

**15 OCTOBER 2001**

**NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 15 October 2001.

- p Cllr Miss P A Drake - Chairman
- p Cllr J M Hoy - Vice-Chairman

**Councillors:**

- p Mrs S M Abernethy
- p K F Ault
- p K E Austin
- e E R Bowring
- p F J Bright
- p Mrs D M Brooks
- e D S Burdle
- p W R Catt
- p Mrs J L Cleary
- e J E Coles
- p D E Cracknell
- p P H Cummings
- p B D Dash
- p J J Dawson
- p W H Dow
- e T J Droogleever
- p L T Dunsdon
- p B C Earwicker
- p M H G Fidler
- e 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 Mrs M Humber BA
- p J A G Hutchins JP
- p M J Kendal
- p G N D Locock
- p Mrs B M Maynard
- p Mrs M McLean
- p A W Rice TD
- p B Rickman
- p Mrs M J Robinson
- p B Rule
- p T M Russell
- p D N Scott
- e M J Shand
- p S A Shepherd
- p Mrs B Smith
- p N L T Smith
- p Mrs L P Snashall
- p G Spikins
- p M H Thierry
- p D B Tipp
- p J Waddington
- p M S Wade
- e S S Wade
- p C A Wise
- p P R Woods
- p Mrs P A Wyeth

**Officers Attending:**

D Yates, N Gibbs, Ms E Malcolm, C Malyon, D Atwill, Ms J Bateman, Miss G O'Rourke and Mrs R Rutins.

**32. MINUTES.**

**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meetings held on 23 July and 24 September 2001, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**33. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT.**

**(a) Local Democracy Week**

The Chairman extended a warm welcome to students from Brockenhurst College, who were attending the Council meeting at the start of Local Democracy Week.

The Students were studying 'A' Level Politics and used the opportunity to meet with elected representatives and to express some of their views on local issues.

**(b) Planning Application Website**

The Chairman was pleased to announce the launch of an innovative new Council website where planning applications and associated plans could be viewed at the touch of a button.

The new service had been introduced to enable people to view plans that might affect them without the need to visit local Council Offices. This was a major step towards implementing the E-Governance Agenda at New Forest District Council.

Members then received a short demonstration. They expressed their appreciation of the amount of information that was now available online and the ease with which it could be accessed.

**(c) Events in America**

The Chairman read out a letter of appreciation received from the American Embassy in response to the Council's message of comfort and support sent following the 11 September terrorist attacks on the United States.

**(d) Chairman's Charity – Canine Partners**

The Chairman was pleased to announce that Linda Thompson and her dog Hector, had visited the offices earlier in the evening to demonstrate how the Canine Partners dogs assist people with disabilities.

The Chairman was pleased to announce that her first fund raising in aid of Canine Partners for Independence, which was a competition to name her new bulldog puppy, had raised £280.

**(e) Mr L Nelson**

The Chairman was pleased to announce that Mr Larry Nelson, the Manager of Totton Recreation Centre, had successfully completed his MA in Marketing Management at the Southampton Business School.

Members noted that once again it was very pleasing to see a Council employee achieving such high standards and joined the Chairman in congratulating Mr Nelson.

**(f) Councillor Kidman**

The Chairman reported that Cllr Kidman, who had represented the Becton Ward on the Council since 1999, had resigned. He and his wife had left England to retire in Cyprus.

Although Cllr Kidman had only been a member of New Forest District Council for a relatively short time, he was an experienced Councillor, having served on Christchurch Borough Council for some years, and he had made a valuable contribution to the work of this Council. The Chairman, on behalf of the Council, thanked Cllr Kidman for his time and effort over the past 2½ years and extended their best wishes to him and his wife for their future.

**34. CORPORATE AND FINANCE REVIEW PANEL.**

The Chairman of the Panel presented the report of the meeting held on 20 September 2001. On the motion that the report be received and the recommendation adopted it was:-

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be received and the recommendation adopted.

**35. CRIME AND DISORDER REVIEW PANEL.**

The Chairman of the Panel presented the report of the meeting held on 18 September 2001. On the motion that the report be received and the recommendation adopted it was:-

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be received and the recommendation adopted.

**36. ECONOMY AND PLANNING REVIEW PANEL.**

The Chairman of the Panel presented the report of the meeting held on 19 September 2001. On the motion that the report be received and the recommendation adopted it was:-

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be received and the recommendation adopted.

**37. ENVIRONMENT REVIEW PANEL.**

The Chairman of the Panel presented the report of the meeting held on 21 September 2001. On the motion that the report be received and the recommendation adopted it was:-

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be received and the recommendation adopted.

**38. HOUSING REVIEW PANEL.**

The Chairman of the Panel presented the report of the meeting held on 19 September 2001. On the motion that the report be received:-

**(a) Tenants' Satisfaction Survey**

The Chairman of the Panel drew the Council's attention to the fact that tenants had expressed very high levels of satisfaction with the Council as landlord.

The Chairman commented that this indicated the first class job that officers were carrying out in all areas of the housing service and he expressed his thanks for this.

**(b) Arrangements for Tenant Participation**

A member commented that in his view, the tenants should retain editorial control of the 'Round the Houses' newspaper. The Chairman replied that the Housing Review Panel had expressed the view that tenants should retain editorial control of the 'Round the Houses' newspaper but the final decision remained with the executive.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be received.

**39. LEISURE REVIEW PANEL.**

The Chairman of the Panel presented the reports of the meetings held on 30 July, 11 and 18 September 2001. On the motion that the report be received:-

**(a) Applemore Recreation Centre – Extension to Fitness Suite**

In accordance with Standing Order 41.2 the Chairman of the Council agreed that the Notice of Motion on this subject appearing later on the agenda should be dealt with at the meeting and, to assist discussion, should be taken at the same time as the Leisure Review Panel report item on the same subject.

In accordance with Standing Order No. 21, Councillor Dash moved the following motion standing in his name:-

“That any extension to the fitness suite at Applemore Recreation Centre should not be to the detriment of other sporting activities at that Centre. Accordingly, Council instructs officers to cease work on the current proposal to extend the fitness suite and for the Cabinet, having sought the view of the Leisure Review Panel, to develop a proposal which would allow the provision of 2 squash courts in addition to the fitness suite expansion.”

Cllr Dash in moving the motion commented that he was pleased to see the scheme being brought forward but would not wish this to jeopardise the continuation of the squash club currently using the centre. He was of the view that one squash court was insufficient to maintain the viability of the club and that people in the area would be disadvantaged. Young people in the area would not be able to travel to Totton Recreation Centre and therefore the Council would not be providing 'sport for all'.

Another member stated that the current fitness suite at Applemore Recreation Centre was used to capacity. The Council had a responsibility to consider the needs of the majority of the community and whilst it had been a difficult choice to reduce the facilities for squash, he was of the view that the proposals to extend the fitness suite were the best solution.

Other members commented that rather than looking solely at the business case perhaps the Council should be considering improving the quality of life for its residents generally. It would be possible to extend the fitness suite and retain two squash courts. It was regrettable that services were again being cut to residents in the Waterside area of the district. The provision of leisure centres was very costly to the local authority and the facilities provided must be accessible and acceptable to all Council Taxpayers.

The health aspect of the proposals was crucial and a number of members were of the view that many more people used health and fitness suites than played squash. The business case for the proposal had to be acceptable in order that the needs of the whole of the district could be catered for.

The Leader of the Council commented that it was necessary for the Council to maintain a balanced budget and that the number of people wanting to use health and fitness facilities was increasing whilst the numbers wishing to play squash was decreasing. He did not agree that young people in the Waterside area would be disadvantaged by these proposals. Indeed, he reported that there had been efforts to try to develop a junior section of the squash club and there had been insufficient support for this.

The Leisure Portfolio Holder commented that he was surprised at the notice of motion and that it was his intention to serve the majority of the residents in the Waterside area. He acknowledged that there were competing demands and that this resulted in difficult choices. However, in order to provide benefit to the widest number of people

he was of the view that the proposals were appropriate. However, should additional funds become available in the future then consideration could be given to maintaining two squash courts at Applemore Recreation Centre.

In seconding the motion Councillor Robinson commented that she had received a petition containing 324 signatures objecting to the removal of the two squash courts. Most of the players that used the courts were local to the Waterside. An alternative option, providing for the retention of two squash courts but with longer payback periods, had been considered at the Review Panel but had not been agreed. Whilst Cllr Mrs Robinson agreed that the health and fitness suite should be expanded she did not want to see this happen at the expense of other users of the Centre.

In summing up Cllr Dash commented that the decision should not be taken for purely financial reasons. The issue was about providing facilities for local people. There was an option to extend the health and fitness suite and retain two squash courts with an acceptable extended payback period and this should be considered.

Following a vote the Notice of Motion was lost.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be received.

**40. STANDARDS COMMITTEE.**

The Chairman of the Committee presented the report of the meeting held on 5 October 2001. On the motion that the report be received and the recommendation adopted:-

**(a) Pensions for Elected Members of Local Authorities – Consultation Paper**

A member was of the view that in order to encourage younger people to become councillors it was necessary to offer more incentives such as higher allowances and pensions which might compensate for loss of salary.

Another member, commented that other issues such as evening meetings also needed to be considered.

The Chairman of the Committee responded that this was currently only a response to a Government Consultation document and that further consideration would need to be given to the issue should the proposals be introduced at some point in the future.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be received and the recommendation adopted.

**41. CABINET.**

The Chairman of the Cabinet presented the report of the meetings held on 1 August, 6 September and 3 October 2001. On the motion that the report be received and the recommendations adopted:-

The following members declared interests in the following items:-

<b>Item</b>	<b>Member</b>
Item 5 – Local Information Office and Affordable Housing at Stannington Car Park, Ashley Road/Spencer Road, New Milton	Councillors Earwicker, Hutchins, Rule and Woods

The interests were not clear and substantial and the members remained present at the meeting and took part in the debate.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Member</b>
Item 18 – Town Centre Management (Co-ordination Review)	Councillor Shepherd (It was noted that Cllr Shepherd had dispensation to speak but not vote on this item)

**(a) Implementation of CCTV**

In response to a question the Chairman agreed to write to a member giving further details of the arrangements whereby town and parish councils had agreed to make revenue contributions to the overall cost of the implementation of CCTV across the District.

**(b) Totton Recreation Centre – Fitness Suite Extension**

A member expressed concern that local ward members had not been consulted over this proposal. Another expressed the view that it appeared that some officers were not fully briefed on the requirements of the new Constitution.

The Chairman replied that he would discuss the matter with the Chief Executive and that he would suggest that in future all reports to Cabinet, Committees and Panels contained a standard paragraph detailing consultation that had taken place on the proposals contained in a report.

**(c) Town Centre Management (Co-ordination) Review**

A member commented that whilst accepting the principle of the review he was concerned at the proposal to terminate the current Town Centre Management Initiative. In particular, he was concerned that Totton would suffer as a result of this.

The Chairman of the Economy and Planning Review Panel replied that the Panel had not felt that the Town Centre Management Initiatives had been operating as well as they could be and that, whilst they had been successful in Hythe, this had not been replicated in Ringwood. The Panel had been very aware of the need for action to be taken in the Totton area but had agreed that this needed to be addressed by way of a complete review of Town Centre Management in the district generally.

Members generally accepted that there were significant differences between the communities of Hythe, Ringwood and Totton and that different approaches to such diverse communities needed to be considered. Members were pleased to note that a further report would be brought forward for consideration within six months.

**RESOLVED:**

That the report be received and the recommendations adopted.

**42. GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE.**

**RESOLVED:**

That, following the resignation from the Council of Cllr Kidman, Cllr Tipp be appointed to fill the vacancy on the General Purposes and Licensing Committee.

CHAIRMAN