

18 APRIL 2011

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 18 April 2011

- 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
- p Mrs F Carpenter
- p Mrs J L Cleary
- e 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 C Greenfield
- p C J Harrison
- p D Harrison
- p E J Heron
- p J D Heron
- p P E Hickman
- p Mrs A J Hoare
- p Mrs M D Holding
- p J A G Hutchins
- e Mrs P Jackman
- p M J Kendal
- C Lagdon
- p Mrs M E Lewis
- Mrs K J Lord
- p Mrs P J Lovelace
- p B D Lucas
- p Mrs A E McEvoy
- p Mrs M McLean

Councillors:

- G J Parkes
- p Sqn Ldr B M F Pemberton
- p L R Puttock
- 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
- D J Russell
- p R F Scrivens
- p Lt Col M J Shand
- 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
- e Dr M N Whitehead
- p C A Wise
- p P R Woods
- Vacancy

Officers Attending:

D Yates and A Rogers.

53. MINUTES (REPORT A).**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 February 2011, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

54. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllrs E Heron, Kendal, Rice, Weeks, Mrs Holding, Rippon-Swaine and D Harrison declared an interest in Minute 57 (Project Integra).

55. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Chairman thanked all those who helped make her Civic Service a memorable occasion. The service was held on Sunday 13 March at St Michaels and All Angels Parish Church in Lyndhurst. There had been a good attendance from civic heads around Hampshire, as well as the Deputy Lieutenant, Mrs Sara Locock and the High Sheriff, Mr Alan Lovell.

She was also pleased to be able to attend the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Annual sports awards on 23 March and the New Forest Sports Awards on 14 March. New Forest sports champions were honoured at the awards. Robyn Smith won the Junior Volunteer Award, wheelchair rugby player Aaron Phipps won the Senior Disability Sportsman Award, and the late Terry Burton was posthumously named winner of the 'Service to Sport' Award, for his outstanding contribution to sport. His son, Jamie Burton, who was Sports and Youth Development Officer for New Forest District Council, collected the award.

Cllr Mrs Wyeth was honoured to represent New Forest District Council at the Tile Barn Activity Centre on 25 March, when the Duke of Edinburgh visited to help celebrate the Duke of Edinburgh scheme, which was a key activity at the Centre.

The Chairman had attended the New Forest East Age Concern Annual Volunteers Party to present long service awards to various volunteers. She stressed the importance of voluntary work in the community and the dependence on it.

On 2 April, the Chairman had attended a concert hosted by the Chairman of Hampshire County Council (HCC), organised by the HCC Music Service. Two Hampshire youth bands had performed a variety of music with a section of the Hampshire County Youth Orchestra, and it had been a very enjoyable evening.

The Chairman welcomed to the meeting representatives of her chosen charities, Mr Peter Haslett of New Forest Basics Bank, and Ms Gemma Sinden of the Oakhaven Hospice Trust, and presented them with cheques for monies collected during her year in office. The funds, totalling over £3000, had been raised over the year through a number of events, including the Supper Dance held at Lyndhurst Community Centre; the dinner at New Milton Conservative Club and the Pro-Am Tournament at Dibden Golf Centre. She thanked Bob Millard and Sharon Plumridge for once again supporting the Chairman's charities with the Annual Golf Event. She also wished to recognise fundraising efforts of the Veterans through their Christmas Party raffle, and the kindness of those who attended her Civic Service, for their generous donations.

56. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

The Leader had no particular announcements but was pleased to inform the meeting that the toilets at Calshot Spit would be open in time for Easter.

57. REPORTS OF CABINET, REVIEW PANEL AND COMMITTEE.**Reports of Cabinet**

Cllr E Heron declared a personal interest as a member of the Project Integra Strategic Management Board, and as a Member of Hampshire County Council. He did not consider his interest to be prejudicial and remained in the meeting to speak and vote.

Cllr Mrs Holding declared a personal interest as a deputy member of the Project Integra Strategic Management Board. She did not consider her interest prejudicial and remained in the meeting to speak and vote.

Cllr Kendal declared a personal interest as standing Vice-Chairman of the Project Integra Strategic Management Board, and in his capacity as Environment Portfolio Holder at Hampshire County Council. He did not consider his interest to be prejudicial and remained in the meeting to speak and vote.

Cllrs Rice, Weeks, Rippon-Swaine and D Harrison declared personal interests in the items concerning Project Integra, as members of Hampshire County Council. They did not consider their interest to be prejudicial and remained in the meeting to speak and vote.

The Leader of the Council, as Chairman of the Cabinet, presented the reports of Cabinet meetings held on 2 March 2011 and 6 April 2011.

On the item concerning the Senior Management Review, members paid tribute to the officers leaving the Council and retiring as a result of the review, and thanked them for their enormous contribution to the success of the Council over many years.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendations adopted.

Report of General Purposes and Licensing Committee

Cllr Penwarden, as Vice-Chairman of the Committee, presented the report of the Committee meeting held on 11 March 2011.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendations adopted.

Report of the Corporate Overview Panel

Cllr Ward, as Chairman of the Corporate Overview Panel (COP), presented the report of the Panel meeting held on 17 March 2011.

The report recommended a reduction in the number of Review Panels from seven to three, with effect from May 2011, and the creation of a Chairman and Vice-Chairman's group with a role that would include overseeing an improvement plan for the scrutiny arrangements, as well as monitoring and coordinating the work of the panels.

Doubts were expressed by some members about the likely success of the future arrangements, and felt that the reduction in the number of panels from 7 to 3 would in their view only further marginalise the role of the backbench members.

Some members felt the 'old committee system' gave greater member involvement, but it was noted that provisions in the Localism Bill meant that if desired, it would not be possible for the Council to revert to a 'committee system' until after the next ordinary election of councillors in 2015.

Cllr Mrs Robinson welcomed the report, commented that the current Scrutiny system had not been fit for purpose and hoped the new arrangements would bring about significant improvements. However she pointed out that the Group comprising the Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen of the new panels (referred to in recommendation (c)), would only involve members from one political group. She explained that, given its remit, the make-up of the Group as proposed would lack constructive challenge and she felt if the Chairman and Vice-Chairman posts were shared across political parties, it would make the arrangements more robust. She felt there had been good examples of joint working among political groups in the recent past, on various projects and scrutiny reviews, which supported this proposal. In view of this, she proposed an amendment to recommendation (c), as follows: 'That the Chairs and Vice Chairs of the scrutiny panels be chosen on a non-party political basis, based on their abilities and expertise.'

A number of members felt that that the appointment of Chairmen and Vice-Chairmen should not be done solely on political grounds, but should be in part based on experience, knowledge or expertise.

It was suggested that the new arrangements be reviewed after 18 months of operation.

Cllr Ward explained that the Task and Finish groups would allow members from across the Council to be involved in the various scrutiny projects to be undertaken and members' individual knowledge and experience could be drawn on in this way. He pointed out that many councils, including some similarly sized to this Council, had just one Scrutiny Panel, compared to the three Panels being recommended. He emphasised that one of the keys to the success of the new arrangements was new ways of working, and was equally as important as the re-structuring of the panels. He explained that the independent review of the Council's Scrutiny arrangements had been undertaken by South East Employers (SEE), and the SEE report had suggested the formation of a Chairman and Vice-Chairman's group, which was agreed by COP, and as an informal group, was not subject to the normal proportionality requirements.

On being put to the vote, Cllr Mrs Robinson's proposed amendment was lost.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendations adopted.

58. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22.

There were none.

59. PORTFOLIO HOLDERS' QUESTIONS.

There were none.

60. NOMINATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL.

RESOLVED:

That Cllr Penwarden be nominated as Chairman and Cllr Thierry as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the following Municipal year.

61. STANDARDS COMMITTEE – ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2010/11 (REPORT B).

Mr A Lander, Chairman of the Standards Committee, presented the annual report of the Standards Committee.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and noted.

62. REPORT OF THE REVIEW PANELS FOR 2010/11 (REPORT C).

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and noted.

63. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS.

No changes to committees were proposed by the political groups.

RESOLVED:

That the following persons be appointed to serve as independent Members of the Standards Committee for the four year period commencing May 2011:

Mr A T J Lander
Mr J P Giltrow
Mrs R Gregory

CHAIRMAN