

8 DECEMBER 2014

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 8 December 2014

- p Cllr Mrs M D Holding – Chairman
- p Cllr Mrs A J Hoare – 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 Ms L C Ford
- p A T Glass
- p M R Harris
- p C J Harrison
- p D Harrison
- p E J Heron
- p J D Heron
- ap 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
- p B D Lucas
- p Mrs A E McEvoy

Councillors:

- p Mrs M McLean
- p A D O'Sullivan
- p N S Penman
- p J Penwarden
- ap L R Puttock
- p A W Rice
- p B Rickman
- p W S Rippon-Swaine
- ap Mrs M J Robinson
- ap Mrs A M Rostand
- ap D J Russell
- p R F Scrivens
- p Miss A Sevier
- p M D Southgate
- ap A J Swain
- ap 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
- Mrs B M Woodifield
- p P R Woods
- p Mrs P A Wyeth
- Vacancy

Officers Attending:

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

36. MINUTES (PAPER A).

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2014 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

Cllr Wappet in Minute No. 40, item 5 of the Report of Cabinet dated 3 December 2014.

Cllrs Lagdon and M S Wade in Minute No. 40, item 1 of the Report of General Purposes & Licensing Committee dated 8 December 2014.

38. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**Chairman's Activities since last Council meeting**

Since the last Council meeting the Chairman had been privileged to take part in a variety of events throughout Hampshire and Dorset. These had been wide-ranging and included: -

- Attending the opening of the Lodge and Quiet Rooms for disabled young people at Brockenhurst College
- Attending the New Forest District 4Youth awards and celebration evening.
- Representing the New Forest District at the Hampshire Schools Sports Awards.
- Attending the production of the Wizard of Oz at the New Forest Academy.
- Attending Mayors' charity events at Portsmouth, Poole, Bournemouth and Basingstoke.
- Attending the Hampshire interfaith lecture at Winchester
- Attending the Beaulieu Estate dinner at the invitation of Lord and Lady Montagu.
- Attending a business event with the Mayor of Bournemouth and the Chamber of Commerce at Bournemouth Town Hall.
- Attending ExxonMobil's Day of Caring Celebration at Fawley Exhibition Centre.
- Attending Mencap's AGM and presenting the annual awards.
- Attending Community First AGM and making the welcoming speech.
- Visiting the Royal Mail's sorting office at Lymington to thank the staff for all their hard work over the Christmas period.
- Attending the Horse and Landscape exhibition at the New Forest Centre.

Get Ahead for Christmas Cooking Demo - Thursday, 30 October 2014

The Chairman was delighted to report that the Get Ahead for Christmas Cooking Demonstration had been a great success and £645.70 had been raised which would go towards her two chosen charities. The Chairman thanked all the Councillors who had helped with the event and also Judith Long who had presented the demonstration.

Remembrance Sunday – Sunday, 9 November 2014

The Chairman had been impressed by the crowds that had attended the various remembrance services within the District. She had been privileged to take part in six different services in Lyndhurst, Brockenhurst, Keyhaven and Milford on Sea. The services were all different, with the attendance and the reverence shown much greater than the Chairman had experienced at any previous remembrance services. The Chairman also attended the Brockenhurst memorial service on 11 November and the New Forest Remembers WW1 commemoration at the Tilebarn on the same day, organised by the National Park Authority.

Brilliance in Business Awards – Wednesday 26 November 2014

Along with the Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive, the Chairman had attended this year's Brilliance in Business Awards at Carey's Manor Hotel where awards were presented on behalf of the Council. It had been a wonderful event which showed the wide variety of excellent businesses in the New Forest.

Veterans' Christmas Party – Friday 5 December 2014

The Chairman had had the pleasure of hosting the annual Veterans' Christmas Party at Dibden Golf Centre. It had been attended by nearly 60 veterans who all thoroughly enjoyed themselves. For the first time, Marchwood Military Port was also represented by six serving soldiers from the 17 Port and Maritime Regiment. The veterans were delighted to meet and talk with the serving soldiers. They all expressed sincere thanks to the Council for holding the event and said they looked forward to it every year.

Brand New Forest

The Leader of the Council and the Chairman, along with other Councillors had attended the launch of next year's Brand New Forest on Saturday, 6 December. It had been well attended and a large number of cards had been sold.

39. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader of the Council said that 2014 had been a year of marked development for the Brand New Forest Campaign with continuing involvement with local businesses, towns and villages. The Leader looked forward to 2015 with anticipation that Brand New Forest would go from strength to strength.

Lymington had been awarded 'Brand New Forest 2015 Town of the Year' status in recognition of the significant support the town's businesses had given the overall campaign. This had been highlighted the previous weekend when the town had hosted the Brand New Forest sponsored Small Business Saturday business expo and fun day.

The event had also seen the successful launch of the 2015 Brand New Forest Card with best ever single day sales of 158 cards from the Brand New Forest stand alone! Local businesses were joining the scheme on a daily basis with over 230 offers published in the new winter/spring booklet. A major boost for the scheme had been NFDC's decision to provide its staff with a card and it had been announced that the National Park Authority would also be providing all its staff with a free card. This followed last year's lead by Beaulieu Enterprises in giving its staff a Brand New Forest card as a Christmas gift, which they had repeated this year.

There were a number of other major activities planned for 2015 including a Brand New Forest Loyalty Points App, an incentive-based programme with the Council's recycling team and a whole range of small local business promotions throughout the year. There was no doubt that Brand New Forest was capturing the imagination of residents, visitors and the many local businesses who were starting to feel the benefit of the new customer base that the scheme was providing.

40. REPORT OF COMMITTEE AND CABINET

Report of General Purposes and Licensing Committee

Cllr M S Wade disclosed a pecuniary interest in this item as his wife worked for the Authority. He did not speak and abstained from voting. Cllr Lagdon disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in this item as a family member worked for the Authority. He did not speak and abstained from voting.

Cllr Beck, Chairman of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee, presented the report of the meeting held on 8 December 2014.

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

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendation be adopted.

Report of Cabinet

Cllr Wappet disclosed a non-pecuniary interest in item 5 (Unit 8 Hardley Industrial Estate) as a member of Fawley Parish Council. He concluded that there were no grounds under common law to prevent him from remaining in the meeting to speak and to vote.

The Leader of the Council, as Chairman of the Cabinet, presented the report of the meeting held on 3 December 2014.

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

Item 3 – Phase II of the National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programmes (2016/17 – 2021/22)

Cllr Kendal said that he was delighted that the Council would be the lead authority for the Southeast Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme. This would ensure that the work of the late Professor Bradbury and the good relationship with Southampton Oceanography Institute would continue. Cllr Kendal offered his congratulations to all officers involved in this achievement.

Item 6 – Rum Walk Path, Totton

Cllr D Harrison thanked the Cabinet for agreeing to restore the bank and footpath as well as alleviating future flood risks. The footpath was a valued and well-used footpath link for local residents. He requested that officers work closely with the Environment Agency and carefully monitor work, including the build up of silt downstream.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and the recommendations be adopted.

41. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22

There were none.

42. QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22A

The Chairman reminded members of Standing Order 40A.1 which stated that a maximum period of 30 minutes in total was allowed for this item. However, she proposed to extend this time in order that all the questions submitted could be put and answered.

Question 1:**From: Cllr D Harrison****To: Cllr Vickers, Planning & Transportation Portfolio Holder**

“A couple of years ago, a commercial company, "Trants" were compelled to vacate an area in front of their Head Office in Totton, some woodland known as Cockleydown Copse. They had illegally occupied it, having chopped down trees and used it as an overflow car park.

This environmental crime has never been punished.

I had understood that the company would be pushed to make good the damage caused, a re-planting scheme. Nothing seems to have been done. The land is owned by Barker Mills Estates, but is possibly to come into public ownership at a future date.

What proposals are there for making good the harm done?”

Answer:

The Portfolio Holder responded that in 2011 the Council had investigated an enforcement case that a car parking area had been laid out in Cocklydown Copse and was being used for parking without the benefit of planning permission. In accordance with the Council's normal practice the option of a planning application being submitted seeking to regularise the use had been offered. This had been submitted in July 2011 and had been refused in September 2011. An appeal had been lodged against the decision. The appeal had been dismissed in August 2012 with the Inspector concluding:- “it would cause significant harm to the appearance and biodiversity of Cocklydown Copse”.

Following the appeal decision, the enforcement team had required the owners to remove all of the hard surfacing from the area. This had been done. The owners had also agreed to do a tree replanting scheme. This had not yet been carried out. The matters would be pursued.

Question 2:**From: Cllr C Harrison****To: Cllr Vickers, Planning & Transportation Portfolio Holder**

“Conservatives on Hampshire County Council have been cutting the subsidies that keep many of our important bus services running every year, for several years now. These cuts have a severe impact on some of the most vulnerable people in the communities we represent. What will the District Council be doing to stop these cuts and future cuts from having an even more severe impact?”

Answer:

The Portfolio Holder replied that managing bus subsidies was a Hampshire County Council function and as such suggested that Cllr C Harrison lobby HCC Councillors to pursue this issue.

The Portfolio Holder supported a suggestion that a Task & Finish Group be established to examine how cuts to bus subsidies impacted on vulnerable people.

Question 3:**From: Cllr M S Wade****To: Cllr Vickers, Planning & Transportation Portfolio Holder**

“As the tender for the new parking meters has not been awarded, and it is to be delayed for another 12 months, can you therefore advise why the tendering process for the new parking meters did not include that all suppliers had to be accredited, as all but one were not, and why there was not enough thought about alternative payment methods before the tendering process was started?”

Answer:

The Portfolio Holder replied that a Task and Finish Working Group had been established to examine the proposal. They had been involved throughout the tendering process and had established some key considerations that had to be taken into account in the selection process. One of these was the requirement that any new equipment would allow motorists to pay using contactless payment methods. It had become apparent that, although the technology to allow this was developing, the necessary banking consents were not yet in place to allow companies making car park meters to offer contactless payments. As such it had been concluded that the best way forwards would be to delay the purchase of new parking meters, to allow the market to mature.

In response to a question as to whether future administrations would charge blue badge holders for parking, the Portfolio Holder said that the current administration had no such plans.

Question 4:**From: Cllr Mrs McLean****To: Cllr Mrs Cleary, Housing & Communities Portfolio Holder**

“Does the portfolio holder recognise the need for affordable key worker housing near Fordingbridge Hospital and what action does she propose taking?”

Answer:

The Portfolio Holder replied that the District Council did not allocate keyworker accommodation. It was allocated through ‘Help to Buy South’, which dealt with keyworker housing for Hampshire and the South of England.

Radian Homes already had some key worker units in West Mills Road in Fordingbridge (6 one-bedroomed flats and 2 two-bedroomed houses). Keyworkers from the hospital could register for these intermediate rent properties through ‘Help to Buy South’.

The Council's Housing Needs Team had not been informed of any additional need for keyworker housing near to Fordingbridge Hospital. Council officers would signpost any enquiries to 'Help to Buy South' and work with them and registered providers to resolve any issues if necessary.

Question 5:

From: Cllr D Harrison

To: Cllr Rickman, Leader of the Council

"Bearing in mind his specific District Council responsibility for community engagement, what effort has the Leader made to stimulate the interest of young people in voting and elections?"

Answer:

The Leader replied that to be able to vote, a resident had to be on the register of electors. Members would know that the registration process had moved to a system of Individual Electoral Registration (IER). One of the features of the new system was that people could register on-line. The on-line facility had proved very user-friendly and had been popular with young people, making it more attractive to them to register.

With the Parliamentary, District and Parish elections being held on 7 May 2015, the Electoral Commission's publicity campaign was due to commence in February 2015 and the Council would issue its own local publicity to coincide with and complement the Electoral Commission's campaign. In addition, the Electoral Team would be writing to all the 526 young people on the registers who would be eligible to vote for the first time on 7 May, to encourage them to turn out to vote.

The Council was also liaising with Bournemouth Borough and Southampton City Councils, both of which were, in turn, working with the universities in their areas, to identify students living in New Forest District but studying in either Bournemouth or Southampton. Once this work was complete the Council would write to those students inviting them to register at their home addresses.

The Council's Electoral Team had also recently given a presentation to over 200 soldiers at Marchwood Military Port, many of them within the 18 – 24 age group, to explain the importance of registering and encouraging them to vote. Contacts with the Regiment would be maintained, to ensure that young soldiers had the information they needed to register and to vote.

Question 6:

From: Cllr M S Wade

To: Cllr Mrs Cleary, Housing & Communities Portfolio Holder

"It appears to be the case that the police have not been recording crime as they should have done. What is the situation in the New Forest and what does she expect the crime figures to look like in about 12 months-time?"

Answer:

The Portfolio Holder replied that New Forest Police took crime seriously and any improvements that had been highlighted by Her Majesty's Inspector of the Constabulary would be implemented in a robust and timely manner.

The Council's partnership working arrangements had delivered good reductions in crime. Providing services and help for victims of serious sexual offences remained one of the Council's key priorities. The Council was currently working with the Police and Crime Commissioner and Rape Crisis to ensure that the services for these victims remained in place and were improved.

The statutory 6 month strategic review of crime and anti-social behaviour gave the Police a good benchmark using the data from April to October 2014. They had concentrated on this period as April 2014 saw the commencement of a number of crime code changes that made it difficult to compare some crime figures with previous periods. The Portfolio Holder's tactical work with the Safer New Forest Operational Joint Action Group gave her an overview of the work with the victims of particularly burglary, car crime and anti-social behaviour. She anticipated that the figures for the year April 2014 – March 2015 would show increases in domestic abuse and repeat domestic incidents in-line with a national trend and a reduction in current sexual offences. Anti-social behaviour including criminal damage continued to fall and the Portfolio Holder was amazed with the very good figures over Halloween where police received only 7 complaints of anti-social behaviour. The Portfolio Holder thanked the police and partner officers who had been out engaging with the public and the families who had made this an enjoyable event. All partners were concerned with the rise in violence offences and although there would be focus on reducing those figures, further rises were likely before the figures started to fall.

In response to a supplementary question regarding work currently taking place to reduce the fear of crime, the Portfolio Holder replied that there were various initiatives across the District to address fear of crime and which gave residents advice on how to prevent crimes. These included: - community safety teams attending community events such as town and parish council meetings, giving free lollies to children on bonfire night if they were able to answer questions on keeping safe, Police networking at Christmas lights switch-on, selling padlocks for sheds, sending letters to residents where car crime was high and giving advice on securing their vehicles, and sending promotional material to business through the New Forest Business Partnership. The Portfolio Holder said that extensive schemes had been put in place to reduce petty crime across the District and these were working well.

Question 7:

From: Cllr D Harrison

To: Cllr Rickman, Leader of the Council

“What is the position of New Forest District Council on requiring the Ministry of Defence to consult with local people over plans for the future of the Marchwood Sea Mounting Centre? Specifically, would the Council support calls for a Public Enquiry?”

Answer:

The Leader responded that he understood that the Ministry of Defence (MOD) had agreed to lease part of the site to a commercial operator and were currently seeking an appropriate partner.

The MOD accepted that planning permission was likely to be required for any new use of the site. They had told the bidders to discuss this with New Forest District Council and this process was underway.

It was anticipated that the preferred bidder would be announced in spring 2015. They would then need to apply for planning permission for their proposed activities. This would follow the normal process and could result in a public inquiry if they could not agree their scheme with the Council.

In response to a supplementary question regarding ensuring that the MOD consulted local people at the earliest opportunity, the Leader of the Council said that he would support this approach as well as following the planning process.

The Vice-Chairman, a member of Marchwood Parish Council, stated that the parish council felt supported by the District Council in this matter.

43. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

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

44. ANY OTHER ITEMS WHICH THE CHAIRMAN DECIDES ARE URGENT

The Chairman wished everyone a Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year.

CHAIRMAN

(CL081214)