

10 JANUARY 2000

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 10 January 2000.

- p Cllr Mrs P A Wyeth - Chairman
- p Cllr A W Rice TD - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

- p Mrs S M Abernethy
- p K F Ault
- e K E Austin
- p E R Bowring
- p F J Bright
- p Mrs D M Brooks
- D S Burdle
- p W R Catt
- p J E Coles
- p D E Cracknell
- p P H Cummings
- e B D Dash
- p J J Dawson
- p W H Dow
- p Miss P A Drake
- p T J Droogleever
- p L T Dunsdon
- p B C Earwicker
- p M H G Fidler
- p R L Frampton
- p Ms C F Gradidge
- p P C Greenfield
- p R C H Hale
- p L E Harris
- p F R Harrison
- p S A Hayes
- p J D Heron
- p Mrs M D Holding

Councillors:

- p Mrs A M Howe
- p J M Hoy
- p Mrs M Humber BA
- p J A G Hutchins JP
- p M J Kendal
- p M C Kidman
- p G N D Locock
- p Mrs B M Maynard
- p Mrs M McLean
- p G K Richardson
- p B Rickman
- p Mrs M J Robinson
- p B Rule
- p T M Russell
- p D N Scott
- p M J Shand
- p S A Shepherd
- p Mrs B Smith
- e Mrs L P Snashall
- p G Spikins
- p M H Thierry
- p D B Tipp
- e J Waddington
- p M S Wade
- p S S Wade
- p Mrs D Wilson
- p C A Wise
- p P R Woods

Officers Attending:

R Hodgson, Mrs P Higgins, K Ireland, Ms E Malcolm, R Merrett, T R Simpson, D Atwill, Ms J Bateman, Mrs R Rutins, and Miss S Smith.

24. MINUTES.

A member asked, in respect of Minute No. 20(a) – Removal of Car Parking Charges from Town and Village Centre Car Parks, whether the position with regard to refunds had been investigated. Cllr Hayes reported that Committee Chairmen had met and had agreed that the Council's policy with regard to pro-rata refunds for car parking permits should not be changed. The member concerned asked for the response to be confirmed to him in writing and this was agreed.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 1 November 1999, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

25. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

(a) Councillor Martina Powell

The Chairman reported that Cllr Martina Powell had remarried and was now Cllr Martina Humber. Members offered Cllr Martina Humber their congratulations and best wishes.

(b) Former Councillor Lady Mary McDonald

The Chairman reported with regret, the death on 2 January 2000 of former Councillor Lady Mary McDonald. Lady McDonald was aged 92 and was first elected to the New Forest District Council in 1973 and served for 10 years. During her term of office she served on a number of committees and outside bodies and a number of charities. Lady McDonald had represented Lymington Town and had lived locally until her death.

(c) Former Councillor Mrs Elinor Pugh

The Chairman also reported with regret, the death of former Councillor Mrs Elinor Pugh at the age of 82. Mrs Pugh also served on a number of Council committees and was Chairman of both the Leisure Services and Licensing Committees at periods during her time of office. Mrs Pugh served as this Council's representative on a number of outside bodies and was a leading light in the Women's Royal Voluntary Service.

Members stood in silence as a mark of respect to the late Lady Mary McDonald and Mrs Elinor Pugh.

(d) New Year's Honours

The Chairman was pleased to report on a number of local people who had been recognised in the New Year's Honours list.

Mr Malcolm Eastwood

Mr Malcolm Eastwood, Hampshire's Chief Fire Officer was awarded a CBE in recognition of the work he had carried out for the Fire Service at both local and national levels. Mr Eastwood first joined the Fire Service in Yorkshire in 1969 and was appointed Chief Fire Officer in Hampshire four years ago.

Mr Bob Lisney

Mr Bob Lisney, Head of Management Services at Hampshire County Council was awarded an OBE for his outstanding work in helping to deal with the County's household refuse. Mr Lisney had worked for the County Council since 1975 and had helped to develop an integrated waste management system for the disposal of 800,000 tonnes of refuse every year.

Mr John Hunter

Mr John Hunter of Lymington received an MBE for his services to the marine industry. Mr Hunter worked for the Esso Exxon Mobil Group in Southampton and was also Chairman of the International and UK Chamber of Shipping Marine Committees, and Chairman of the Merchant Navy Training Board. Mr Hunter had helped the Government establish proposals for the navigation of passenger ships and tankers to reach environmental, safety and crewing standards.

Mr Anthony Bates

Mr Bates of Dibden Purlieu was also awarded an MBE for his services to the Royal Navy in producing a revolutionary type of mine-sweeper constructed from fibre glass. Mr Bates led an eight strong Ministry of Defence Team to design the new 400 tonne ships which had proved to be globally successful and efficient.

Sir Alan Rudge

Sir Alan Rudge of Brockenhurst was made a Knight Bachelor. For Sir Alan, an internationally known electronics expert, this was the latest in a long list of honours and awards for his services to engineering and research. Sir Alan, a former Chief Executive at British Telecom, had been awarded an OBE in 1987 and a CBE in 1995.

(e) Beacon Status

The Chairman reported with great pleasure the Council's tremendous success in its applications for Beacon Status. 269 applications were made from across the country and only 33 were selected for Beacon Status.

The Council applied in its own right in respect of "Modern Service Delivery – Council and Housing Tax Benefit Administration" and was also a key partner with Hampshire County Council and others for "Dealing with Waste" for which Project Integra formed the basis of the application. Both applications were successful and as a result New Forest District Council became one of only three local authorities to achieve Beacon Status in respect of two service areas. Significantly, the Council was the only shire district in the country to achieve Beacon Awards in more than one service area. This was an endorsement of good practice across the Council and excellence in the two specific service areas.

Over the next 15 months the Council would be participating at National Road Shows and Seminars and would be holding Open Days to share Best Practice. There would be many opportunities to learn from other Beacons.

Members joined the Chairman in congratulating those involved in the applications for their efforts. In particular those officers working in Council and Housing Tax Benefit Administration and in Waste Management deserved special recognition for the excellence they had achieved.

(f) Christmas Flooding

The Chairman reported on severe flooding that had occurred in Fordingbridge, Lymington and other parts of the District on the night of 24 December 1999. It was estimated that in the region of 100 properties were flooded during the period.

The Chairman was proud to report that employees had responded admirably to the situation giving practical support, help and advice to many people. Over 3,000 sand bags were filled and distributed. Other equipment and welfare assistance was given and staff continued to offer support until Boxing Day.

Over 50 employees gave up their time over the Christmas period and the Chairman commented that this was yet another example of the dedication and commitment so often shown by employees. Members joined the Chairman in thanking all those officers and members of the Women's Royal Voluntary Service and Salvation Army who gave up their time over the Christmas period.

(g) Loo of the Year Awards

The Chairman was pleased to announce that the toilets at Hordle Cliff, Milford on Sea and The Furlong Car Park at Ringwood had received commendations in this year's Loo of the Year Awards. In addition the husband and wife team of John and Lyinda Walker had received an award for the excellent work they carried out during the summer season as Attendants at the Ringwood toilets.

26. CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 30 November 1999.

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

(a) Item 4 – Protocol for Member/Officer Relations

A member enquired as to whether the amended protocol would preclude him from using the Fordingbridge Local Office, of which he was a key holder, for his surgeries. The Chairman of the Committee commented that the amendment to the protocol was recommended mainly to cover arrangements at Appletree Court and the Town Hall and his use of the Fordingbridge Office would not be affected.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendations adopted.

27. DIRECT SERVICES CONTRACTS COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 26 November 1999.

On the motion that the report be received, the Chairman of the Committee endorsed the comments of the Chairman of the Council in her announcements in relation to the awards given for toilets in the district.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

28. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE.

The Vice-Chairman of the Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 4 November 1999. On the motion that the report be received:-

(a) Item 2 – Environmental Radiation Monitoring

A member asked for clarification on the information contained within the report and expressed concern that the item appeared to differ significantly from the Committee's minute on the same subject.

The Vice-Chairman of the Committee agreed to write to the member clarifying the position with regard to ionising radiation.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

29. HOUSING COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 17 November 1999.

On the motion that the report be received:-

(a) Item 4 – Rent Assessment

In response to a question, the Chairman of the Committee commented that the cost of the additional temporary clerical support required should remain within the region of £1,700 and that she would confirm this in writing to the member concerned.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

30. LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 9 November 1999. On the motion that the report be received:-

(a) Item 1 – Open Space Implementation (Developers' Contributions)

One member expressed concern at the apportionment of Developers' Contributions, in particular in relation to the differing amounts requested from the Hythe and Dibden Parish and Totton Town Councils. Another member felt the proposed works should be carried out as a result of the review of the District Plan and should not be financed from Developers' Contributions.

The Chairman of the Committee commented that the works proposed would in fact be financed from Leisure Services general contributions. The issue would be discussed in detail at the forthcoming Leisure Services Committee meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

31. PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 1 December 1999. On the motion that the report be received it was:-

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

32. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND LICENSING, LEISURE SERVICES AND PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEES.

Cllr Hutchins, Chairman of Leisure Services Committee, presented the report of the special joint meeting held on 14 September 1999. On the motion that the report be received:-

(a) Item 1 – Proposed Engineering and Environmental Improvement Works at Lymington Quay

In response to a question, the Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee indicated that the cost for the provision of the showers was partly detailed in the report but that a further report would be considered by a future special joint meeting before a final decision was made.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

33. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Committee presented the reports of the meetings held on 14 December 1999 and 10 January 2000.

On the motion that the reports be received:-

(a) Item 5 – District Auditor’s Management Letter 1998/99

In response to a question, the Chairman of the Committee explained that the retirement of the Chief Executive had been on non-standard terms in view of the fact that such a senior post needed to be referred to committee for decision and that the associated business case had been in excess of five years.

RESOLVED:

That the reports be received and the recommendations relating to the “Recruitment and Appointment of the Director of Finance” and the “Appointment of Mr David Yates as Chief Executive” be adopted.

34. THE COUNCIL TAX 2000/2001 SETTING THE TAX BASE.**RESOLVED:**

- (a) That the calculation of the Council’s tax base for the year 2000/2001 be approved; and
- (b) That pursuant to Report A to the Council and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of The Tax Base) Regulations 1992, the amount calculated by this Council as its council tax base for the year 2000/2001 be as follows and as detailed in the Annex to these minutes:

PARISH/TOWN	TAX BASE
Ashurst & Colbury	910.9
Beaulieu	457.7
Boldre	1000.3
Bramshaw	336.5

PARISH/TOWN	TAX BASE
Bransgore	1833.1
Breamore	170.0
Brockenhurst	1719.2
Burley	750.6
Copythorne	1192.2
Damerham	234.4
Denny Lodge	148.0
East Boldre	378.3
Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley	563.0
Exbury & Lepe	98.9
Fawley	4715.7
Fordingbridge	2102.1
Godshill	205.3
Hale	262.9
Hordle	2276.8
Hyde	494.0
Hythe & Dibden	7323.1
Lymington & Pennington	6513.3
Lyndhurst	1348.9
Marchwood	1783.9
Martin	182.7
Milford on Sea	2543.9
Minstead	345.0
Netley Marsh	798.1
New Milton	10210.2
Ringwood	5,168.5
Rockbourne	161.5
Sandleheath	256.9
Sopley	292.1
Sway	1590.1
Totton & Eling	9201.8
Whitsbury	96.3
Woodgreen	247.3
Whole District	67913.5

35. QUESTION UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 9.

In accordance with Standing Order No. 9, Cllr Robinson asked the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee the following question:-

“In view of the fact that on 13 October 1999 the Policy and Resources Committee accepted the urgent need to appoint a Dibden Bay Project Co-ordinator, could the Chairman of the Committee please advise why no progress with this appointment appears to have been made”.

The Chairman replied: “I thank Cllr Robinson for her question. It gives me an opportunity to inform members of the extent of this Council’s preparations surrounding the anticipated port development proposals likely to come forward from Associated British Ports in the near future.

It is absolutely right to prepare ourselves to resist development plans which would destroy a large part of the New Forest as we know it and threaten an even wider area.

I must stress, of course, that we have not yet received a formal proposal from ABP. However, the broad scope of their intended development is known and District Council officers have been working closely with officers from Hampshire County Council, over the past year, to anticipate and evaluate the effect of large scale port development on the environment of the New Forest.

Cllr Robinson will be aware that a Dibden Bay task force has been established, to lead this authority's response to the expected development proposal from ABP.

The task force comprises of Senior Officers of this Council from the areas of Planning, Environmental Health, Legal and Public Relations. They are working at this stage quietly, to consider the implications of any development at Dibden Bay. Particular areas of study surround conservation and ecology issues, planning and landscape, pollution, transport impact, the legal process and, indeed, the very economic need to develop Southampton Port at all.

The task force meets regularly to monitor progress. For example, it has given consideration to responses made on the environmental assessment scoping document submitted to the DETR by ABP.

As I indicated, we are working closely with Hampshire County Council who are addressing areas for which they are responsible, such as transport and nature conservation. The work of our task group and of our partners is being supported by the selective use of consultants. For example, a landscape character assessment is currently in hand.

In addition, the County and District Councils have jointly appointed leading counsel – Richard Drable-QC to assist both authorities with their overall response to the proposal.

It is the responsibility of this authority to be ready, as I believe we are, to deal with any application when it is made: but it would not be prudent to commission extensive consultancy advice before the full details of ABP's application, together with supporting data, are put on the table.

The report to Policy and Resources Committee on 13 October 1999, referred to in Cllr Robinson's question, explained that the role of Dibden Bay Co-ordinator will be part of the established task force I have mentioned, to provide a specific administrative resource to strengthen the Council's ability to deal with such a major issue.

It is important to emphasise that this post is not an overall "supremo" as has been suggested in some areas of the press. The post will organise and co-ordinate day to day arrangements surrounding this authority's response to proposed development at Dibden Bay. This will include liaison with Hampshire County Council and other relevant outside bodies. There will also be responsibility for assisting with research and the collation of information to support this Council's representations, leading up to and through a Public Enquiry.

Following the Policy and Resources Committee meeting held in October, it became clear that a formal application was not going to be made by ABP before the end of 1999. The need to provide additional administrative support to the task force, although important, was not therefore as immediately pressing as had been thought when the report was presented to Policy and Resources.

There should be no question that it remains our intention to strengthen the task force by appointing a co-ordinator post. The post will be filled through an internal appointment made by re-deploying an existing member of staff. I would expect this appointment to be made before the end of February.

This Council is fully prepared to receive and to respond vigorously to any planning application that suggests an extensive port development on the site of Dibden Bay. To say otherwise is scare-mongering and is irresponsible.

A possible Dibden Bay Port is one of the largest issues that this Council has had to respond to. There should be no doubt that we are, and we will remain, fully committed and resourced both to assess and to robustly respond to all aspects of a proposal when made."

CHAIRMAN

Annex – Minute No. 34

(CL100100)