250 square metres. There is no learner pool at New Milton.

The Pool Hall at Ringwood has an area of 553 square metres. The main pool has an area of 265 square metres and the learner pool 54 square metres.

The Pool Hall at Lymington has an area of 639 square metres. The main pool is 250 square metres with a learner pool of 49 square metres.

Finally, at Totton, the Pool Hall measures 647 square metres, with a main pool of 250 square metres and a learner pool of 49 square metres.

The total area of each centre is as follows:

Applemore 2,344 square metres
New Milton 1,427 square metres
Ringwood 1,850 square metres
Lymington 1,368 square metres
Totton 1,104 square metres

I hope that you will find this information useful"
As a supplementary question Cllr Scott asked for an analysis of the operating cost and income for comparable facilities.

Cllr J J Dawson replied as follows:

- "1. The availability of space in the main hall and pools at the recreation centres varies substantially because of differences in the PE curriculum across the sites. Those with a limited school use will have more capacity for generating income than those with higher levels of school use.
2. The perimeter area of the hall does not actually define its capacity for accommodating activities. For example, Ringwood main hall at 598 square metres houses five badminton courts, whereas Lymington main hall at 601 square metres houses four badminton courts.
3. The income earning capacity of the Centres, whatever their facility base, is hugely influenced by their catchment area and the demography of that catchment and local competition. Centres with the same facilities will have different earning potentials depending on the area in which they are built. This is certainly true of Applemore and New Milton.
4. Connected with the catchment argument is also the Centre programme. Those Centres able to run high income, high usage activities, such as large aerobics classes in the main hall, are likely to earn a lot of money than those where traditional activities, such as badminton, are more popular.

Given the above, a comparison of the floor metre area of say two main halls and the income earned between two Centres is not as straight forward as it seems. When you get into a similar exercise for an entire Centre with widely differing types and sizes of facility, then it is likely to lead to erroneous conclusions.

In addition, may I draw your attention to the comparative costs published by CIPFA, which are available in the Members Room."

In accordance with Standing Order 7, Cllr Kendal moved, and Cllr Greer seconded, the following motion:-

That Council requests a report from officers on the long-term benefits to council taxpayers (by repaying council debt) and to tenants (as a result of enabling additional finance to be provided by the private sector for the improvement of council properties and the stabilisation of rentals) through transfer of council housing stock by large scale voluntary transfer to a housing association or by transfer to a newly created local authority company in which New Forest District Council, tenants and suitable housing associations hold shares and by "trickle transfer" of unsuitable council stock to housing associations for refurbishment.

In accordance with Standing Order 7 this motion was referred to the Housing and Policy and Resources Committees for debate for a report to be brought back to the next meeting of the Council.

26. COMMON SEAL.

RESOLVED:

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

CHAIRMAN