

26 OCTOBER 2009

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 26 October 2009.

- p Cllr L R Puttock - Chairman
- p Cllr Mrs P A Wyeth – 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
- p P C Greenfield
- p C J Harrison
- p D Harrison
- p E J Heron
- p J D Heron
- e P E Hickman
- p Mrs A J Hoare
- p 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

Councillors:

- p G J Parkes
- p Sqn Ldr B M F Pemberton
- p J Penwarden
- p M P Reid
- p 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
- Lt Col M J Shand
- p A E J Shotter
- p Mrs B Smith
- p Mrs S I Snowden
- p 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
- p A Weeks
- p Dr M N Whitehead
- p C A Wise
- e P R Woods

Officers Attending:

D Yates, J Mascall, Miss G O'Rourke, Mrs R Rutins and Ms M Stephens.

24. MINUTES.

The Leader of the Council congratulated the Chairman on the success of his civic day and his efforts to promote local produce and the local economy. In that vein, the Leader announced that, in an effort to invigorate the local economy during the recession, the Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder had made a decision, under his delegated powers, to suspend car parking charges in town and village car parks for half of one day in the 4 week period immediately prior to Christmas Eve 2009. Parish and Town Councils had been invited to indicate when they wished the suspension to apply in their areas.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 September 2009, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

25. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Chairman reported that he had attended over 20 events as the Council's representative since the last Council meeting.

Civic Day

The Chairman reported that his Civic Day on 18 September had been highly successful. This year, the Council had showcased Tools for Self Reliance in Netley Marsh, the recycling plant in Marchwood, Palace House and Motor Museum in Beaulieu and Bucklers Hard. Every opportunity had been taken to promote local produce by ensuring that wherever possible the food and drink provided to guests was locally sourced.

The Chairman thanked all involved in the organisation of the day.

Halloween – Saturday 31 October

On Saturday 31 October the Council would be hosting a Halloween event for the young people and their parents at Appletree Court.

The event would give the Council the opportunity to engage with the young people of the district. They would be able to find out more about the Council's leisure centres and clubs for young people, learn about recycling, community safety and more.

Hampshire and IOW Youth Clubs Awards Ceremony

The Chairman had been delighted to attend the AGM of the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Youth Clubs on Thursday, 15 October.

There were approximately 17,500 young people and 900 adult support workers involved in youth clubs in Hampshire and the Isle of Wight and the Chairman had been pleased to be able to give his support. He congratulated the Garage Youth Club in Totton, which had won the 'Club of the Year' award.

Remembrance Day – Sunday 8 November 2009

New Forest District Council would be formally represented at a number of Remembrance Sunday services. The Chairman would attend the ceremony and would lay a wreath at St Matthews Church, Netley Marsh alongside Deputy Lieutenant Mrs Drummond OBE, the Vice-Chairman Cllr Mrs Wyeth would do likewise at Lyndhurst and the Leader Cllr Rickman at Sway.

The Stroke Association Recognition Ceremony – Tuesday, 17 November 2009

The Chairman would attend a recognition ceremony hosted by the Stroke Association (one of the Chairman's charities) on 17 November when volunteers of the Southampton and New Forest area would be given certificates and awards in recognition and appreciation of their dedication and hard work for the charity.

26. REPORTS OF CABINET AND COMMITTEES.

Cllr Rickman, the Leader of the Council and the Chairman of the Cabinet, presented the report of the meeting held on 7 October 2009.

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

New Forest District Council Local Development Framework – Core Strategy for the New Forest District outside of the New Forest National Park

Members thanked officers for their hard work and efforts in developing a robust core strategy. Some members in particular were pleased with the affordable housing element of the document and hoped that this would increase available housing in the district.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendations be adopted.

27. REPORT OF GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE.

Cllr Rice, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, presented the report of the meeting held on 11 September 2009.

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

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendation adopted.

28. REPORT OF STANDARDS COMMITTEE.

Cllr Hutchins, Vice-Chairman of the Committee, presented the report of the meeting held on 25 September 2009.

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

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendations adopted.

29. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22.

There were none.

30. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' QUESTION TIME.

Question from: Cllr D Harrison to Cllr Mrs Brooks, Leisure, Culture and Youth Matters Portfolio Holder

“Great damage has been done to the reputation of this Council by what has become widely known as the ‘Slippery Floor Fiasco’. The District Auditor did not establish who was responsible for making the key decisions which resulted in the loss of over £300,000 of taxpayers’ money. Most Council members were completely unaware of what was happening behind the scenes and recognise that there are still questions that remain unanswered. Would it not be in the best interests of this Council and the public it serves, to agree to a proper independent inquiry?”

Answer:

The Portfolio Holder reminded members that the Council had carried out a very open and public review of this issue. A detailed report had been presented to a special joint meeting of two Review Panels. This had been held in public and the findings were a public document.

The independent Audit Commission had undertaken a detailed review and the District Auditor had presented his findings to a joint meeting of the Standards Committee and the Final Accounts Committee. This meeting had also been held in public and the minutes were a public document.

The Corporate Overview Panel would be considering a report at their November meeting to review the actions implemented to improve Council processes and systems. This would be a public meeting.

It was not in the best interests of the taxpayers for the Council to continue to use its resources to undertake further reviews on a matter which had been very publicly and independently scrutinised.

The Portfolio Holder suggested that if members were genuinely concerned about the reputation of the Council, notice be taken of the comments made by the District Auditor at the Final Accounts meeting, which placed the Council’s performance in the premier division of Local Authorities in the way that it used and managed its resources to deliver value for money services to residents of the New Forest.

In response to a supplementary question as to whether the Council was being complacent in not holding an independent inquiry, the Portfolio Holder disagreed and stated that the matter had been scrutinised in public at various meetings. The Corporate Overview Panel in November would be reviewing the action plan arising from the internal investigation to ensure that appropriate processes were in place to avoid similar situations in the future.

31. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS.

No proposed changes were reported.

CHAIRMAN