

10 DECEMBER 2012

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 10 December 2012.

p Cllr Mrs A E McEvoy – Chairman
ap Cllr Ms L C Ford – Vice-Chairman

Councillors:

p A R Alvey
p Mrs D E Andrews
p G C Beck
p Mrs S V Beeton
p Ms R Bellows
p Mrs S M Bennison
p J E Binns
p D A Britton
p Mrs D M Brooks
p S J Clarke
p Mrs J L Cleary
p G F Dart
p S P Davies
p W H Dow
ap A T Glass
p M R Harris
p C J Harrison
p D Harrison
p E J Heron
p J D Heron
p Miss A J Hickman
p Mrs A J Hoare
p Mrs M D Holding
p Mrs P Jackman
p M J Kendal
ap A N G Kilgour
p C Lagdon
p Mrs M E Lewis
p Mrs P J Lovelace

Councillors:

p B D Lucas
p Mrs M McLean
p A D O'Sullivan
p N S Penman
p J Penwarden
p L R Puttock
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
Miss A Sevier
p M D Southgate
p A J Swain
p M H Thierry
p A R Tinsley
p D B Tipp
p F P Vickers
p M S Wade
p S S Wade
p R A Wappet
p Mrs C V Ward
p J G Ward
p C A Wise
ap Mrs B M Woodfield
p P R Woods
ap Mrs P A Wyeth

Officers Attending:

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

47. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 22 October 2012 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

48. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllrs Ms Bellows and Mrs McLean disclosed an interest in Minute 51 (Report of Cabinet dated 7 November, Item 1).

Cllr Mrs Brooks disclosed an interest in Minute 51 (Report of Cabinet dated 5 December, Item 2).

49. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.The Big Spin

The Chairman had attended the 'Big Spin' event on 18 November at Totton Health and Leisure Centre. 209 spinners had pedalled for 3 hours and had raised over £3,700 to be shared between Naomi House Hospice, the Southampton Hospital Charity and the Honey-pot Children's Charity (one of the Chairman's chosen causes).

Civic Service

The Chairman thanked all those who helped make her Civic Service on Sunday 25 November at All Saints Church in Fawley a memorable occasion. There had been a good attendance from civic heads around Hampshire, community representatives from the Waterside and family and friends. The Chairman also thanked Donna Langfield for her hard work in organising the day, as well as the New Forest Academy and the 6th & 12th New Forest East Scouts for providing ushers.

Veterans' Christmas Party

The Chairman had hosted the annual Veterans' Christmas Party at Dibden Golf Centre on 3 December. It had been attended by over 60 veterans who were very grateful to New Forest District Council for remembering them. The Chairman hoped the event would continue in the future.

Brilliance in Business

The Chairman and Chief Executive had attended the Brilliance in Business awards on 28 November at Carey's Manor, where awards had been presented on behalf of the Council.

New Forest Basics Bank

The Chairman encouraged Councillors and officers to attend the Basics Bank 'Fill a Sack for Santa' event on Sunday 16 December, 2.30pm at Elmers Court Country Club, Walhampton. Refreshments, activities for children and a bouncy castle would be available in exchange for a gift of food for Santa to pass on to families in need.

Basics Bank supplied food, household and hygiene items to local people in need. In the last year Basics Bank had sent out 882 parcels to provide for the emergency needs of local people.

The Chairman thanked Cllr Mrs Lewis for championing this worthwhile charity.

Other Engagements

Other engagements that the Chairman had attended included: the Randolph Schwabe exhibition at Lymington, the Beaulieu Estate Dinner, New Forest Mencap's AGM, the Falklands Memorial Plantation re-dedication ceremony on Portsdown Hill, 6th New Forest East Scouts Carol concert, Fawley's Christmas Fayre and East Dorset's Carol Service.

Reminders

The Chairman reminded members that her charity Christmas concert would take place on Saturday 15 December at 7pm in All Saints Church in Fawley. The Chairman would also host a Charity Burns Night on Friday, 25th January 2013 at 7pm at Lyndhurst Park Hotel. The Chairman asked members to support these events.

50. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS.

In highlighting the achievements of the Council, the Leader was pleased to introduce a short film showcasing the refurbishments to the North Milton estate.

The Housing and Communities Portfolio Holder said that New Forest District Council had invested £6.8million to bring 82 houses and 132 flats on the North Milton Estate up to the Government's Decent Homes Standard. The programme of refurbishment work, which started in July 2011, was the biggest of its kind that the Council had undertaken.

The improvements to the estate included:

- replacement roofs
- new kitchens
- new bathrooms or wet rooms
- wall insulation
- rendering on external walls
- new doors and porches
- new entrance doors and door entry systems for the flats

The refurbishment had given the estate a new lease of life, with a vibrant atmosphere and improved sense of community. The Portfolio Holder said that the success of the programme was a credit to officers involved.

51. REPORTS OF COMMITTEE AND CABINET.

Report of General Purposes and Licensing Committee

Cllr Beck, as Chairman of the Committee, presented the report of the Committee meeting held on 16 November 2012.

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

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendation adopted.

Reports of Cabinet

Cllrs Ms Bellows and Mrs McLean disclosed interests in the report of the Cabinet dated 7 November (item 1), on the grounds that they were both Council tenants. They concluded that there were no issues under common law to prevent them from taking part in the consideration and voting.

Cllr Mrs Brooks disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in the report of the Cabinet dated 5 December (item 2), on the grounds that she was employed by a Member of Parliament. She concluded that there were no issues under common law to prevent her from taking part in the consideration and voting.

Cllr Rickman, the Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Cabinet, presented the reports of the Cabinet held on 7 November and 5 December 2012.

Item 4 (meeting held on 7 November 2012) - Annual Performance Report 2012

Whilst pleased to hear that the Council had performed well against key targets and performance indicators, some members expressed concern that not all targets, such as those relating to affordable homes, recycling and planning, had been met. Furthermore, missed targets had not been highlighted during discussion at the Cabinet meeting. Members hoped that the Council would continue to perform well against all targets.

A member requested an update on the operation of the Dibden Golf Centre by a private contractor, and asked whether local councillors could be included in meetings with users.

In response, the Leader of the Council said that the Council's key targets had been discussed thoroughly through the Council's scrutiny process as well as at the Cabinet meeting. He confirmed that the Cabinet was pleased with the new arrangements at the Centre. He would be happy for local members to attend meetings with the contractor.

Item 3 (meeting held on 10 December 2012) - Kerbside Collection of Glass for Recycling

Cllr M Wade said that he was pleased the Council had been successful in attaining government grant funding to introduce a new district-wide kerbside glass collection service. He congratulated officers involved. He hoped that this would go some way to improving the Council's recycling performance which had been stagnant over recent years. Cllr M Wade suggested that the Council needed to consider more innovative ways to increase recycling so that the Council would reach or exceed the Project Integra target of 40%.

The Environment Portfolio Holder replied that the Council ranked about middle of the table for recycling in Hampshire. The Council's strategy was to deliver recycling facilities residents wanted and what they were prepared to pay, balanced against targets. It was important to remember that Hampshire

County Council had excellent energy recovery facilities and extremely low rates of landfill.

On the motion that the reports be received, it was:

RESOLVED:

That the reports be received.

52. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22.

There were none.

53. QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22A.

Question from: Cllr Mrs Robinson to Cllr Vickers, Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder

“Does the Portfolio Holder agree that it is very regrettable that local pubs are closing and can be changed into convenience stores without needing to go through the planning process?”

Answer:

The Portfolio Holder replied that current Government planning policy allowed public houses to be converted into shops without needing permission for a change of use. The District Council could not object to such a change of use.

The Portfolio Holder said that there were advantages in having convenience shops in towns and villages. Whilst it was unfortunate that public houses were closing due to a lack of demand, a convenience shop would invariably be used more by the local community than a public house. Convenience stores also created more jobs and reduced car journeys to less accessible large supermarkets, ultimately reducing the carbon footprint. The conversion of public houses to stores was a response to the demands of the free market.

As a supplementary question Cllr Mrs Robinson asked the Portfolio Holder if, given the significant change of use of buildings permitted without the need to go through the planning process, he would consider raising concerns through the Government’s consultation ‘*Extending Permitted Development Rights for Homeowners and Businesses*’. The Portfolio Holder replied that the consultation proposed changes to increase permitted development rights for extensions to homes and business premises in non-protected areas. He had drafted a response to the consultation on behalf of the Council. The response included objections to most elements of the proposals, because the proposed changes would result in significant harm to the amenity of nearby residents and the quality of the environments where developments occurred. A copy of the response would be made available to all members.

Question from: Cllr Mrs Beeton to Cllr Vickers, Planning and Transportation Portfolio Holder

“What measures are being taken by our council to ensure that designated unlit rural cycle routes are safe for our residents and visitors?”

Answer:

The Portfolio Holder replied that Hampshire County Council (HCC) were responsible for the maintenance of cycle routes whether they were on the road or adjacent footpaths, and for most street lighting. In these difficult financial times it was important that local authorities concentrated on the respective duties for which they were responsible and he therefore could not support the District Council becoming involved in this matter. There was a HCC hotline for reporting all potholes, contact details could be found on the County Council’s website.

Support for sight impaired persons

Arising from the informal presentation by Open Sight before the meeting, Cllr Beck asked the Health & Leisure Portfolio Holder if she would consider this Council hosting a ‘blind’ sports day. The Portfolio Holder replied that whilst she would look into the possibility, the Council’s Health & Leisure Centres had held activity days for the visually impaired and disabled in the recent past.

54. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS.

No changes to committees or panels were proposed by the political groups.

55. SPECIAL COUNCIL MEETING

RESOLVED:

That a special Council meeting be held on Monday, 28 January 2013 at 6.30pm

CHAIRMAN