

25 OCTOBER 2004

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 25 October 2004.

- p Cllr Lt Col M J Shand - Chairman
- p Cllr Sqn Ldr B M F Pemberton - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

- p G Abbott
- p K F Ault
- p K E Austin
- p C Baker
- p G C Beck
- p Mrs J L Cleary
- p D E Cracknell
- p G F Dart
- p W H Dow
- p Miss P A Drake
- p L T Dunsdon
- p M H G Fidler
- p Ms L C Ford
- p Mrs L P Francis
- p P C Greenfield
- e R C H Hale
- C J Harrison
- p D Harrison
- p F R Harrison
- p J D Heron
- p D A Hibbert
- p P E Hickman
- p Mrs M D Holding
- p J M Hoy
- p Mrs M Humber
- p J A G Hutchins
- p M J Kendal
- p Mrs B M Maynard
- p Mrs M McLean

Councillors:

- p M J Molyneux
- p R J Neath
- p G J Parkes
- p J Penwarden
- p L R Puttock
- p A W Rice TD
- p B Rickman
- p Mrs M J Robinson
- p B Rule
- p D J Russell
- p T M Russell
- p D N Scott
- e N E Scott
- p S A Shepherd
- p Mrs B Smith
- p Mrs S I Snowden
- p M H Thierry
- p A R Tinsley
- p D B Tipp
- e Mrs B Vincent
- p M S Wade
- p S S Wade
- p G M Walmsley
- p J G Ward
- p A Weeks
- p Dr M N Whitehead
- p C A Wise
- p P R Woods
- p Mrs P A Wyeth

Officers Attending:

N Gibbs, C Malyon, J Mascall, Ms J Bateman, Miss G O'Rourke and Mrs R Rutins.

33. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllrs Dunsdon, Ms Ford, Heron, Kendal, Rice and Thierry declared interests in minute no. 36.

Cllrs Hutchins, Mrs Smith, M S Wade and Mrs Wyeth declared interests in minute no. 37.

34. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 13 September 2004, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

35. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

(a) Voluntary and Community Sector Compact

The Chairman informed members of the launch of "One Compact for Hampshire" which took place for the New Forest District at the Chairman's evening on 3 November 2004. The Compact was a tool to improve working relationships between the Public and Voluntary and Community sectors. By using the Compact, organisations could focus on providing enhanced benefits to the community by working together. Both GOSE and the Audit Commission were encouraging the initiative and progress on the Compact would be assessed as part of the Council's next CPA inspection. The Chairman said that it was important that members were aware of its existence and purpose.

The "One Compact for Hampshire" had been developed by representatives from all sectors and Districts in Hampshire, it covered communication, consultation, funding, partnership working and volunteering. It attempted to reduce any confusion, which might have arisen from the different sectors working together.

The Chairman was very pleased to have had the opportunity to promote and enhance partnership working between the Council and the Voluntary and Community sector. It was hoped that even the small voluntary and community organisations would find the Compact easy to use and that it would allow equal access to information for all.

(b) "The Holly and the Ivy"

The Chairman announced that he was hosting a Christmas Fair – "The Holly and the Ivy" to be held on Saturday 27 November 2004 at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst, as a fundraising event for his Charity, New Forest Sailability. He suggested that all members should attend to do their seasonal shopping. There would be a wide range of goods on sale.

All the proceeds from the £2.50 entrance fee would go to the Chairman's charity.

36. REPORT OF CABINET.

Cllrs Dunsdon, Kendal and Rice declared personal interests in Item 3 – (Hounslow School Community Sport Centre Management Arrangements) as Hampshire County Councillors. They did not consider their interests to be prejudicial. They remained at the meeting and voted.

Cllrs Ms Ford and Thierry declared personal interests in item 5 (Off-Street Parking Amendment Order 2004 -Ringwood Furlong Long Stay Car Park and Lorry Park) as Ringwood Town Councillors. They did not consider their interests to be prejudicial. They remained at the meeting and voted.

Cllr Heron declared a personal interest in item 5 (Off-Street Parking Amendment Order 2004 -Ringwood Furlong Long Stay Car Park and Lorry Park) as a member of Ringwood Chamber of Trade. He did not consider his interest to be prejudicial. He remained at the meeting and voted.

The Chairman presented the report of the Cabinet dated 6 October 2004. On the motion that the report be received and the recommendations adopted:

(a) Recommendations from Economy and Planning Review Panel

The Chairman said that he agreed with the views of the Panel in relation to the post of Business Development Officer and felt that such a post would improve the economic development of the New Forest. However this particular issue could not be agreed in isolation ahead of the full round of budget bids being considered.

RESOLVED:

That the report of the Cabinet dated 6 October 2004 together with the separately circulated document detailing the scale of Fees and Charges for Keyhaven River for 2004/2005 be received and the recommendations adopted.

37. REPORTS OF GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE.

Cllrs Mrs Smith and M S Wade declared personal and prejudicial interests in Item 1 - 25 October 2004 (Pay Award 2004) in that their spouses were Council employees. They left the meeting during consideration of this matter.

Cllr Mrs Wyeth declared a personal interest in Item 1 – 25 October 2004 (Pay Award 2004) in that she had a relative who was a Council employee. She remained at the meeting but did not speak or vote on this matter.

Cllr Hutchins declared a personal interest in Item 2 – 25 October 2004 (Street Trading Wednesday Market – New Milton) as a New Milton Town Councillor. He did not consider his interest to be prejudicial. He remained at the meeting and voted.

The Chairman presented the reports of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee dated 17 September and 25 October 2004.

On the motion that the reports be received and the recommendations adopted it was:

RESOLVED:

That the reports of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee dated 17 September and 25 October 2004 be received and the recommendations adopted.

38. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' QUESTION TIME.

Question No. 1 from : Cllr Dr Whitehead to Cllr Mrs Holding (Portfolio Holder for Health & Social Inclusion)

"Does the Portfolio Holder for Health share my concern about the lowering of the standard of care for the out of hours service since the New Forest Primary Care Trust took over responsibility for this service from General Practitioners?"

Answer:

The Health and Social Inclusion Portfolio Holder replied that she was very concerned about the standards of care in the out of hours service since the Primary Care Trust (PCT) had taken over the service from general practitioners on 1 July 2004.

She pointed out that the PCT were only receiving £600,000 per annum from the Government to fund that service when it was actually costing them over £1m to provide it. There was therefore a large funding shortfall at a difficult financial time.

The Contract was agreed in July 2003 which only gave the PCT one year to arrange the service. Senior nurses needed time to be trained and university courses needed to be set up . These issues would normally have taken much longer than a year. All GP's in the New Forest had contracted out of the out of hours service but as a goodwill gesture many helped out for the first three months. They could not continue to do so as the EEC Working Time Directive made it illegal for them to work the number of hours required. Other salaried GP's, some from other countries, were now doing this work.

The Birmingham Prime Care Organisation was the only organisation that was available to do most of the out of hours service for the PCT and a contract for a year was awarded to them. Most of the problems have emanated from this contract mainly because the organisation was based in Birmingham. There have been problems with the time taken to answer calls and with them not understanding the geographical characteristics of the area.

The PCT realised the difficulties early on and arranged for a local hub in Southampton to take over the dispatch aspect of the service from August 2004. The level of complaints then declined substantially. The Portfolio Holder said that she was aware that that the PCT were continually looking at ways to improve the service and that all the complaints made were carefully monitored and lessons learned from them.

The Portfolio Holder said that she did not blame the PCT for the initial problems but rather the Government for the rushed, ill thought out timing of the proposals. There was a chronic under-funding of the service at a time when all PCT's were already struggling to meet their targets.

In response to a supplementary question relating to the mounting concern from GP's and patients, particularly in relation to the time taken to obtain medical attention, the Portfolio Holder said that she was in continuing discussion with the PCT regarding this matter and the waiting times were reducing.

Question No. 2 from : Cllr Mrs Smith to Cllr Mrs Holding (Portfolio Holder for Health & Social Inclusion)

"Would the Portfolio Holder please comment on the proposals by the Southampton University Hospital Trust (SUHT) to cut £20,000 from the cardiac rehabilitation budget?"

Answer:

The Portfolio Holder replied that she was concerned that the budget for this service had been cut by SUHT although she understood that it was because of the severe financial constraints they were working under. She outlined the four stages of Coronary Care treatment. Level 1 was the heart attack itself. Level 2 was the initial life saving treatment in hospital. Level 3 was the period after discharge when the initial healing had taken place and the patient had returned home. The individual was then assessed and a structured programme with carefully judged exercise was drawn up to rebuild the patient's confidence for everyday life. Level 4, healthy exercise to keep rehabilitation on track, took place at a centre, funded from the Partnership and Health Strategy Fund.

SUHT had withdrawn the funding at Level 3 and without a Level 3 assessment Level 4 could not take place. New Forest PCT had committed £34,000 to Level 4 for patients in the New Forest but without Level 3 happening this funding could not be used.

The Portfolio Holder said that she was very concerned as rehabilitation was such an important part of care. Currently the Commissioners from the PCT were negotiating with SUHT to try and restore the Level 3 funding.

In answer to a supplementary question the Portfolio Holder agreed that she would continue to support the need for funding for Level 3 care and would take forward the concerns of the Council.

Question No. 3 from : Cllr Mrs Humber to Cllr Heron (Portfolio Holder for Economy and Planning)

“Is the Portfolio Holder happy with the announced boundary of the National Park “?

Answer:

The Portfolio Holder said that he knew of very few people who would agree with the designated boundary. A National Park was put forward to offer this very special area increased protection, yet areas that were once protected by the Heritage area now found themselves without any specific protection. The New Forest, having suffered numerous setbacks over its long existence and due largely to the strength and determination of those who love it and live within it, has still flourished.

The Portfolio Holder said that he was sure that everyone would all work with the new National Park Authority to ensure the brightest of futures for this outstanding area.

In answer to a supplementary question relating to ensuring that the current heritage areas and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty continued to be protected the Portfolio Holder said many areas were still protected as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and as green belt land under the Local Plan. The Council's current policies did offer protection and through the Local Plan he would endeavour to ensure that did not change.

39. NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL ‘YOUTH SHOUT ABOUT’.

On Friday 15 October the Council hosted a “Youth Shout About” day where young people from across the district were invited to come to Appletree Court to participate in a Youth Conference.

The Chairman introduced Mr Arif Isikgun who was a local member of the UK Youth Parliament (UKYP) and had chaired the Shout About conference.

The Chairman said that the UKYP was a national body of democratically elected young people aged from 11 to 18. The Members of the Youth Parliament - or MYP's - were from England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and met once a year to discuss issues they considered important. The UKYP did not try to mimic Government; there were no political parties, no shadow cabinet or Prime Ministers in waiting.

English members belonged to one of nine regions, while Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland had their own forums affiliated to the UKYP. They were elected by the young people in each region once a year.

The Leader said that when the Audit Commission had rated the Council as being “excellent and improving” under the CPA assessment, one of the points that arose from the assessment was a need for a strategic overview of the Council’s Youth policy. As a foundation for the future, the Council declared 2004 as the “Year of Youth”. In September an excellent Youth Day had been held in the grounds of Appletree Court and now the Youth Shout About event had proved successful too. The Leader said it was now important to embody these principles in all the Council’s policies.

The Chairman then invited Arif Isikgun to chair a debate on the “Youth Shout About” Conference.

Mr Isikgun said that the Youth Parliament (www.ukyouthparliament.org.uk) aimed to give young people a voice that would be heard and listened to by both local and national government. He said that there had been a lot of good work done in a number of important areas and young people were now more confident about speaking out. “Youth Shout About” had given local young people an excellent opportunity to discuss key issues in the New Forest Area.

Members and young people who had participated in the event then discussed the main issues that had arisen.

Housing:

A key issue in this area was the number of young people who were homeless. More emergency accommodation was needed and more advice available on benefits and options open to young people. Projects such as “Nightstop” could be expanded.

Changes to the Social Housing Grant did not help the situation and meant that many families had to remain in bed and breakfast for a much longer period of time. Whilst the Council was trying very hard to overcome the situation, the changes in Government funding did not help.

Leisure:

Issues arising from these discussions included the need for the provision of more affordable leisure activities in the local area.

Mr Isikgun said that the recent youth events (“Sugar and Spice” and “Slugs and Snails”) hosted by the County Council had also been very successful and enjoyable. Young people of all ages and backgrounds had attended and there had been a wide variety of activities and workshops.

It was noted that the health and leisure centre focus groups now all had a young person included in their membership to give their views.

Environment:

Litter was an issue that the young people felt strongly about. They suggested additional litter bins should be provided and more done to inform the public about environmental issues such as litter. There were incentive schemes running in schools and the young people used peer pressure to show that to drop litter was unacceptable.

Education:

When asked their views on the Education system the young people felt that although there were many student bodies in place they weren't listened to and didn't have any real power. They suggested that it would be useful if students could sit on Governing Bodies to voice their opinions.

Bullying at school was an issue that, despite attempts to address, still existed.

Transport:

Transport in the New Forest was a big issue with many rural areas without any form of public transport. Where public transport was available it was very expensive and often beyond what a young person could afford. It was noted that the Wilts and Dorset Bus Company had offered half price travel to under 11's but the view was that this concession should apply to all school age young people. Members noted that other bus companies provided similar concessions elsewhere in the Country.

Although some young people did cycle they said they did not feel safe on the roads. It was agreed that there was a continuing need for further development of cycle ways.

Crime and Safety:

In relation to the Police the young people felt that the Police needed to be more approachable and that it was much better to have officers on the beat than in patrol cars. They suggested that it would be helpful for the police to hold discussion workshops in schools and colleges.

There was still a perception that all young people caused trouble. The main issue for the young people was crime committed to them by other young people and the Police needed to be more aware of this issue. Many of these crimes went unreported.

It was noted that following a recent reorganisation there was a dedicated police officer for every village. The young people were not aware of this and had seen no publicity.

The young people said that they would like more events like "Shout About". Such events encouraged different people to get together to express their views however, they needed to know that their comments would be listened to. Mr Isikgun thanked all the young people for taking part and for all the effort they had put into making it such a success.

The Leader said that he was very pleased with the way the "Year of Youth" had turned out and all the events had proved to be a meaningful basis for dialogue. The Council would try to address the issues that had been raised particularly those relating to transport. The Council needed to meet with the bus companies and the County Council to find a way to provide better transport facilities.

Council

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It was agreed that all Review Panels would look at ways in which young people could be directly involved in their work.

The Chairman thanked everyone for a very useful and stimulating debate.

CHAIRMAN

(DEMOCRAT/CL251004/MINUTES.DOC)