

13 SEPTEMBER 2004

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 13 September 2004.

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

Councillors:

- p G Abbott
- p K F Ault
- p K E Austin
- e 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
- p R C H Hale
- p C J Harrison
- p D Harrison
- p F R Harrison
- p J D Heron
- p D A Hibbert
- p P E Hickman
- e 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
- J Penwarden
- p L R Puttock
- A W Rice TD
- p B Rickman
- p Mrs M J Robinson
- p B Rule
- p D J Russell
- T M Russell
- p D N Scott
- p N E Scott
- e S A Shepherd
- p Mrs B Smith
- p Mrs S I Snowden
- e M H Thierry
- 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:

D Yates, N Gibbs, Mrs P Higgins, J Mascall, Ms J Bateman and Mrs R Rutins.

24. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllr Mrs Ford declared an interest in minute 27
Cllr Mrs Robinson declared an interest in minute 27.

25. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 19 July 2004, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

26. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

(a) Brockenhurst Toilets

The Chairman reported that a presentation to mark the inclusion of Brockenhurst's new public toilets in the Prime Minister's 'Better Public Building Awards' shortlist took place on 7 September.

The innovative public convenience building had made it to the last 17 of the competition and the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) had formally presented a commemorative plaque to the Council.

CABE's regional representative, Richard Rose-Casemore, had said: "It was a great pleasure to make the presentation on behalf of CABE and the Office of Government Commerce. Brockenhurst's new public toilets made a welcome addition to the new generation of public conveniences and 'comfort stations' around the country." He applauded the new interpretation of the genre and to have made it on to this shortlist was an excellent achievement.

(b) New Forest Show

The Chairman reported that the District Council had a full presence at the New Forest Show for the first time in many years. Over 5,000 residents and visitors were welcomed to the Council's stand next to the East Ring.

Members congratulated the Public Relations Team who had co-ordinated this event, and thanked all the employees who worked on stand in the summer heat.

(c) Festival of Youth

On Saturday 11 September the Council had hosted a Festival of Youth in the grounds of Appletree Court. Nearly 2,000 young residents between the ages of 13 and 19 were introduced to the idea of local democracy and enjoyed an afternoon and evening of local bands, acrobats, DJ and MC workshops, drama, sport and leisure, a fashion show, career opportunities and a funfair.

Exxon were the main sponsors of the event and the Council had also received support from other local businesses.

The Chairman said that congratulations, once again, must go to the Public Relations Team who had co-ordinated the event, together with many other departments of the Council who had helped make the day such an undoubted success.

27. REPORT OF CABINET.

Councillor Robinson declared a personal interest as a member of the Waterside Neighbourhood Partnership Group which was a consultee on the Play Strategy (Item 1). She did not consider her interest to be prejudicial. She remained at the meeting and voted. There was no specific discussion on this particular issue.

Cllr Ford declared a personal interest in Stillwater Park (Items 12 and 13) as a local member for Ringwood. She did not consider her interest to be prejudicial. She remained at the meeting and voted.

The Chairman presented the report of the Cabinet dated 4 August and 1 September 2004. On the motion that the report be received and the recommendations adopted:

(a) Options for the future development of Stillwater Park

The Chairman said that following receipt of a legal opinion it was now clear that under the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960 the Council were unable to purchase and site additional mobile homes on Stillwater Park. He said that he was grateful to Mr Terry, the Chairman of the Stillwater Park Residents' Association, for drawing this possible difficulty to the Council's attention.

Officers were now looking at alternative proposals and these would be considered by the Cabinet in due course.

The Leader of the Opposition said that the residents of Stillwater Park had been concerned over the future of the site for a considerable time now. She was concerned that the current proposals had got this far before the legal advice had been obtained. The residents were again now in the difficult situation of not knowing the future of the site that was their home. Another member commented that he also was concerned that the Cabinet had only considered this particular legal point at their last meeting.

The Chairman replied that this was a large area of land and from the start proposals had always been made with a view to benefiting the residents whilst looking for a better way of increasing the supply of affordable homes in the district. All the proposals had been discussed with the residents at the earliest possible stage and the intention had always been to increase the number of affordable homes.

The residents themselves had tried to expand the site but these proposals had failed because their business case had not been viable. The Council had then tried to expand the site for them. Whilst there were difficulties presented by the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act 1960, it had been thought possible to use the Council's new "Well Being" powers to overcome this. However, the Cabinet would now need to look again at what proposals were possible for the site.

(b) Cost of Town/Village Parking Clocks for period 1 January – 31 December 2005

The Chairman confirmed that the agreement of the County Council was required to set the charge for the parking clocks and that there were no grounds for appeal to them against the proposed increase. The increase would however benefit the District's council tax payers at the expense of the motorist.

(c) Tetra (Terrestrial Trunked Radio) Communication Systems

A member said that in accordance with Standing Order 41.1, this matter should have been reported back to the Council by the Corporate Overview Panel rather than the Cabinet. The Council had received a Notice of Motion on the matter at their meeting in April and had referred it to the Corporate Overview Panel to consider. The member did not feel that the views of the Panel should have been filtered by the Cabinet.

The Chief Executive said that whilst technically the matter should have been reported back to Council from the Corporate Overview Panel, the Cabinet was the appropriate decision-making body. In order to expedite the matter the Cabinet had taken a decision based on the recommendation of the Corporate Overview Panel. However, he would look carefully at how these matters were dealt with in the future.

The Chairman of the Corporate Overview Panel was satisfied that the Cabinet had taken on board the views of the Panel in coming to their decision.

(d) Waste Management Strategy

A member said that the new regulations for the disposal of car parts meant that they could no longer be accepted at Council Household Waste Recycling Centres. She understood that there was a specific facility in Southampton for this type of waste but this was not being publicised. There was a concern that the lack of disposal facilities could result in fly tipping. The Chairman replied that he would follow this issue up with the Portfolio Holder.

28. REPORT OF FINAL ACCOUNTS COMMITTEE.

The Chairman presented the report of the Final Accounts Committee dated 27 August 2004. On the motion that the report be received it was:

RESOLVED:

That the report of the Final Accounts Committee dated 27 August 2004 be received.

29. STANDARDS COMMITTEE.

The Chairman presented the report of the Standards Committee dated 21 July 2004. On the motion that the report be received it was:-

RESOLVED:

That the report of the Standards Committee dated 21 July 2004 be received.

30. NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL/TEST VALLEY BOROUGH COUNCIL COMMERCIAL SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE.

In the absence of the Vice-Chairman of the Joint Committee Cllr Wise presented the report of the Commercial Services Joint Committee dated 2 September 2004. On the motion that the report be received it was:-

RESOLVED:

That the report of the Commercial Services Joint Committee dated 2 September 2004 be received.

31. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' QUESTION TIME.

Question No. 1 from : Cllr Tipp to Cllr Heron, Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder

"Would the Portfolio Holder please inform the Council on what progress he has made in fighting the Regional Assembly's proposals for massive housing increases in South Hampshire?"

Answer:

The Portfolio Holder replied that whilst he sat on the Partnership for Urban South Hampshire (PUSH) it was Central Government that set the densities for housing. PUSH had not so far seen any specific proposals for housing increases in the area and therefore had not as yet taken any action.

In response to a supplementary question relating to the influence of groups such as PUSH and SEERA (South East England Regional Assembly) the Portfolio Holder said that it was useful to be represented on such groups as it was a channel through which to voice the concerns of the Council as a whole.

Question No. 2 from : Cllr Dr Whitehead to Cllr Mrs Holding Health & Social Inclusion Portfolio Holder

"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?"

In the absence of the Health and Social Inclusion Portfolio Holder the Chairman agreed that a written response should be made to this question.

Question No. 3 from : Cllr Tipp to Cllr Heron, Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder

"Would the Portfolio Holder please explain why we have so many disabled parking bays lying empty, when there is such a shortage of parking spaces in places like Lymington?"

Answer:

The Portfolio Holder responded that the requirements of the new Disability Discrimination Act meant that additional parking spaces for the disabled had had to be allocated. These were allocated on a formula based on the number of parking spaces available overall. The number of spaces allocated for disabled parking had been inadequate in the past and the new requirements were addressing that situation.

In response to a supplementary question the Portfolio Holder said that he would be reviewing the usage of the parking spaces for the disabled to see if they were under- utilised.

Question No. 4 from : Cllr Mrs Humber to Cllr Heron, Economy and Planning Portfolio Holder

"Would the Portfolio Holder be prepared to withdraw his decision to prevent Citizens' Advice Bureau volunteers in New Milton from benefiting from a parking concession?"

Answer:

The Portfolio Holder said that he had had numerous requests, all from worthy causes, for concessionary parking. It was not possible to start making large numbers of exceptions. He was of the view, after discussion with local members, that there was adequate long stay parking provision in the area within easy reach.

In response to a supplementary question the Portfolio Holder said that he could not look at specific issues in isolation. Flexible parking arrangements to suit local needs were part of the Council's overall traffic management proposals and he would consider the issues as part of an overall detailed review.

32. MEETING DATES.

RESOLVED:

That Council meetings be held on the following Mondays at 6:30 p.m:

16 May 2005 (already agreed)

18 July 2005

12 September 2005

24 October 2005

12 December 2005

27 February 2006

24 April 2006

15 May 2006

CHAIRMAN

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