

15 DECEMBER 2008

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 15 December 2008.

- p Cllr P R Woods - Chairman
- p Cllr L R Puttock - 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 G F Dart
- p S P Davies
- p W H Dow
- 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 J D Heron
- p P E Hickman
- p Mrs J A Hoare
- p Mrs M D Holding
- p J A G Hutchins
- p Mrs P Jackman
- p M J Kendal
- p C Lagdon
- p Mrs M E Lewis
- p Mrs K J Lord
- p Mrs P J Lovelace
- p B D Lucas
- e Mrs A E McEvoy
- p Mrs M McLean

Councillors:

- p G J Parkes
- p Sqn Ldr B M F Pemberton
- p J Penwarden
- e M P Reid
- e A W Rice
- p B Rickman
- p W S Rippon-Swaine
- p Mrs M J Robinson
- p 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
- p M H Thierry
- p 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
- e A Weeks
- e Dr M N Whitehead
- p C A Wise
- p Mrs P A Wyeth

Officers Attending:

D Yates, R Jackson, J Mascal, Miss G O'Rourke, Mrs A Righton, Mrs R Rutins and Ms M Stephens.

47. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllrs Mrs Brooks, Hutchins, Mrs McLean, Parkes, Rickman, Mrs Robinson, Vickers, M Wade and Ward declared interests in Minute No 50.

48. MINUTES (REPORT A).

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 27 October 2008, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

49. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Chairman announced that he had attended a variety of events in his position as Chairman since the last Council meeting.

He mentioned the Holly and the Ivy event held the previous weekend at Appletree Court. This had been well attended despite the very cold weather but he was disappointed not to see more councillors there. The Chairman thanked the employees who had helped at the event especially in light of the cold weather.

He had together with Cllr Puttock, the Chief Executive and other senior officers, the previous week, welcomed about 60 volunteers from various voluntary bodies operating within the New Forest to an informal reception at Appletree Court. This had enabled him to thank all concerned on behalf of the Council for the work that they did to enrich the lives of many residents. The event also enabled the Council to assist in the launch of the 'ONE COMPACT' for Hampshire and the mini guide for the voluntary services, which had resulted from the Council and the voluntary sector working together over a long period. All concerned felt that this had been a very successful event. The Chairman hoped that this would become an annual event.

The Chairman and his consort, together with Cllr Puttock, had that day entertained 70 veterans to a Christmas buffet at Dibden Golf Centre. This had now become an annual event which was very much appreciated by the Veterans of the New Forest.

The Chairman announced that on Saturday 28 March 2009 he would be holding a Chairman's Charity Evening Dinner and Dance at Hoburne Bashley. A leaflet detailing the event had been circulated to all members. The cost of the event would be £27.50 for a 3 course meal and dancing. Other entertainment included a magician. All profit from this event would go to the Chairman's two charities, Oakhaven Hospice and First Opportunities. The Chairman hoped to see members at the event in support of the Chairman's charities. Further information, together with tickets, could be obtained from Donna Miller in Democratic Services.

50. REPORTS OF CABINET.

Cllrs Mrs McLean, Parkes, Mrs Robinson, Vickers and M Wade declared personal interests in Item 1 of the Report of Cabinet dated 3 December as members of Hythe and Dibden Parish Council. They did not consider their interests to be prejudicial and remained in the meeting, took part in the debate and voted.

Cllrs Hutchins and Ward declared personal interests in Item 1 of the Report of Cabinet dated 3 December as members of New Milton Town Council. They did not consider their interests to be prejudicial and remained in the meeting, took part in the debate and voted.

Cllrs Mrs Brooks and Rickman declared personal and prejudicial interests in Item 7 of the Report of the Cabinet dated 3 December as beach hut owners. There was no discussion on this item.

Cllr Rickman, the Leader of the Council and the Chairman of the Cabinet, presented the report of the meetings held on 5 November and 3 December 2008.

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

(a) Proposed Extensions to the Council's Public CCTV System

In paying tribute to the work of the Portfolio Holder and officers on this issue a member expressed the view that CCTV was an effective toolkit in tackling anti-social behaviour. Nonetheless he felt that this was just one of a number of measures to improve community safety. He felt that if the Council was determined to deliver an adequate level of community safety and enhance the quality of life for residents a number of measures would need to be delivered and resourced adequately.

(b) Notice of Motion – Speed Limit on A31, Ringwood

Cllr Thierry requested that the letter submitted to the Highways Agency be circulated to all members of the Council for information. It was agreed that an officer progress this request.

(c) Fees and Charges

A member noted that the Council had decided to approach the reduction in VAT in a pragmatic way but draw attention to the effect of not passing on the reduction for car parking charges. She asked whether the Leader was prepared to be transparent about the extra income that was being generated. The Leader of the Council said that the decision making process had been clear and transparent.

RESOLVED:

That the reports be received and the recommendations be adopted.

51. REPORT OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE.

Cllr Hutchins, Vice-Chairman of the Standards Committee, presented the report of the meeting held on 28 November 2008.

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

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendation adopted.

52. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22.

There were none.

53. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' QUESTION TIME.

Question from: Cllr D Harrison to Cllr Beck, Crime and Disorder Portfolio Holder

“Does the Portfolio Holder for Crime and Disorder expect the levels of crime and anti social behaviour in New Forest towns to decrease in future months”?

Answer:

In response to the question the Portfolio Holder said that it was difficult to predict the future but, using the evidence and statistics available, the Council could forward plan anticipated crime types. Crime changes were expected due to the economic trends and the Council had been working with other agencies within the crime and disorder reduction partnership to monitor crime reports and adjust priorities and work according to the need. To date the New Forest had had good results in reducing crime by 17% over the last three years but particularly in the last year there had been reduced anti-social behaviour and thefts from vehicles.

The Council's latest assessment had indicated a need to adjust the focus to include acquisitive crimes such as metal thefts and shoplifting but also to focus on further reducing the availability of drugs in New Forest communities. The strategic assessment was a public document as was available to all members of the public.

All agencies conducted their usual business in conjunction with the priorities of the Partnership. The Police were leading on a major drive to raise awareness of burglary and the preventative steps that could be taken. This would start after Christmas and would be a major focus in the New Forest. NFDC would be assisting with the redesign and production and distribution of packs entitled “Keep Unwanted Visitors Out’ to members of the general public, providing them with information on how better to protect their property.

The Portfolio Holder asked members whether they ensured that their back doors were locked before answering a knock or ring at the front door as this was a method used by criminals working in pairs to access people's properties.

The Portfolio Holder felt that, as elected representatives of communities, councillors had a duty to work to prevent crime as well as reinforcing the message that New Forest was a desirable place to live – as one of the safest, cleanest places to reside and work.

NFDC, the Police and other partners would continue to address any challenges that might confront them in the future on behalf of the community with the aim of decreasing crime.

In response to a supplementary question regarding the transparency of the decision to reduce the District Council's funding for Accredited Community Safety Officers in the Totton area, the Portfolio Holder said that the decision-

making process regarding this issue was transparent and had been discussed at a number of meetings. The reduction would not mean a drop in the service or impact on the security of residents.

54. THE COUNCIL TAX 2009/2010 SETTING THE TAX BASE (REPORT B).

Members considered the calculation of the Council Tax Base in so far as it related to the Council function.

RESOLVED:

That, in so far as the Council is empowered to do so by law:

- (a) The calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2009/10 be approved; and
- (b) Pursuant to this report and in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (Amendment) Regulations 2003, the amount calculated by this Council as its council tax base for the year 2009/10 be as follows and as detailed in Appendix 1 to Report B to the Council.

PARISH/TOWN TAX BASE	09/10
Ashurst & Colbury	925.0
Beaulieu	518.8
Boldre	1050.0
Bramshaw	345.7
Bransgore	1869.8
Breamore	180.0
Brockenhurst	1844.8
Burley	781.0
Copythorne	1221.5
Damerham	239.9
Denny Lodge	155.7
East Boldre	397.4
Ellingham, Harbridge & Ibsley	595.3
Exbury & Lepe	110.4
Fawley	4864.3
Fordingbridge	2383.0
Godshill	213.9
Hale	267.8
Hordle	2434.9
Hyde	506.9
Hythe & Dibden	7786.9
Lymington & Pennington	7074.9
Lyndhurst	1397.7
Marchwood	2118.9
Martin	188.5
Milford on Sea	2735.2
Minstead	361.6
Netley Marsh	829.8
New Milton	10862.8

PARISH/TOWN TAX BASE	09/10
Ringwood	5447.7
Rockbourne	166.3
Sandleheath	273.9
Sopley	300.9
Sway	1679.9
Totton & Eling	9872.3
Whitsbury	102.8
Woodgreen	244.7
Whole District	72350.9

55. NOTTINGHAM DECLARATION (REPORT C).

The Council considered signing the Nottingham Declaration which was a voluntary pledge to address the issues of climate change.

Members of the Council welcomed the document as they felt that it would assist the Council in engaging with the community and partners in driving its green agenda.

Some members also expressed the view that as environmental issues were of key importance to the residents of the New Forest, elected councillors should promote activities on climate change on behalf of their constituents.

Members commended the work of the Green Audit Project Board and the work of officers in developing innovative ideas for reducing the Council's carbon emissions and improving the sustainability of the New Forest.

On the other hand, other members expressed the view that the Council could have little impact on resolving issues of climate change and considered that there was evidence to suggest that current global warming theories were flawed. Some scientists now believed the planet was cooling rather than warming.

Some members expressed the view that in the current economic climate the money used to fund green initiatives could be better spent elsewhere such as reducing the numbers of those in fuel poverty. A view was expressed that resources directed at climate change initiatives should only be spent where they would add value and make an impact.

Members on the whole felt that as the residents of the New Forest, particularly young people, were keen for the Council to take measures to mitigate climate change, it was the Council's duty to make conscious efforts to work towards reducing carbon emissions when delivering services. Members of the Council therefore supported the signing of the Nottingham Declaration.

Upon a vote it was:

RESOLVED:

That the Council sign the Nottingham Declaration on climate change.

CHAIRMAN