

25 FEBRUARY 2008

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 25 February 2008.

- p Cllr W H Dow - Chairman
- p Cllr P R Woods - Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

- p G C Beck
- p D A Britton
- p Mrs D M Brooks
- p Mrs F Carpenter
- p Mrs J L Cleary
- p D E Cracknell
- p G F Dart
- e S P Davies
- p L T Dunsdon
- p Ms L C Ford
- p H F Forse
- e P C Greenfield
- p C J Harrison
- p D Harrison
- p E J Heron
- p P E Hickman
- p Mrs J A Hoare
- e Mrs M D Holding
- p J A G Hutchins
- p Mrs P Jackman
- p M J Kendal
- e C Lagdon
- p Mrs M E Lewis
- p Mrs K J Lord
- p Mrs P J Lovelace
- p B D Lucas
- p Mrs A E McEvoy
- p Mrs M McLean
- p G J Parkes

Councillors:

- p Sqn Ldr B M F Pemberton
- p J Penwarden
- p L R Puttock
- p M P Reid
- p A W Rice
- p B Rickman
- p W S Rippon-Swaine
- p Mrs M J Robinson
- e Mrs A M Rostand
- p D J Russell
- p R F Scrivens
- p Lt Col M J Shand
- p A E J Shotter
- p Mrs B Smith
- e Mrs S I Snowden
- e A J Swain
- e M H Thierry
- e A R Tinsley
- p D B Tipp
- p C R Treleaven
- p F P Vickers
- p M S Wade
- p S S Wade
- p R A Wappet
- p J G Ward
- p A Weeks
- p Dr M N Whitehead
- p C A Wise
- p Mrs P A Wyeth

Officers Attending:

D Yates, J Mascal, Mrs M Dunsmore, K Green, Mrs P Higgins and Mrs R Rutins.

64. MINUTES (PAPER A).

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 17 December 2007, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record subject to the following amendments: -

- (i) To reflect that Cllr Reid was not present at the meeting;

- (ii) By the insertion under minute 56 of a new paragraph, before the resolution: "Members expressed regret that because of the requirements of the Code of Conduct the relevant members were unable to be present to hear Cllr Shand's comments".

65. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

All members declared interests in Minute No 67 – Report of Standards Committee.

Cllr Mrs Brooks in Minute No 67.

Cllr Kendal in Minute No. 72.

66. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Bob Jackson

The Chairman welcomed Bob Jackson, the newly appointed Executive Director, who was in attendance to observe the meeting. He would start his post with the Council next month.

The Good Old Days

The Victorian style dinner and lantern slide show had been held at Lyndhurst's Crown Hotel and had raised nearly £3,000 for the Chairman's two chosen charities, the Oakhaven Hospice and Hampshire Air Ambulance. The event had been attended by New Forest East MP DR Julian Lewis, and mayors, mayoresses and Chairmen from neighbouring authorities. Toastmaster Mike Judd, the former Saints striker, had been in attendance along with guest speaker Fred Dineage.

Diners were given an insight into life in Victorian times by the magic lantern of Stan Roberts, who had shown a variety of authentic slides of scenes of rural Hampshire and the New Forest, as well as fascinating kaleidoscope pictures in brilliant vibrant colours.

Death of Tony Hetherington

The Chairman announced with deep regret the sudden and tragic death of the Council's Licensing Officer Tony Hetherington. The Chairman had written to his wife Carol and her family and expressed the Council's heartfelt condolences and sincerest sympathy.

As a Member and former Chairman of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee for some years, the Chairman had worked very closely with Tony. He had been a true professional and had always brought warmth and a sense of humour to meetings. He would be sadly missed by his friends and colleagues, Councillors, and many people in the licensed trade.

Tony's funeral would be held on Wednesday, 27 February at 12:30 pm at Bournemouth Crematorium.

The Council stood in silence as a mark of respect.

67. REPORTS OF CABINET AND COMMITTEES.

Cllr Mrs Brooks declared an interest in recommendation (c) of item 2 of the report of the Cabinet as the owner of a beach hut. There was no discussion on this matter.

Cllr Kendal, Chairman of the Cabinet and Leader of the Council presented the report of the Cabinet meetings held on 2 January and 6 February 2008.

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

(a) Housing Revenue Account Estimates 2008/09

The Leader explained that the 5% rent increase was in response to the average weekly rent calculated by the Government for this Council as part of its rent restructuring scheme. Whilst Tenants' Representatives had expressed their concern regarding the proposed rent increases they understood that the increase was as a result of targets set by the Government and not by this Council.

(b) General Fund Revenue Budget 2008/09 and Capital Programme 2008/12

The Leader of the Council made the statement on the Administration's proposed budget attached as Appendix 1 to these minutes. In moving the recommendation, the Leader proposed the following amendments:-

(i) That recommendation (c) (i) be amended to read as follows:-

The General Fund revenue budget for 2008/09 be agreed in the sum of £22.286m;

(ii) That recommendation (c) (ii) be amended to read as follows:-

The Council Tax for 2008/09 be set at £148.70 for a band D property.

The Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder seconded the amendments.

The Leader of the Opposition then made the statement attached as Appendix 2 to these minutes and moved an amendment giving alternative budget proposals for 2008/09.

Cllr D Harrison seconded the Leader of the Opposition's amendment. He said that he felt that the Government were placing too many restrictions on the District Council which meant that delivering choice to the community was more difficult. He also felt that the Government had limited the decision-making ability of elected members in favour of quangos. He felt that the District Council needed to be more proactive particularly when tackling

environmental issues and that more partnership working with other agencies would assist the District Council with this task. It was also felt that further emphasis and priority should be given to the Council's scrutiny function, so that Panels could properly examine key priorities for the community such as sun beds. He considered that the budget proposed by the Liberal Democrat Group was not reliant on monies being received from sun bed usage. Their budget proposals placed greater emphasis on green issues, as it was felt that this was a key priority for the future. The Group were aware of the pressure to maintain the level of Council Tax as it could be a burden to those on lower incomes, therefore they considered it essential that the District Council should offer value for money for its services.

The Finance and Efficiency Portfolio Holder felt that the budget offered by the Leader of the Council was well considered and covered all areas of need. He considered that the budget proposed by the Liberal Democrat Group missed the need to provide a balanced capital expenditure programme. The figures put forward by the Leader of the Liberal Democrat Group meant that there would be underfunding in the capital budget.

The Leader of the Opposition, in summing up said that the Conservative Group had in the past repeatedly under-spent in the budget and that this was unplanned. The under-spends were therefore happening by accident. She also felt that the Council needed to become more proactive in terms of glass recycling and tackling this environmental impact. She considered that glass recycling should be made a key priority.

The Leader of the Council, in closing the debate, congratulated the Leader of the Opposition for presenting a well thought out alternative for the budget. He said that whilst he considered there to be many disadvantages in terms of kerb-side glass recycling, he would examine the suggestions put forward by the Opposition. He would examine how the Council would take forward recycling methods generally. He pointed out that there was a danger that the carbon footprint would increase by providing more vehicles for collections. There were also other considerations to take into account such as the potential increase in anti-social behaviour as a result of glass being left on the public highway. He felt that it was imperative that the Council Tax remain below 3.5%.

The Leader said that the increase in the interest rates had impacted on the Council and that fluctuations brought uncertainty for financial planning. He recognised that there was an under spend but this would be put to good use. He felt that a balanced budget had been put forward in the best interests of the residents in the district.

Upon a vote, the amendment proposed by the Leader of the Opposition was lost.

The amendments proposed by the Leader of the Council were carried.

RESOLVED:

That the reports be received and the recommendations be adopted, subject to the following amendments of the recommendations on item 2:-

(i) That recommendation (c) (i) be amended to read as follows:-

The General Fund revenue budget for 2008/09 be agreed in the sum of £22.286m;

(ii) That recommendation (c) (ii) be amended to read as follows: -

The Council Tax for 2008/09 be set at £148.70 for a band D property.

68. REPORT OF COMMERCIAL SERVICES JOINT COMMITTEE.

Cllr Wise, Chairman of the Joint Committee, presented the report of the meeting held on 5 December 2007.

On the motion that the report be received, it was:-

RESOLVED:

That the report be received.

69. REPORT OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE.

Cllr Hutchins, Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee, presented the report of the meeting held on 25 January 2008.

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

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendations be adopted.

70. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22.

There were none.

71. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' QUESTION TIME.

There were none.

72. THE 2008/2009 COUNCIL TAX (REPORT B).

Cllr Kendal declared an interest as a Hampshire County Council member. He did not consider the interest to be prejudicial and he remained in the meeting, took part in the debate and voted.

Arising from the Council's decision under Minute No. 67, revised recommendations were tabled.

Some members expressed surprise at the high increase in the precepts proposed by the Police Authority. It was reported that this increase was understood to be for the employment of more Police Officers. Members hoped that they would see evidence of an increased force in the villages of the New Forest. The Portfolio Holder for Crime and Disorder said that he would monitor this issue and report back to the Council when appropriate.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That it be noted that at its meeting on 17 December 2007 the Council calculated the following amounts for the year 2008/09 in accordance with regulations made under Section 33(5) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992: -

- (a) 72,101.30 being the amount calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 3 of the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) Regulations 1992, as its council tax base for the year.

(b) **LOCAL COUNCIL AREA**

ASHURST & COLBURY	927.10
BEAULIEU	511.30
BOLDRE	1,058.30
BRAMSHAW	344.70
BRANSGORE	1,864.40
BREAMORE	184.00
BROCKENHURST	1,833.70
BURLEY	784.00
COPYTHORNE	1,223.10
DAMERHAM	237.00
DENNY LODGE	153.80
EAST BOLDRE	393.80
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE & IBSLEY	597.60
EXBURY & LEPE	114.70
FAWLEY	4,822.80
FORDINGBRIDGE	2,384.30
GODSHILL	215.90
HALE	266.20
HORDLE	2,451.20
HYDE	509.70
HYPHE & DIBDEN	7,735.10
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON	6,982.50
LYNDHURST	1,389.00
MARCHWOOD	2,113.30
MARTIN	192.40
MILFORD-ON-SEA	2,732.60
MINSTEAD	364.10
NETLEY MARSH	821.00
NEW MILTON	10,887.90

RINGWOOD	5,414.10
ROCKBOURNE	166.00
SANDLEHEATH	275.00
SOPLEY	301.90
SWAY	1,669.30
TOTTON & ELING	9,823.00
WHITSBURY	103.30
WOODGREEN	253.20
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	72,101.30

being the amounts calculated by the Council, in accordance with regulation 6 of the Regulations, as the amounts of its council tax base for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

- (2) That the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2008/09 in accordance with Sections 32 to 36 of the Local Government and Finance Act 1992: -
- (a) £100,690,986 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(2)(a) to (e) of the Act.
 - (b) £74,054,500 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 32(3)(a) to (c) of the Act.
 - (c) £26,636,486 being the amount by which the aggregate at 2(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 2(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 32(4) of the Act, as its budget requirement for the year.
 - (d) £11,564,970 being the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its general fund in respect of redistributed non-domestic rates and revenue support grant, increased by the amount of the sums which the Council estimates will be transferred in the year from its collection fund to its general fund in accordance with Section 97(3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Council Tax Surplus), and increased by the amount of any sum which the Council estimates will be transferred from its collection fund to its general fund pursuant to the Collection Fund (Community Charges) directions under Section 98(4) of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (Community Charge Surplus).

- (e) £209.03 being the amount at 2(c) above less the amount at 2(d) above, all divided by the amount at 1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 33(1) of the Act, as the basic amount of its council tax for the year.
- (f) £4,349,996 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act.
- (g) £148.70 being the amount at 2(e) above less the result given by dividing the amount at 2(f) above by the amount at 1(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates.

(h)

LOCAL COUNCIL AREA

	£
ASHURST & COLBURY	173.24
BEAULIEU	166.30
BOLDRE	165.71
BRAMSHAW	163.21
BRANSGORE	201.48
BREAMORE	170.44
BROCKENHURST	174.22
BURLEY	161.46
COPYTHORNE	157.04
DAMERHAM	171.91
DENNY LODGE	171.46
EAST BOLDRE	179.17
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE & IBSLEY	167.94
EXBURY & LEPE	153.06
FAWLEY	239.18
FORDINGBRIDGE	214.67
GODSHILL	189.32
HALE	178.09
HORDLE	182.83
HYDE	160.47
HYPHE & DIBDEN	216.62
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON	229.30
LYNDHURST	177.86
MARCHWOOD	240.82
MARTIN	170.79
MILFORD-ON-SEA	178.75
MINSTEAD	169.30
NETLEY MARSH	159.36
NEW MILTON	195.00
RINGWOOD	213.36

ROCKBOURNE	172.80
SANDLEHEATH	164.15
SOPLEY	209.81
SWAY	170.86
TOTTON & ELING	254.75
WHITSBURY	166.12
WOODGREEN	170.42

being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 2(g) above the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 1(b) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its council tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which one or more special items relate.

(i) **PART OF THE COUNCIL'S AREA**

These are the District plus Town/Parish Council elements only.

LOCAL COUNCIL AREA	A £	B £	C £	D £	E £	F £	G £	H £
ASHURST & COLBURY	115.49	134.74	153.99	173.24	211.74	250.24	288.73	346.48
BEAULIEU	110.87	129.34	147.82	166.30	203.26	240.21	277.17	332.60
BOLDRE	110.47	128.89	147.30	165.71	202.53	239.36	276.18	331.42
BRAMSHAW	108.81	126.94	145.08	163.21	199.48	235.75	272.02	326.42
BRANSGORE	134.32	156.71	179.09	201.48	246.25	291.03	335.80	402.96
BREAMORE	113.63	132.56	151.50	170.44	208.32	246.19	284.07	340.88
BROCKENHURST	116.15	135.50	154.86	174.22	212.94	251.65	290.37	348.44
BURLEY	107.64	125.58	143.52	161.46	197.34	233.22	269.10	322.92
COPYTHORNE	104.69	122.14	139.59	157.04	191.94	226.84	261.73	314.08
DAMERHAM	114.61	133.71	152.81	171.91	210.11	248.31	286.52	343.82
DENNY LODGE	114.31	133.36	152.41	171.46	209.56	247.66	285.77	342.92
EAST BOLDRE	119.45	139.35	159.26	179.17	218.99	258.80	298.62	358.34
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE & IBSLEY	111.96	130.62	149.28	167.94	205.26	242.58	279.90	335.88
EXBURY & LEPE	102.04	119.05	136.05	153.06	187.07	221.09	255.10	306.12
FAWLEY	159.45	186.03	212.60	239.18	292.33	345.48	398.63	478.36
FORDINGBRIDGE	143.11	166.97	190.82	214.67	262.37	310.08	357.78	429.34
GODSHILL	126.21	147.25	168.28	189.32	231.39	273.46	315.53	378.64
HALE	118.73	138.51	158.30	178.09	217.67	257.24	296.82	356.18
HORDLE	121.89	142.20	162.52	182.83	223.46	264.09	304.72	365.66
HYDE	106.98	124.81	142.64	160.47	196.13	231.79	267.45	320.94
HYPHE & DIBDEN	144.41	168.48	192.55	216.62	264.76	312.90	361.03	433.24
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON	152.87	178.34	203.82	229.30	280.26	331.21	382.17	458.60
LYNDHURST	118.57	138.34	158.10	177.86	217.38	256.91	296.43	355.72
MARCHWOOD	160.55	187.30	214.06	240.82	294.34	347.85	401.37	481.64
MARTIN	113.86	132.84	151.81	170.79	208.74	246.70	284.65	341.58
MILFORD-ON-SEA	119.17	139.03	158.89	178.75	218.47	258.19	297.92	357.50
MINSTEAD	112.87	131.68	150.49	169.30	206.92	244.54	282.17	338.60
NETLEY MARSH	106.24	123.95	141.65	159.36	194.77	230.19	265.60	318.72

NEW MILTON	130.00	151.67	173.33	195.00	238.33	281.67	325.00	390.00
RINGWOOD	142.24	165.95	189.65	213.36	260.77	308.19	355.60	426.72
ROCKBOURNE	115.20	134.40	153.60	172.80	211.20	249.60	288.00	345.60
SANDLEHEATH	109.43	127.67	145.91	164.15	200.63	237.11	273.58	328.30
SOPLEY	139.87	163.19	186.50	209.81	256.43	303.06	349.68	419.62
SWAY	113.91	132.89	151.88	170.86	208.83	246.80	284.77	341.72
TOTTON & ELING	169.83	198.14	226.44	254.75	311.36	367.97	424.58	509.50
WHITSBURY	110.75	129.20	147.66	166.12	203.04	239.95	276.87	332.24
WOODGREEN	113.61	132.55	151.48	170.42	208.29	246.16	284.03	340.84

being the amounts given by multiplying the amounts at 2(g) and 2(h) above by the number which, in the proportion set out in Section 5(1) of the Act is applicable to dwellings listed in a particular valuation band divided by the number which in that proportion is applicable to dwellings listed in valuation band D, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 36(1) of the Act, as the amounts to be taken into account for the year in respect of categories of dwellings listed in different valuation bands.

- (3) That it be noted that for the year 2008/09 the Hampshire County Council, the Hampshire Police Authority and the Hampshire Fire and Rescue Authority have stated the following amounts in precepts issued to the Council, in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, for each of the categories of dwellings shown below: -

PRECEPTING AUTHORITY

PRECEPTING AUTHORITY	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL	666.00	777.00	888.00	999.00	1,221.00	1,443.00	1,665.00	1,998.00
HAMPSHIRE POLICE AUTHORITY	90.36	105.42	120.48	135.54	165.66	195.78	225.90	271.08
HAMPSHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE AUTHORITY	38.82	45.29	51.76	58.23	71.17	84.11	97.05	116.46
	795.18	927.71	1,060.24	1,192.77	1,457.83	1,722.89	1,987.95	2,385.54

- (4) That, having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 2(i) and 3 above, the Council, in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the following amounts as the amounts of council tax for the year 2008/09 for each of the categories of dwellings shown on the next page: -

PART OF THE COUNCIL'S AREA

LOCAL COUNCIL AREA	A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
ASHURST & COLBURY	910.67	1,062.45	1,214.23	1,366.01	1,669.57	1,973.13	2,276.68	2,732.02
BEAULIEU	906.05	1,057.05	1,208.06	1,359.07	1,661.09	1,963.10	2,265.12	2,718.14
BOLDRE	905.65	1,056.60	1,207.54	1,358.48	1,660.36	1,962.25	2,264.13	2,716.96
BRAMSHAW	903.99	1,054.65	1,205.32	1,355.98	1,657.31	1,958.64	2,259.97	2,711.96
BRANSGORE	929.50	1,084.42	1,239.33	1,394.25	1,704.08	2,013.92	2,323.75	2,788.50
BREAMORE	908.81	1,060.27	1,211.74	1,363.21	1,666.15	1,969.08	2,272.02	2,726.42
BROCKENHURST	911.33	1,063.21	1,215.10	1,366.99	1,670.77	1,974.54	2,278.32	2,733.98
BURLEY	902.82	1,053.29	1,203.76	1,354.23	1,655.17	1,956.11	2,257.05	2,708.46
COPYTHORNE	899.87	1,049.85	1,199.83	1,349.81	1,649.77	1,949.73	2,249.68	2,699.62
DAMERHAM	909.79	1,061.42	1,213.05	1,364.68	1,667.94	1,971.20	2,274.47	2,729.36
DENNY LODGE	909.49	1,061.07	1,212.65	1,364.23	1,667.39	1,970.55	2,273.72	2,728.46
EAST BOLDRE	914.63	1,067.06	1,219.50	1,371.94	1,676.82	1,981.69	2,286.57	2,743.88
ELLINGHAM HARBRIDGE & I	907.14	1,058.33	1,209.52	1,360.71	1,663.09	1,965.47	2,267.85	2,721.42
EXBURY & LEPE	897.22	1,046.76	1,196.29	1,345.83	1,644.90	1,943.98	2,243.05	2,691.66
FAWLEY	954.63	1,113.74	1,272.84	1,431.95	1,750.16	2,068.37	2,386.58	2,863.90
FORDINGBRIDGE	938.29	1,094.68	1,251.06	1,407.44	1,720.20	2,032.97	2,345.73	2,814.88
GODSHILL	921.39	1,074.96	1,228.52	1,382.09	1,689.22	1,996.35	2,303.48	2,764.18
HALE	913.91	1,066.22	1,218.54	1,370.86	1,675.50	1,980.13	2,284.77	2,741.72
HORDLE	917.07	1,069.91	1,222.76	1,375.60	1,681.29	1,986.98	2,292.67	2,751.20
HYDE	902.16	1,052.52	1,202.88	1,353.24	1,653.96	1,954.68	2,255.40	2,706.48
HYPHE & DIBDEN	939.59	1,096.19	1,252.79	1,409.39	1,722.59	2,035.79	2,348.98	2,818.78
LYMINGTON & PENNINGTON	948.05	1,106.05	1,264.06	1,422.07	1,738.09	2,054.10	2,370.12	2,844.14
LYNDHURST	913.75	1,066.05	1,218.34	1,370.63	1,675.21	1,979.80	2,284.38	2,741.26
MARCHWOOD	955.73	1,115.01	1,274.30	1,433.59	1,752.17	2,070.74	2,389.32	2,867.18
MARTIN	909.04	1,060.55	1,212.05	1,363.56	1,666.57	1,969.59	2,272.60	2,727.12
MILFORD-ON-SEA	914.35	1,066.74	1,219.13	1,371.52	1,676.30	1,981.08	2,285.87	2,743.04
MINSTEAD	908.05	1,059.39	1,210.73	1,362.07	1,664.75	1,967.43	2,270.12	2,724.14
NETLEY MARSH	901.42	1,051.66	1,201.89	1,352.13	1,652.60	1,953.08	2,253.55	2,704.26
NEW MILTON	925.18	1,079.38	1,233.57	1,387.77	1,696.16	2,004.56	2,312.95	2,775.54
RINGWOOD	937.42	1,093.66	1,249.89	1,406.13	1,718.60	2,031.08	2,343.55	2,812.26
ROCKBOURNE	910.38	1,062.11	1,213.84	1,365.57	1,669.03	1,972.49	2,275.95	2,731.14
SANDLEHEATH	904.61	1,055.38	1,206.15	1,356.92	1,658.46	1,960.00	2,261.53	2,713.84
SOPLEY	935.05	1,090.90	1,246.74	1,402.58	1,714.26	2,025.95	2,337.63	2,805.16
SWAY	909.09	1,060.60	1,212.12	1,363.63	1,666.66	1,969.69	2,272.72	2,727.26
TOTTON & ELING	965.01	1,125.85	1,286.68	1,447.52	1,769.19	2,090.86	2,412.53	2,895.04
WHITSBURY	905.93	1,056.91	1,207.90	1,358.89	1,660.87	1,962.84	2,264.82	2,717.78
WOODGREEN	908.79	1,060.26	1,211.72	1,363.19	1,666.12	1,969.05	2,271.98	2,726.38

CHAIRMAN

(DEMOCRAT/CL250208/MINUTES.DOC)

The complex social changes have caused the Administration to further refine our corporate objectives and this impacts on management of the Councils finances.

To an outsider the New Forest governance arrangements must seem a confusing place. The Verderers, the Agisters, the Forestry Commission, the National Park Authority, the Parish Councils and the County Council are all part of this process with us. And then there is the New Forest Consultative Panel bringing together its members with their sectional interests. Each has an important part to play in respect of their particular objectives. But it is you as the ward councillor, the only one elected by your local residents that must take the lead in combining all their efforts to the best advantage of our local community. It is important that we remind them all of this, that it is the elected New Forest District Council that serves the whole community, that provides all the services needed, and that leads our community partnerships. Never has this overall leadership been more important in helping meet the needs of an ageing population living longer, a youth sector bombarded with a consumer led demand culture for instant gratification, a shortage of affordable housing aggravated by profit greed and a local charitable organisations struggling in a welter or new well meaning regulations which simply hinder their efforts to the point of exhaustion. Yes the need for community leadership from you the elected council has seldom been more important. Others may be more involved in conservation for example, or forestry for example, or countryside activities for example, but you are more involved in communities as a whole and community leadership.

When a large tanker at sea needs to changes its direction, a small adjustment in the rudder makes little difference at first and it takes a while before the tanker is going in a new direction, but it will.

NFDC is like that tanker. We have a gross budget in excess of £75million. To place this in perspective the National Park gross budget is £4m less then any one of a dozen of our budget holders. We finance 90% of all CAB costs and we have dozens of community partnerships. A small change in what we do makes a difference to all these organisations. So we are making some small but significant adjustments to what we do. We are going to be more involved in partnerships aimed at helping older people live comfortably and we are going to be involved in younger people have facilities and assistance in meeting their needs, and we are going to place more emphasis on their employment prospects. We shall be taking more of a lead on these matters and our revised corporate plan will reflect that leadership role more overtly. Some examples.

We financed the study into how the Fenwick hospital building could continue its role for the community's healthcare in a changing environment. We helped their £750,000 bid to the NHS which was successful, and now they are on their way to providing necessary ancillary health care to the community. Milford and Hythe are both looking promising too at this stage with different uses being studied. As far as young people are concerned we continue to work with Totton and Brockenhurst College where we are on both Boards. Our Capital Programme reflects the extensions to health centres to accommodate the 816 club and we seek additional playing space through our LDF. But equally important is their need for future employment. Our sustainable tourism work has helped many young people work in that field. We have rightly to be proud of the national and international awards won by our Tourism section and Cllr Rickman is to be congratulated for his past efforts in this. But the time has come to widen the scope of that excellence into other economic activities as well. Hence the small change in portfolio responsibilities last year. A small change on the rudder but one which will I hope have large beneficial outcomes for the employment of our young as we seek to embrace the same ethos across the other employment sectors that we have in Tourism.

My appeal last year for assistance on providing more affordable housing has had some returns. A few parishes have come forward with some thoughts and our housing team is working with them to see how we can develop these with housing associations. You are all by now very well aware of the shortfall of housing finance and the land scarcity so I won't dwell on that further other than to say we have some excellent staff and a very enthusiastic portfolio holder working on this.

Dave Yates is realigning the corporate structure to meet these new challenges. Senior director appointments will reflect that and we welcome John Mascall to his new post and Bob who joins us soon to his new post. Service departments are being changed, but realigned to the portfolio holder objectives so that the full efforts of the Council are focused more clearly behind our major corporate objectives.

This also will save us money on salaries and some of those savings have been reflected in the expenditure proposals that you have been studying in committees and Panels. So our budget this year begins to reflect some of the objectives I mentioned earlier.

Which brings me now to our financial situation which Colin Wise and others have worked on so hard in the last 6 months and to whom I am very grateful indeed.

More unknowns this year than usually.

Bus subsidy problem.

We have increased the overall budget for 08/9 by £500k, from the original budget set for 07/8. If there had been no extension to the scheme we would have increased the budget by £200k anyway, to reflect the current year's actual usage and fares. Therefore, our best estimate at this stage of the cost of the scheme extension is £300k. This is comprised of additional costs of £793k offset by additional specific Government Grant of £493k. The grant level is the highest level available to us from the four funding allocation models the Govt considered.

With regard to the estimated additional costs to be incurred, our estimates are based on the second highest of the four options of reimbursement rates to the bus operators. The highest option would increase costs by a further c£100k. My understanding is that discussions are still taking place with the bus operators over the reimbursement rates that should apply for 06/7 and 07/8 and therefore it may be some time before the 08/9 rates are agreed. The other factor which we are not yet aware of is the actual number of users of the new service.

You may recall that when we set the budgets for the existing scheme we had assumed that additional grant received within RSG would exceed additional costs by c£200k and therefore the initial additional £200k budget provision that we were going to put into the 08/9 budget would basically have balanced the books against the grant received.

Underspend for 2008 has largely been due to the Senior Management restructure and will be addressed in the budget.

However there have been no revenue cuts in front line services or no reductions in capital programme.

Funds will be directed for the continuation of our 816 programme and our one-site investigation.

There has been development of our updated corporate plan with the additional accent on youth and older people eg Fenwick hospital.

It is with the various factors in mind that the Conservative Group feel that the Council Tax should not exceed 3.5% and therefore I propose changes to the recommendation in the report to reflect this.

Lib Dem alternative budget 2008/09.

No one can dispute that we have the privilege of living in one of the most pleasant and desirable parts of the country and that in general, residents acknowledge that they have good services.

Nevertheless, councillors tend to hear loud and clear when services do not live up to the standards that are expected and our credibility as elected representatives, empowered to administer and scrutinise many of the public services they receive is damaged every time we try to defend the indefensible or put the blame elsewhere.

They also know only too well that many of the decisions made by local councils are not made openly, as a result of debate in the council chamber, but behind closed doors in group meetings or when the cabinet meets informally. They would love to see scrutiny working effectively, but they know it's not, because of political inconvenience.

That is why the job of opposition is so important. It's up to us to ensure that alternative views are aired in public. It's up to us to challenge those councillors who say one thing in scrutiny meetings but then vote to the contrary once the group has met. It's up to us to speak up for issues that have been sidelined because they are not politically convenient.....and that is what the Liberal Democrat budget will challenge you to consider.

We work hard across parties to achieve improvement in many areas, but there are other areas where we appear to differ. One of these is our commitment for the council to lead by example, especially on the controversial issue of climate change.

So what would the Lib Dems do?

Well first we'd make a commitment to a maximum 2.8% tax increase (that's an increase of £4.02 on a Band D property.) Then we'd set about making sure the money was spent through the council leading by example.

Admittedly there's a lot of stuff we've got little room to manoeuvre on, for example the new national concessionary fares scheme which has caused so much kerfuffle so far because we really don't know what the implications will be. But otherwise, where do the greatest priorities lie?

We believe these lie in creating the best chance for the future of the area and the people who live in it. The actions we take now are the best way of protecting our assets for the future and issues around climate change can no longer be sidelined. We know that residents in the district want to take personal responsibility because they've told us so, and because they have demonstrated their commitment, for instance in recycling year in, year out. The council itself also needs to take firm action to commit to a reduction in carbon emissions. So

many of our proposals make up an unashamedly 'green budget' through actions, not words. Furthermore we'll show that this is also affordable.

Budget proposals.

Table 1.

First and foremost, we need to save energy and a fantastic way of achieving this is to do more to improve our recycling rates.

Last year we challenged the council to introduce kerbside collection of glass. We submitted a properly costed proposal, which the then portfolio holder dismissed as ill thought out. Well he was wrong and our figures have been re-tested with officers and still hold up. Part year cost for the coming year will be £122K. Full year costs will have to be borne in future years, but these can be partly offset though increased grant income.

Some members and officers of this council are enthusiastically embracing the need to reduce our carbon footprint, currently by conducting a green audit. Despite the crucial importance of this work it's being done with absolutely no enabling budget and therefore too slowly. The Leader has made it clear that any initiatives generated will have to take their chances against other proposals during the yearly budget cycle. There is clearly no serious commitment from the Cabinet on this. The initiative needs proper resources and so our budget includes some.

Then we come to the council's somewhat contradictory policy on sun beds in our own health and leisure centres. On the one hand working with health agencies, the council actively promotes healthy lifestyles through the centres, yet conveniently chooses to ignore the need to lead by example when it comes to earning money through the provision of sun beds. We believe this is totally wrong and so would remove these, albeit at the cost of £40K a year. I have no doubt that the vacated space is marketable and I anticipate this loss of income would only be temporary.

For the past 2 or 3 years, some members of this council have been granted individual sums of money to spend as they see fit within their communities. Although they are called rural assistance grants they are clearly no such thing. Even the relevant scrutiny panel wishes to see this position regularised, recognising the value in allowing members to provide direct financial assistance to the areas they represent. Once again we propose the extension of this scheme to all members. It will cost a total of £30K but with the withdrawal of the old 'rural' scheme, the net increase is only £16K. What's more members will be encouraged to seek to achieve a demonstrable environmental gain in deciding where to allocate their grants.

We don't believe we should be cutting back on grounds maintenance, but that any efficiencies should be put back as service enhancement, so we are not prepared to make the

£12K cut proposed by the Administration. We also propose a very modest investment of £5K to enable the implementation of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act.

I promised that our initiatives would be affordable and so to a great extent they will be balanced by savings and efficiencies. I was amazed to read in the press that Cllr Kendal gave warning at a recent cabinet meeting that various grant and community assistance budgets might have to be cut to reduce the council tax increase, but apparently was still happy to see this council spending money on publicity, including the New Forest Show! I appreciate that some savings have already been identified for the corporate communications budget, but we would require another £25K saving.

I've already referred to the cessation of the old rural assistance grants budget which will save £16K. We would also look to achieving even greater savings in internal budgets wherever possible though effectively freezing the supplies and services uplift proposed in the official budget. We reckon there's something like £80K that this would release.

One of the 'elephants in the room' for this council has been for many years the need to tackle the costs and inefficiencies of supporting two large office bases. At last there is hope that the problem is going to be tackled. Meanwhile the council tax payer must bear the expense and officers will continue to commute between Lyndhurst and Lymington on a daily basis for various meetings. It has been estimated that in all, officers travel costs amount to around £300K a year. Obviously, much of that is unavoidable as travel is needed for site visits and other operational reasons, but in the interests of controlling our contribution to climate change unnecessary journeys must be avoided. We calculate that £50K could be saved by using technological alternatives to travel. If improved IT has meant I have been able to make fewer journeys on council business others must be able to do at least as well. Indeed, I also challenge all members to make a 10% reduction in their council mileage during the current calendar year.

I spoke earlier about priorities. It seems that the highest priority for the Administration is to salt money away 'just in case'. This council is so risk averse that it has millions hidden away in case of meltdown. Year on year extra money has been built into budgets to cater for the worst case and year on year it hasn't been needed. It seems almost like an accident that the council hasn't under spent this year and is likely to break even!

Table ". Under spends.

It is quite correct to keep some money in reserve but this should be balanced against the primary purpose of this councils' existence. We don't know exactly how much the concessionary fares scheme is going to cost the district this year. Several scenarios have been proposed, ranging from under £100K to £500K. The Administration has opted to build £300K extra into the budget but we believe that this is over the top. Our proposal would be prudent, but not obsessively so. £200K is a reasonable contingency sum to budget for. In the

event that more is needed this would be a temporary call on reserves and allow more accurate forecasting for subsequent years.

Similarly, hidden in the figures presented by Cllr Kendal is £100K of revenue to top up the capital reserves. Surely, in a year when you are asking for more than an inflationary increase in council tax, this is not a year to be hiding money away for a rainy day. We believe the money is needed for services not the piggy bank.

I've still got £60K to go to reach my goal of a 2.8% increase limit. I don't have a problem with this. As I've said previously, NFDC has a long and undistinguished history of significant under spends, so it's likely that some if not all of this will simply not be needed. If it is, then that is exactly what reserves are for.

So there you are, a budget that's more about what the council can do, rather than what it can't do. A budget that demonstrates a real vision for the environmental future of the district and challenges us to do our bit to tackle climate change. Its time this council stopped avoiding the issue and started tackling some of these very difficult changes that are needed for the future. And that's the challenge we intend holding you to.

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT ALTERNATIVE
BUDGET PROPOSALS 2008/09

<u>Additional Bids</u>	£'000
Kerbside Glass Collection	122
Green Audit/Climate Change	50
Removal of Sunbeds	40
Councillors Community Grants Scheme	30
Grounds Maintenance	12
Clean Neighbourhoods	<u>5</u>
TOTAL ADDITIONAL BIDS	259

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT ALTERNATIVE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2008/09

<u>Additional Savings</u>	£'000	£'000
Capital Financing Provision	-100	
Concessionary Travel	-100	
Reduction in Inflation Allowance	-80	
Travel Expenses	-50	
Publicity	-25	
Rural Assistance Grant	<u>-14</u>	
TOTAL ADDITIONAL SAVINGS	<u>-369</u>	
TOTAL NET BIDS/SAVINGS		-110
● Contribution to/from(-) Reserves		-60
● Council Tax Reduction (4.45% to 2.8%)		<u>170</u>
		<u><u>0</u></u>

Note: Kerbside glass collection costs would increase to £300k in a full year

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT ALTERNATIVE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2008/09

GENERAL FUND BUDGET UNDERSPENDS SINCE 2002/03:

2002/03

NFDC Council Tax increase	9.4%
Underspend	£531,000 (Equivalent to 7.1% increase)
Increase actually needed	2.3%

2003/04

NFDC Council Tax increase	3.5%
Underspend	£356,000 (Equivalent to 3.5% increase)
Increase actually needed	0.0%

2004/05

NFDC Council Tax increase	4.9%
Underspend	£1,303,000 (Equivalent to 14.9% increase)
Increase actually needed	-10.0%

2005/06

NFDC Council Tax increase	4.79%
Underspend	£979,000 (Equivalent to 10.5% increase)
Increase actually needed	-5.71%

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT ALTERNATIVE BUDGET PROPOSALS 2008/09

GENERAL FUND BUDGET UNDERSPENDS SINCE 2002/03:

2006/07

NFDC Council Tax increase	2.75%
Underspend	£1,753,000 (Equivalent to 18.0 % increase)
Increase actually needed	-15.25%

2007/08

NFDC Council Tax increase	1.9%
Underspend	£18,000 (Equivalent to 0.18% increase)
Increase actually needed	1.72%

TOTAL UNDERSPEND: £4.94m