

13 NOVEMBER 2009

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

GENERAL PURPOSES AND LICENSING COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee held at Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Friday, 13 November 2009.

p Cllr P R Woods (Chairman)
Cllr A W Rice TD (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

p G C Beck
e W H Dow
p J A G Hutchins
p Mrs P Jackman
Mrs M McLean
p J Penwarden
e W S Rippon-Swaine

Councillors:

p R F Scrivens
p A E J Shotter
p Mrs B Smith
e M S Wade
p S S Wade
p Mrs P A Wyeth

Officers Attending:

Mrs R Rutins and Ms M Stephens; and for part of the meeting, K Green, Miss T Harwood, M Powell and P Weston.

12. MINUTES.

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2009, having been circulated, be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.

No declarations of interest were made by members in connection with any agenda items.

14. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION.

No issues were raised during the public participation period.

15. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2009-2013 (REPORT A).

The Committee considered the medium term financial plan for 2009-2013.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the medium term financial plan be noted;
- (b) That the financial performance of the Committee for both 2008/09 and 2009/10 be noted; and
- (c) That the Committee's fees and charges for 2010/11 be agreed.

16. GAMBLING ACT 2005 – STATEMENT OF PRINCIPLES 2010/2013 (REPORT B).

The Chairman, on behalf of the Committee, thanked Mr Powell for all of his hard work and support over the years and wished him well for his retirement.

The Committee considered the Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles 2010/13.

Members suggested slight changes to the 'Introduction to New Forest District Council's area' on page 6 of the document, first paragraph, that the Forest was owned by the Crown and managed by the Forestry Commission, and that the New Forest was a National Park. The first sentence of the third paragraph should also be changed to refer to 'The New Forest District Council area' facing many challenges.

Members were informed by the CCTV and Licensing Manager that there had been minor changes only to the statement of principles when compared with the previous statement.

RECOMMENDED:

That subject to the suggested amendments above, the Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Principles 2010 – 2013 be adopted with effect from 3 January 2010.

17. REVIEW OF PLEASURE BOAT LICENSING (REPORT C).

That Committee reviewed the current licensing system for pleasure boats and boatmen.

Section 94 of the Public Health Acts Amendment Act 1907 enabled the Council to issue licences for pleasure boats and boatmen. A pleasure boat was either a vessel that was let for hire to members of the public or to be used for carrying a maximum of 12 passengers.

The Council currently used guidance issued by the Solent and Southern Harbour Masters Association in licensing pleasure boats. The Committee agreed that guidance published by Maritime and Coastguard Agency (MCA) be used instead.

The Committee also supported a proposal that boatmen licences for the same periods as taxi drivers in order to achieve a level of consistency.

Boatmen were not subject to the same knowledge test as taxi drivers as their competency was verified by the MCA. Similarly, the Council only issued pleasure boats licences if they operated fishing within inland waters, outside of this area, the responsibility fell to the MCA.

In relation to boatmen licences, some members expressed the view that applicants should be subject to CRB checks. Persons on the water were as vulnerable as those in taxis and the view was expressed that boatmen should be subject to the same checks as taxi and private hire drivers.

On the other hand, other members were of the view that the current system was adequate and that more stringent requirements could have a negative impact on the boatmen.

The Licensing Officer was asked to report further on this.

RESOLVED:

- (a) That the current licensing system be amended as set out in paragraphs 3.1 and 4.1 of Report D to the Committee; and
- (b) That a report be submitted to the January meeting on possible CRB checks for applicants for boatmen licences.

18. AMENDMENT TO STANDING ORDERS (REPORT D).

The Committee considered an amendment to the Standing Orders for Meetings to include provision for announcements by the Leader of the Council at meetings of the Council.

The Committee was of the view that officers should explore setting a time limit on announcements and suggested that three minutes would be adequate.

RECOMMENDED:

That Standing Order 34 of the Standing Orders for meetings be amended to provide for announcements by the Leader of the Council at meetings of the Council, subject to consideration being given to the time limit for announcements.

19. ELECTORAL PARTICIPATION (VERBAL UPDATE).

The Democratic Services Manager gave a verbal update on the progress regarding ways to promote electoral participation using grants from the Ministry of Justice (MoJ).

As requested by the Committee at their last meeting, the Elections team had attended the New Forest Youth Council meeting on 4 November to seek the views of young people on specific projects that would be subject to grant from the MoJ to increase electoral participation amongst their peers.

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It was reported that the visit to the Youth Council had been very successful. The members of the Youth Council had been proactive in giving ideas and suggestions.

The young people indicated that voting for the first time was an intimidating experience. The Electoral Commission had produced an advice booklet for young people on the voting process. Prior to the next election, the elections team would identify first time voters and would send out the guidance booklet. The cost of sending out the booklet would be minimal but it was hoped to recover the cost by way of a grant from the Ministry of Justice.

The Youth Council had suggested that a 'Question Time' event for young people be organised by the District Council with the help of the Youth Council. The event would include local MPs and District Councillors. This suggestion was being pursued. The Chairman of the Youth Council had been in contact with the Principal of the Totton College who had indicated full support for the event. It had been suggested that the event be held in the east of the District.

The members of the Youth Council had expressed views that much more could be done by schools, colleges and universities to promote democracy and the voting process.

The Committee was supportive of any efforts to actively engage with young people and improve the levels of participation. Members recognised the challenge of obtaining and holding the interest of young people and encouraged activities via the Youth Council to promote participation. Committee members also acknowledged the role of individual members in promoting democracy amongst young voters in their constituencies.

The Committee thanked the Elections Team for their work on this matter and fully supported the suggested activities aimed at bringing about greater participation of young people in the voting process.

RESOLVED:

That the Committee supports the activities outlined above to promote electoral participation amongst young people and that application for a grant to cover the costs be made to the Ministry of Justice.

CHAIRMAN

(GPLC131109)