

17 APRIL 2000

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 17 April 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
- p K E Austin
- p E R Bowring
- p F J Bright
- p Mrs D M Brooks
- p D S Burdle
- p W R Catt
- p J E Coles
- p D E Cracknell
- p P H Cummings
- p 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
- e 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
- e 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
- e G K Richardson
- p B Rickman
- p Mrs M J Robinson
- p B Rule
- p T M Russell
- e 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
- p J Waddington
- e M S Wade
- p S S Wade
- p Mrs D Wilson
- p C A Wise
- p P R Woods

Officers Attending:

D Yates, Mrs P Higgins, K Ireland, Mrs E Malcolm, D Atwill, Ms J Bateman, N Cross, Ms G O'Rourke and T R Simpson.

48. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That subject to minute 44(a) paragraph 3, line one, being amended by the addition of the words 'it had been reported that' after the word 'whilst' the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2000, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

49. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

(a) George McClaren

The Chairman was pleased to present to George McClaren, Caretaker, a thank you badge from the New Forest North District Scouts Association Fellowship. The award was made to Mr McClaren as a thank you for his services over the years in ensuring that the premises were always in good order for the scouts bookings.

(b) Cllrs R C H Hale, D N Scott and M S Wade

The Chairman reported that she had sent 'Get Well' cards on behalf of all the Council to Cllrs Bob Hale, David Scott and Malcolm Wade.

Cllr Hale had been very unwell but was now recovering. Cllr Robinson reported that Cllr Hale had been discharged from hospital and read a message from him thanking all members of the Council for their get well wishes and support.

Cllr Scott had been suffering from a virus for some weeks and Cllr Wade had recently had an operation on his leg.

(c) Chairman's Coffee Morning and Millennium Dinner and Dance

The Chairman reported with pleasure that her coffee morning held at The New Forest Nondescript Club at Lyndhurst on Saturday, 18 March had raised £341 for her two charities: The Wessex Cancer Trust and the Honeypot Home at Exbury. The Chairman's Dinner and Dance held at The Forest Lodge Hotel on 7 April had raised a further £310.

The Chairman thanked everyone who had so generously supported both events.

(d) Award from Salvation Army

The Chairman was pleased to report that on behalf of the Council, she had received an award from the Salvation Army in recognition of the Council's contribution towards the collection of textiles in the district.

Some of the textiles recovered from the collection banks in the Council's car parks were sent to eastern European and some African countries whilst others were recycled and used in the electronic and automotive industries.

Members of the Council joined the Chairman in thanking the Forest community for all their efforts and encouraged everyone to continue to make use of the Council's recycling facilities.

(e) EP-Saratoga Award for Best Value in Personnel Services

The Chairman was pleased to announce that the New Forest District Council was the first winner of the Society of Chief Personnel Officers and Saratoga Award for Best Value in Personnel in District Councils. The award was given to authorities showing exemplary performance in aspects of Best Value.

A confidential survey of employees and members of New Forest District Council had been carried out by Saratoga who then analysed the data as part of a bench-marking process.

The award recognised the dedicated work of the Personnel Team over the last two years and the excellent partnership with trade unions.

50. BUSINESS SERVICES CONTRACTS COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 3 March 2000. On the motion that the report be received:-

(a) Item 3 – Tax and Benefits Service Contract Progress Report

A member asked if, since the introduction of the new Government initiative designed to reduce fraud and abuse of welfare payments, there was any evidence of legitimate claimants being deterred by the procedure. The member also enquired as to the nature of the statutory advertising that had been undertaken.

The Chairman of the Committee replied that there had been a reduction in the number of claimants and he would write to the member concerned with details of the statutory advertising undertaken.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

51. CENTRAL SERVICES COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 14 March 2000. On the motion that the report be received, the Chairman commented that in relation to item 1 (Local Government Commission's Review of Electoral Arrangements in New Forest District – Receipt of Commission's Recommendations) the Commission had been very complimentary about all its dealings with New Forest District Council and this was a credit to the officers involved.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendations adopted.

52. DIRECT SERVICES CONTRACTS COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 10 March 2000. On the motion that the report be received:-

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

53. ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 2 March 2000. On the motion that the report be received:-

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

54. HOUSING COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 22 March 2000. On the motion that the report be received:-

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

55. LEISURE SERVICES COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 7 March 2000. On the motion that the report be received:-

(a) Item 1 – Towards a Cultural Strategy

In response to a question the Chairman of the Committee confirmed that members would be made aware of responses from partner organisations.

(b) Item 4 – Grant Aid Fund Applications

A member commented on a recent newspaper headline relating to an exhibition at ArtSway. The member commented that the particular exhibition was funded mainly by lottery money and consideration of the grant to ArtSway had begun before the exhibition was held.

Another member expressed concern at the reduction in the grant to ArtSway and commented that in her view such cuts in arts funding would seriously affect the future of live theatre and music. The Chairman of the Committee commented that the matter had been thoroughly discussed at the Committee meeting and subsequently the ArtSway Trust had met and confirmed that they could obtain the balance of funding required for 2001 from alternative sources.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

56. PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 5 April 2000. On the motion that the report be received:-

(a) Item 1 - Local Agenda 21 – Annual Report on Progress

A member enquired whether, as part of the review of urban residential capacity, proposals would be brought forward for changes to the policies in the New Forest District Plan, especially BU-H1 to reflect the growing need to maximise the use of land within the District towns.

The Chairman of the Committee responded that whilst the Government's wishes to protect 'green field' land from development by increasing densities in urban areas was understood, this should not be at the expense of their character. The Chairman agreed that a report would be brought forward on the subject in connection with the review of the Local Plan.

(b) Item 2 – PPG12 : Development Plans and New Forest District Local Plan Review

In response to a question the Chairman of the Committee agreed to write to the member concerned commenting on the view of the Countryside Agency that the National Park Status issue would be resolved in 2001.

(c) Item 14 – Publicity for Planning Applications – Neighbour Notification

A number of members expressed concern at the proposed restricted use of 'green site notices' following the introduction of a new scheme of neighbour notification for planning applications. Members noted that whilst the new neighbour notification scheme would be useful, the withdrawal, in most instances, of the 'green site notices' was considered a retrograde step. Some members also expressed concern that parish councils had not been consulted on the proposal.

An amendment was moved and seconded that the item be referred back to the Planning and Transportation Committee to enable a full consultation on the proposals to withdraw routinely, 'green site notices' as a means of advising affected parties of proposed developments.

The Leader of the Council commented that he was of the view that the public did not feel that the 'green site notices' were effective and the Planning and Transportation Committee had directly addressed this by introducing the neighbour notification scheme which would be a great improvement in service delivery.

The Chairman of the Committee commented that the issue had been a matter of full debate at the Planning and Transportation Committee and that 'green site notices' would continue to be posted in specific instances.

In accordance with Standing Order 14(15)(b) it was moved that the question be now put. In the opinion of the Chairman of the Council the matter had not been sufficiently discussed and the debate continued.

Members expressed concern that despite the specific partnership agreements with Town and Parish Councils no consultation had taken place with them. Whilst the principle of the new neighbour notification scheme was acknowledged some members felt this should be run in tandem with the 'green site notices'.

The motion that the item be referred back to the Planning and Transportation Committee to enable full consultation with Town and Parish Councils on the proposal to routinely withdraw 'green site notices' was put to the vote and was lost.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

57. SPECIAL JOINT MEETING OF ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES AND LICENSING, LEISURE AND PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION COMMITTEES.

The Chairman of the Planning and Transportation Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 5 April 2000. In view of the fact that the Special Joint Meeting did not have any delegated powers, the Chairman moved an amendment that the report be referred back to the Environmental Services and Licensing Committee for consideration.

RESOLVED:

That the report be referred to the Environmental Services and Licensing Committee for consideration.

58. POLICY AND RESOURCES COMMITTEE.

The Chairman of the Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 11 April 2000. On the motion that the report be received and the recommendation adopted the Chairman drew attention to Item 7 of Appendix 3 of Item 2 – 'Recommendations from Modernisation Working Party' which highlighted the partnership work to be undertaken and the importance of close liaison with Town and Parish Councils.

(a) Item 3 – Enforcement Concordat

In response to a question on the wording of the Enforcement Concordat (Appendix 14) the Chairman of the Committee commented that he had confidence in officers to ensure that no illegal enforcement action was taken.

(b) Item 4 – Social Exclusion – Issues Paper

In response to a question the Chairman of the Committee commented that the Administration would do their best to reduce unemployment in the Lymington area.

(c) Item 7 – Recommendations from Employee Structure Sub-Committee – Extract from the Minutes of the Meetings held on 28 February 2000 and 31 March 2000

A member asked if the two redundancies specified in the minutes had been compulsory. The Chairman of the Committee responded that the Employee Structure Sub-Committee had accepted the recommendations of officers following the request to reduce the Council's wage bill.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendation adopted.

59. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 9.

(a) Cllr Coles asked the Chairman of the Council the following question:-

'It was reported in the Echo on Friday that the Ministry of Defence were selling Searles House and the Memorial Gardens in Winchester. The Memorial Gardens contained the ashes and memorials of men who served in the Hampshire Regiment with which New Forest District Council had affiliations.

It was reported that after the sale the Memorial Gardens would only be open to the public 12 times a year. At the moment they were open all year.

Would the Chairman agree to write, on behalf of New Forest District Council, to the Ministry of Defence, the two local MP's and the Leader of Hampshire County Council requesting that after their sale, the Memorial Gardens should remain permanently open to the public'.

After discussion in which members expressed strong support for the proposal:-

RESOLVED:

That the Chairman write on behalf of New Forest District Council to the Ministry of Defence, local MP's, and the Leader of Hampshire County Council expressing their extreme concern at the proposal that the Memorial Gardens would only be open for 12 days a year and supporting the proposals that the Memorial Gardens should remain open to the public permanently.

- (b) Cllr Locock asked the Chairman of the Planning and Transportation Committee the following question:-

"In view of the judicial ruling that while it was not legally necessary to refund holders of car park permits it was a reasonable view that such repayment could be made. Would the Chairman of the Planning and Transportation Committee agree to the Committee reconsidering their position?"

The Chairman replied "Yes. A report would be made to the Planning and Transportation Committee on 31 May 2000."

- (c) Cllr Ault asked the Chairman of the Leisure Services Committee the following question:-

"Can the Chairman please confirm that, in the event that any application was made for any grant aid and/or any allocation of developers' contributions in respect of the development of a skate board park at Woodside Park, Lymington the matter would only be decided by the relevant New Forest District Council committee?"

The Chairman replied "My understanding of this particular case is that a full Council resolution of the Lymington and Pennington Town Council has supported the development of a skate board park at Woodside Park, Lymington. A report would be brought to the Leisure Services Committee on 30 May seeking this Council's financial support."

- (d) Cllr Robinson asked the Chairman of the Policy and Resources Committee the following question:-

"Can the Leader of the Council give details of the liaison which has taken place between himself and the Leader of Southampton City Council during the planning of the Tall Ships event and the forthcoming 'Seawings 2000'?"

In particular, did they discuss the potential impact, particularly on the road network, on the eastern part of this District, caused by these events, due to the attraction of many thousands of spectators to the Waterside?

Will the Leader join me in thanking New Forest District Council employees, Police Officers and others who were on duty to assist the public who viewed the spectacle from vantage points within the District?"

The Chairman replied "Whilst I myself have not been in contact with Southampton City Council, the Council's District Emergency Planning Co-ordinator and Customer Services Manager were in discussion with them, the event organisers and local Police on potential traffic problems and the importance of identifying possible viewing points in the New Forest area. I would like to thank staff for their support and efforts during this busy time."

60. REPRESENTATION ON THE COUNCIL AND ON COMMITTEES.

Following the resignation of Cllr Frampton from the Liberal Democrat Group and his acceptance of membership of the Conservative Group a review of the allocation of seats was conducted.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the place allocated to the Liberal Democrat Group on the Central Services Committee be allocated to the Independent Group;
- (b) That Cllr Snashall cease to be a member of the Central Services Committee and that Cllr Spikins be appointed to serve in her place;
- (c) That the following Liberal Democrat nominations be agreed to fill the vacancies left by Councillor Frampton:-

Business Services Contracts Committee – Cllr Smith

Leisure Services Committee – Cllr Dawson

Planning and Transportation Committee – Cllr Harris

- (d) That, in accordance with the change in Committee membership proposed by the Conservative Group, Cllr Frampton be appointed to serve on the Leisure Services Committee in place of Cllr Heron.

CHAIRMAN