

19 NOVEMBER 1998

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**LIAISON MEETING WITH NEW FOREST DISTRICT  
PARISH AND TOWN COUNCILS**

Notes of liaison meeting with New Forest District Parish and Town Councils held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Thursday, 19 November 1998.

**Present:**

**Councillors:**

Mrs A M Howe	Chairman of the Council (in the Chair)
J E Coles	Leader of the Council and Chairman of Policy and Resources Committee
J J Dawson	Chairman, Leisure Services Committee
W J Greer	Leader, Conservative Group
Mrs M J Robinson	Chairman, Housing Committee
Miss G M Rickus CBE	Chairman, Direct Services Contracts Committee
Mrs B Smith	Chairman, Environmental Services and Licensing Committee
Mrs J K Vernon-Jackson MBE JP DL	Chairman, Planning and Transportation Committee

**Officers Attending:**

I B Mackintosh	Managing Director
Ms E Malcolm	Director of Environment Services
D A Gurney	Director of Finance and Administration
N J Gibbs	Director of Community Services
Mrs R Rutins	Democratic Services Manager
T R Simpson	Head of Central Administration

**Representing Parish and Town Councils:**

<b>Name:</b>	<b>Town/Parish Council</b>
P N Reynolds/ )	Bramshaw Parish Council
J Sturgess )	
J W Green/ )	Bransgore Parish Council
Mrs S Owen )	
J Korbey/ )	Brockenhurst Parish Council
J Place )	
D Battrick/ )	Copythorne Parish Council
J Samways )	
D G Timms	East Boldre Parish Council
E Holtham )	Fawley Parish Council
G Richardson )	
M Cannon/ )	Hale Parish Council
V A Marlow )	
W H Dow	Hyde Parish Council
Mrs C Gradidge/ )	Hythe and Dibden Parish Council
S S Wade )	

T M Abbott	Lyndhurst Parish Council
Mrs P Elsworth	Lyminster and Pennington Town Council
D Hindle/ )	
Mrs M A Bernard )	Marchwood Parish Council
K Bowley/ )	
R Gover )	Netley Marsh Parish Council
R P Waterman	New Milton Town Council
Y Newton/ )	
J B Newton )	Ringwood Town Council
T L Gibson	Sopley Parish Council
D I Biggs	Totton and Eling Town Council
N Angel	Woodgreen Parish Council
Mr R E Wareham	New Forest District Association of Parish and Town Councils and Hordle Parish Council
Mr B C Rangecroft	New Forest District Association of Parish and Town Councils and Marchwood Parish Council

**Apologies:**

**New Forest District Council**

Cllr N D M McGeorge (Chairman, Central Services Committee)

**Parish/Town Councils:**

Breamore Parish Council  
Damerham Parish Council  
Fordingbridge Parish Council  
Rockbourne Parish Council  
Sway Parish Council  
Mr Bennett – Lyminster and Pennington Town Council

**1. NOTES (PAPER A).**

The notes of the meeting held on 23 April 1998 were agreed as a correct record.

**2. OPEN SPACE TENURE (REPORT B).**

The meeting was reminded that the current policy on Open Space Tenure had been in place for at least two decades. This provided for the District Council to convey "off site" open space land leasehold at a peppercorn rent and "on-site" open space freehold. The large majority of Parish and Town Councils accepted these principles. It was stressed that it was the shared objective of both the District Council and Parish Councils to secure the future of public open space for the long term benefit of residents and visitors. It was considered that the best way to do that

was to vest land in two parties. Over the years, alternatives to the current arrangements had been assessed but it had been concluded that none could offer the same security for the future retention of land in public ownership as the present system.

The District Council understood the frustrations caused by some related issues and in particular the length of time taken to secure leases. Action to address these issues had been promised. The District Council was at present developing schedules which would keep local Councils up to date on action being taken on each particular piece of open space which was the subject of negotiation within their areas.

The principle of "shared ownership" was not an issue of trust between the parishes and the District but rather about partnership and securing the legacy of open space for the future. Pressures on either the District or the Parish Councils could be markedly different in coming decades and the current arrangements would ensure that the interests of one could not override those of the other.

A Parish Council representative related that the rental for a hall leased to the parish by the district had been raised considerably. This had placed the parish in a difficult position. In reply, it was pointed out that the lease of the hall was subject to different conditions than the leases now being negotiated for open space tenure. These had no provision for rent reviews and there was no question of rentals being increased substantially during the period of the lease.

In reply to a question, it was reported that only two Parish Councils did not accept leasehold tenure of open space from the District Council.

### **3. COMMUNITY GOVERNANCE (REPORT C).**

Progress made on the implementation of the Council's ten point action plan to engage the public more in its affairs, reported to the liaison meeting on 23 April 1998, was discussed. Parish and Town Councils were reminded that the initiatives being taken were in line with aims set out in the Government White Paper on modernising Local Government. Some of the action points implemented, such as the introduction of public participation at the Development Control Sub-Committee, had been extremely successful while others such as the Area Forums were still developing. The District Council recognised that it was important to keep parishes informed of progress and developments.

All parishes would shortly be advised of the programme for the next round of Area Forums and would be invited to suggest topics for discussion. It was recognised that the topics for discussion at the first Area Forums had not been particularly interesting to local residents but the District Council had been keen to assess the public's views on how the District Council's consultation arrangements were perceived. It was hoped that when topics of greater local interest were chosen, there would be greater response. There would also be greater publicity for the Forums. The difficulty of achieving adequate coverage through publicity in the free newspapers was understood. Parish Councils' assistance in publicising the Forums was requested.

Parish Council representatives expressed doubt at the value of the Forums in view of the general apathy of the public at large to Local Government unless there was an issue of pressing local concern. District Council representatives pointed out, however, that some people who had attended the Forums had appreciated the opportunity to speak to Councillors on matters of concern.

With regard to the Citizen's Panel, it was explained that in theory the Panel was a static one of 1,000 persons but there would be natural turnover through people no longer wishing to serve. It was suggested that, and District Council representatives agreed, that the way in which the Panel was selected be reviewed as it was felt that there would be benefits if the members rotated on a regular basis.

Action: K Smith/H Renwick

The District Council undertook to let Parish Councils have details of the demographic profile of the district.

Action: H Renwick

It was noted that a seminar was being held on 24 November on the Government's White Paper on Modernising Local Government. A major thrust of the White Paper was that all Councils should be in touch with their residents in a positive way. The Chairman of the New Forest District Association of Parish and Town Councils had been invited to attend.

**4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION AT DEVELOPMENT CONTROL SUB-COMMITTEE (REPORT D).**

Parish and Town Councils were encouraged to make use of the recently introduced public participation periods at Development Control Sub-Committee. Representatives of the applicant, objectors and supporters as well as Parish and Town Councils were now permitted to speak to the Sub-Committee prior to decisions being taken. The public participation periods had been very well received by the public and by the parishes.

**5. STATEMENT OF PARTNERSHIP.**

Parish and Town Councillors were reminded that the District Council had undertaken to review the Statement of Partnership in the New Year. Parish and Town Councils would shortly be asked for their views on any improvements which could be made.

Action: R Rutins

**6. DESIGN AWARD SCHEME (REPORT E).**

The views of the meeting on the introduction of a design award scheme for the district in 1999 were sought. The scheme was intended to highlight building and environmental schemes which had brought a high standard of design to new development and which had enhanced the locality. Several possible categories of award were being considered.

The meeting welcomed the proposal as a positive effort to improve the quality of the built environment and to recognise positive contributions. Details of the judging arrangements had not yet been formulated but could be the subject of discussion in the months to come.

Action: P James

**7. CAR PARK CHARGES – UPDATE (REPORT F).**

An update on the introduction of car park charges was given. It was noted that charging in Ringwood, Fordingbridge, Lyndhurst, Hythe and Totton had not yet been introduced pending a decision by the Secretary of State. In those centres where charges had been introduced few operational problems had been experienced and there seemed to be little effect on on-street parking. There was no firm indication as to when a decision by the Secretary of State would be made.

**8. CHARGES FOR EMPTYING DOG WASTE BINS (REPORT G).**

Netley Marsh Parish Council was concerned at what they considered to be the high cost quoted by the District Council for emptying dog waste bins. It was explained that the District Council's pricing policy for collecting waste from the bins was merely to cover its own costs.

Questions were raised as to the continuing availability of Dog Control Byelaws for Parish Council land. Officers would investigate the latest position and inform Parish Councils. The position with regard to the availability of signs would also be investigated and parishes informed.

Action: R Rutins

The difficulty of securing prosecutions for contraventions of byelaws and also the Fouling of Land Order was highlighted. The District Council's Dog Wardens could, subject to availability and to the Parish Councils bearing the cost, assist parishes with enforcement but enforcement remained difficult. Parish Council officers could be authorised to take action under their own byelaws.

**9. NEW FOREST HERITAGE AREA STATUS – UPDATE (REPORT H).**

The latest developments on the question of the status of the New Forest Heritage Area were highlighted. It was noted that the Government had indicated their intention to make a statement on the matter during Autumn 1998. No firm indication of a date had been given.

The relevant Government Minister had visited the New Forest at the invitation of the New Forest Committee. He had confirmed that doing nothing regarding protection for the New Forest was not an option.

The New Forest had been placed on a tentative list of world heritage sites. The process could take six to ten years but being placed on the tentative list was very encouraging for the future of the Forest.

**10. DEVELOPMENT CONTROL ACKNOWLEDGEMENT CARDS.**

Bramshaw Parish Council expressed concern that the acknowledgement cards issued by Development Control did not have reference or planning application numbers. This could prove difficult to larger Parish Councils commenting on a large number of applications.

The Director of Environment Services explained that when the new planning system became operational in the New Year acknowledgement letters would have a great deal more useful information, including the application number, description of the site and the name of the case officer. In the interim, the question of reference numbers on the acknowledgement cards would be pursued.

Action: Director of Environment Services

**11. VISIT TO MARSH LANE DEPOT AND CENTRAL PURCHASING.**

Parish Councils thanked the District Council for arranging the visit to the Marsh Lane depot and Central Purchasing earlier and said that the visit had been informative and very worthwhile. These comments would be passed on to the relevant committee and to the employees.

Action: Director of Environment Services

**12. DATE OF NEXT MEETING.**

Members favoured meeting again following the quadrennial elections in May. A meeting in June/July would be arranged, but in the interim if important issues arose a special meeting would be held.