

19 JULY 2010

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 19 July 2010.

- p Cllr Mrs P A Wyeth – Chairman
- p Cllr J Penwarden – Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

- p G C Beck
- p D A Britton
- p Mrs D M Brooks
- Mrs F Carpenter
- p Mrs J L Cleary
- e G F Dart
- p S P Davies
- p W H Dow
- e L T Dunsdon
- p Ms L C Ford
- p H F Forse
- P C Greenfield
- p C J Harrison
- p D Harrison
- p E J Heron
- p J D Heron
- P E Hickman
- Mrs A J Hoare
- p Mrs M D Holding
- p J A G Hutchins
- 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
- p Mrs A E McEvoy
- p Mrs M McLean

Councillors:

- p G J Parkes
- p Sqn Ldr B M F Pemberton
- p L R Puttock
- e 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
- p Lt Col M J Shand
- e A E J Shotter
- p Mrs B Smith
- p Mrs S I Snowden
- p A J Swain
- e M H Thierry
- e A R Tinsley
- D B Tipp
- p C R Treleaven
- p F P Vickers
- M S Wade
- p S S Wade
- e R A Wappet
- p J G Ward
- p A Weeks
- p Dr M N Whitehead
- p C A Wise
- p P R Woods

Officers Attending:

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

13. MINUTES (REPORT A).

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2010 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

14. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

There were none.

15. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

Sudden death of a colleague

The Chairman announced the sad death of charity cyclist Arthur Platt, who had worked at Totton Health and Leisure Centre as a shift manager. The 37-year-old had been riding from Scotland to Cornwall to raise money for the Help for Heroes charity.

The Chairman, along with the Leader, the Portfolio Holder for Leisure, Culture and Youth Matters and the Chief Executive, had represented the Council at the funeral on 19 July.

All members stood for a minutes silence as a mark of respect.

New Forest Show

The Chairman reminded councillors that the New Forest Show would take place on 27 – 29 July.

The theme of the Council's exhibition at the show would be 'greener living'. The Council would give tips on ways to reduce energy consumption and save money. There would also be a 'good life' garden for ideas on what to grow at home and a cookery demo of inspiring recipes and practical suggestions for healthy meals. The Chairman encouraged all councillors to go along and support the event.

Queen's Birthday Honours

A number of people from the New Forest had been recognised in the Queen's birthday honours for their achievements and work in the community:

Ann Sevier from Fordingbridge, a former employee, had been made MBE for her services to the Police.

Donna MacNair, the first woman to be elected as a New Forest Verderer had also been made MBE for services to the New Forest area.

Sara Locock, former Chairman of the New Forest Magistrates, had been made an MBE for services to the community.

Professor John Shepherd, research fellow at the National Oceanography Centre Southampton, had been awarded a CBE for his services to science.

Other Local Awards

The Chairman was pleased to announce that there had been two finalists from the New Forest at the Hampshire Road Safety School Crossing Patrol award ceremony which she had attended. She had also attended the Hampshire Games on 18 July where Coxlease School had received gold medal in football and bronze in athletics.

Chairman's Recent Activities

The Chairman announced that she had attended various local events in her capacity as Chairman including the Milford on Sea Woman's Royal British Legion 75th Anniversary, the opening of the Scout headquarters at Foxlease; the D-Day Air memorial service at Holmsley and the New Forest Remembrance Parade & Open Air Service at Lepe Country Park.

Chairman's Future Events

The Chairman announced events including the following: -

1 October – supper dance at Lyndhurst Community Centre.

23 November – dinner at New Milton Conservative Club.

11 February – fashion show (details would be circulated in due course).

From November collection bins would be placed around Appletree Court for Councillors, staff and the public to donate goods for the Basics Bank appeal.

The Chairman hoped that members would support these events.

16. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.**Publication of Food Standards Agency Audit of the Food Safety Service**

The Leader announced that the Council's Environmental Health service, which provided the food safety service, had recently been audited by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). This had been a formal audit of the statutory function which examined the systems and procedures used for the inspection of food businesses. The Leader was pleased to report that the findings had been very positive and confirmed that the service had been well run and was effective in achieving food law compliance in New Forest businesses.

The report had been published and could be viewed on the FSA website.

The audit confirmed that competent and trained officers operated a highly effective regulatory service. Residents and visitors could therefore be confident that there was good consumer protection within the New Forest District.

The audit recognised that officers had a supportive working relationship with food business operators, and that a progressive approach to enforcement, in line with the enforcement policy, had been an effective means to achieve compliance with food law.

17. REPORT OF GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE.

Cllr Puttock, Chairman of the Committee, presented the report of the meeting held on 11 June 2010.

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

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendations be adopted.

18. REPORTS OF CABINET.

The Leader of the Council, as Chairman of the Cabinet, presented the reports of the Cabinet dated 2 June and 5 July 2010.

On the motion that the reports be received and the recommendations be adopted;

(a) Item 2 – Hampshire Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA2)

The Leader moved that in light of the fact that the Government had withdrawn the second instalment of LPSA2 reward grant which was due in 2010/11, the recommendation be withdrawn to allow the Cabinet the opportunity to reconsider the matter.

The motion was seconded, put and agreed.

(b) Item 4 – Eling Wharf and Foreshore – Contaminated Land

A member expressed concern that the Cabinet had decided not to proceed to formal determination of the land as contaminated. He felt that the Cabinet had been too lenient in their dealings with Burt Boulton Holdings Ltd (BBH) who owned the industrial site.

The Leader said that the Cabinet had taken the right decision following advice from specialist Counsel.

Other members expressed the view that Counsel's advice should be followed in allowing BBH the opportunity to carry out voluntary remedial works but that the Cabinet should closely monitor their action. Should there be any concerns regarding the works the Cabinet should reconsider the position as a matter of urgency.

RESOLVED:

That the reports be received and the recommendations be adopted subject to the following amendment: -

Item 2 – Hampshire Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA)

In light of the fact that the Government had withdrawn the second instalment of LPSA2 reward grant which was due in 2010/11, the recommendation be withdrawn to allow the Cabinet the opportunity to reconsider the matter.

19. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22.

There were none.

20. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' QUESTION TIME.

Question from: Cllr D Harrison to Cllr Mrs Holding (Employment, Health and Wellbeing Portfolio Holder)

"The Department of Health have recently published a health profile for the New Forest. The most alarming statistic is the incidence of malignant melanoma. The figures are significantly worse than the England average. We were very slow in removing the sun beds from our leisure centres. Is it possible there is a link?"

Answer:

The Hampshire PCT Public Health specialist suggested that the high rate of skin cancer for the New Forest might be because of the improved recording of cancer incidences and the fact that the New Forest was an affluent area. It had been shown that affluent people were often more careful with their health and were more regularly checked than people in less affluent areas. Affluence also often meant more trips abroad and therefore greater exposure to strong sunlight. The New Forest also had an older population and cancer incidence often increased with age.

When sunbeds were available in the Council's leisure centres, all centres policed their usage. Leisure centres were also members of the Sunbed Association which offered strict guidance on the use of beds. Everyone using the leisure centre sunbeds had a maximum of 20 sessions per year. Each session would be 3, 6 or 9 minutes duration and sessions were carefully monitored. In contrast many private owners allowed unlimited use which could have contributed to the problem.

It had been shown that over exposure to ultra violet light could cause cancer. The Council strictly monitored all sunbed usage in the leisure centres so users were not over exposed to ultra violet light. Under exposure to sunlight could also cause health problems. The Portfolio Holder concluded that this issue was about balance and common sense.

In response to a supplementary question the Portfolio Holder confirmed that there was no evidence to link the incidences of skin cancer in the New Forest to use of sun beds within the Council's leisure centres.

Question from: Cllr Weeks to Cllr Rickman, (Policy & Resources Portfolio Holder and Leader of the Council)

"The Government's coalition programme states - "We will allow councils to return to the committee system, should they wish to".

Will the leader confirm whether he is intending to take up this offer?"

Answer:

The Local Government Act 2000 required principal local authorities with populations over 85,000 to operate executive decision-making arrangements. These arrangements had to include provision for overview and scrutiny committees.

The Council was aware of the Government's commitment to allow councils to return to the Committee system. However, the Government's proposals, if they were to be introduced, would require primary legislation. Grant Shapps, the Minister for Housing and Local Government, had said that the proposals "will be included in the Localism Bill which will be introduced later in this Parliamentary session". While the Council had no firm commitment from the Government about the timing for the Bill, it was anticipated that it would be published before the end of 2010. However, it could be a further 12 months, until the end of 2011, before any of the Bill's provisions became law, and even then regulations to set out the detail of any further changes could take longer. This meant that a return to a Committee system, if indeed the option did become available, might not be permissible for some considerable time.

The decision as to whether or not the Council should abandon the current Leader/Cabinet decision-making arrangements and return to a Committee system would be for the full Council to take. However the Leader would ensure that members had every opportunity to consider options that might be available when sufficient information on the Government's proposals were known to enable consideration to be meaningful.

In response to a supplementary question the Portfolio Holder confirmed that he had no personal views on the matter. The Portfolio Holder would consider this issue in detail, along with all members, when sufficient information was available.

21. MEETING DATES FOR THE 2011/12 MUNICIPAL YEAR.**RESOLVED:**

That meetings be held on the following Mondays at 6.30 p.m.

16 May 2011 (annual meeting) (already agreed)
18 July 2011
12 September 2011
24 October 2011
12 December 2011
20 February 2012
16 April 2012
14 May 2012 (annual meeting)

22. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS.

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Mrs Wyeth be appointed to serve on the Appeals Committee in place of Cllr Russell.

CHAIRMAN

(DEMOCRAT/CL190710/MINUTES.DOC)