

13 APRIL 2015

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held in COUNCIL CHAMBER, APPLETREE COURT, LYNDHURST on Monday, 13 April 2015

* Cllr Mrs M D Holding (Chairman)

* Cllr Mrs A Hoare (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

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

Councillors:

* Mrs A E McEvoy
* Mrs M McLean
* O'Sullivan
* N Penman
* J Penwarden
* L R Puttock
* A W Rice
* B Rickman
* W S Rippon-Swaine
Mrs M J Robinson
* Mrs A M Rostand
* D J Russell
* R F Scrivens
* Miss A Sevier
* M D Southgate
* A J Swain
M H Thierry
* A R Tinsley
* D B Tipp
* F P Vickers
* M S Wade
* S S Wade
* R A Wappet
* J G Ward
* Mrs C V Ward
* C A Wise
* Mrs B M Woodifield
* P R Woods
* Mrs P A Wyeth

*Present

Officers Attending:

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

56. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 23 February 2015 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

57. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Lagdon and M S Wade in item 1 of the Report of General Purposes & Licensing Committee dated 6 March 2015.

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

Since the last Council meeting the Chairman had attended many functions throughout the New Forest, Hampshire, Dorset & Surrey, including: -

- The Mayor of Bournemouth's Charity fashion show at the Highcliffe Marriott Hotel raising money for his charities.
- The opening of the Malt Cinema at the Lymington Community Centre.
- The VIP launch of Cambium at Careys Manor Hotel, Brockenhurst.
- Welcoming delegates to the New Forest Network Advice meeting at Appletree Court.
- A private dinner party for local networking with companies from the Bournemouth area, in the Mayor of Bournemouth's parlour.
- A concert in the Great Hall, Winchester on WW1 hosted by the Chairman of Hampshire County Council.
- The raising of the Commonwealth Flag on Commonwealth Day at Appletree Court.
- A rehearsal of the Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra at the Lighthouse and a tour of the RNLS College.
- Civic days with the Mayors of Eastleigh, Havant and Hart.
- A private dinner party with the Mayor of Fareham in his parlour with his local business representatives.
- The Mayor of Christchurch charity gala dinner at the Captain's Club, Christchurch and the Mayor of New Milton's charity ball held at Shorefield Holiday Park.
- Representing the New Forest at the Hampshire and IOW Sport Awards Ceremony at Southampton Football Club.
- Representing the New Forest District at the New Forest Choirs and the New Forest Chamber Choir at the Regent Centre, Christchurch.
- The Mayor of Fareham's charity ball at the Ferneham Hall and also the Mayor of Eastleigh's charity ball at the Botley Park Hotel, Hedge End.
- The Mayor of Havant's charity spring dinner at the South Downs College restaurant.
- An Easter afternoon tea party in aid of charity with the Mayor of Rushmoor in the Council offices, Farnham.
- The Forest Connexions Exhibition preview at the New Forest Centre Lyndhurst and the Dudley Keep Lecture on Galipoli at the Great Hall, Winchester.
- A reception in the Mayor of Southampton's parlour and afterwards at Showtime Production in the O2 at the Guildhall by Southampton and West Hampshire Brownies and Guides.
- The opening day at the Lodge, Ashley, New Milton.
- The Mayor of Bournemouth's charity ball in the Pavilion ballroom.

Departing Councillors

Earlier that day the Chairman had held a reception for outgoing councillors who were retiring at the forthcoming election. The Chairman thanked these councillors for the years of service given to the New Forest and wished them happiness in the future.

Members paid tribute to departing Councillors and thanked them for their hard work and diligence during their terms of office.

Death of former Councillor Mrs Barbara Maynard

The Chairman reported the death of former Cllr Mrs Barbara Maynard, who served on the Council for the Blackfield and Langley Ward between 1995 and 2003 and then the Fawley, Blackfield and Langley Ward between 2003 and 2007. During her terms, she served on what were then the Central Services, Emergencies and Housing Committees along with the Planning Development Control and Appeals Committees. She would be sadly missed.

Charity Fundraising Events

On Friday 13 March the Chairman hosted reception and charity dinner at the Balmer Lawn Hotel, Brockenhurst. A total of £1687 was raised for the Chairman's charities. The speaker, Peter Henley of BBC South Today and the Politics Programme gave a great speech. The Chairman thanked Donna Langfield and the owners and staff of the Balmer Lawn Hotel for their help with the event.

On Thursday 19 March the Chairman hosted a lifestyle fashion evening at Elliotts, Lymington organised by the owner Neil Welker and his staff. The evening had been a great success and raised £2734 for the Chairman's charities.

On Monday 30 March, Amanda and Alan Poulton at The Red Lion in Boldre held a quiz and curry evening in aid of the Chairman's charities. A profit of £523 was raised. On Easter Friday a draw was held for a charity basket and raised a further £265. The Chairman thanked all those who helped with these events.

The Chairman thanked Anthony Climpson, Carol Seymour and members of the New Forest Tourism and Business Association who donated generously to The Nalder Foundation and the Hampshire and Isle of Wight Air Ambulance with raffle prizes.

The Chairman announced that many bags had been donated by staff and councillors for Oakhaven Hospice, the goods would be sold in their shops. She thanked all who donated.

The Chairman thanked all who helped with her recent charity events.

59. LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

There were none.

60. REPORTS OF COMMITTEES AND CABINET

Report of General Purposes & Licensing

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 Committee, presented the report of the meeting held on 6 March 2015.

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

RESOLVED:

That the recommendation be adopted.

Reports of Cabinet

The Leader of the Council, as Chairman of the Cabinet, presented the reports of the meetings held on 4 March and 1 April 2015.

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

RESOLVED:

That the reports be received and the recommendations be adopted.

61. REPORT OF OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANELS 2014/15

The Council considered the report of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels for 2014/15.

The Chairmen of the Overview & Scrutiny Panels thanked Councillors, Heads of Service, Officers and external partners for their contributions to the scrutiny process. Particular thanks were given to members who had served on Task & Finish Groups throughout the year.

RESOLVED:

That the report be received and noted.

62. QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22

There were none.

63. QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22A

Question 1:

From: Cllr Lagdon

To: Cllr Vickers, Planning & Transportation Portfolio Holder

“Concerning the ‘National Planning Policy Framework issued March 2012 by the Conservative and Liberal Democrat Coalition Government, can the Portfolio Holder please tell us how this council proposes to: “BOOST SIGNIFICANTLY the supply of

housing within the New Forest District Council area” when at present, certainly in the east of the Forest, we are stretching the infrastructure to breaking point and have very little room to build anyway?”

Answer:

The Portfolio Holder replied that NFDC was one of only a small number of Planning Authority Councils that had a fully adopted Local Plan. Neighbouring councils without a plan such as Test Valley, Eastleigh and East Hants were seeing Planning Inspectors grant large developments. NFDC’s Plan started in 2006. To date, 57% of the 20 year housing commitment has already been built. The Council also has an 8 year land supply available for development based on current numbers. The current plan required updating. The process for doing so would take at least 2 years before Public Examination. Consequently, there would not be a significant change in the house building rate in the time of the next Council. In response to a supplementary question regarding how many new houses were needed to be built per year in the District and the impact on the existing infrastructure, the Portfolio Holder explained that in the NFDC area, every possible building site was within 5 kilometres of an Special Protection Area (SpA) or Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and consequently the Council was required to provide Sites of Alternative Natural Green Space (SANGs). This was a major issue with the existing plan. A direct result of this was that it diminished ability to build houses. A further factor related to the poor transport infrastructure in large parts of the District. All of these factors would influence the proposals put into the revision of the Plan. It was also open to a town like Totton to produce its own Neighbourhood Plan and thereby decide how much housing would be built and where.

Question 2:

From: Cllr M S Wade

To: Cllr Cleary, Housing and Communities Portfolio Holder

“Is the Life Line activity in the CCTV control room in anyway affecting the appropriate level of community safety monitoring of the CCTV cameras in the New Forest towns and villages?”

Answer:

The Portfolio Holder said that the number of incidents monitored by cameras in the control room remained steady at just over 2,000 incidents per year. Whilst activity in the control room had increased due to community alarms, so had staffing. Prior to the changes in the service, there were 7 employees in CCTV covering 20 hours per day. There were now 15 employees in the unit covering 24 hours a day. The old control room was often singled crewed. Now, for many hours of the day, there were 3 or 4 employees present at a time. Calls from Community Alarms had peak times and during those hours they were the priority due to the vulnerability of the clients, however the Council would continue to respond to Police Control and Shop Watch whilst still carrying out regular camera scans. There was no evidence to suggest that CCTV monitoring had been adversely impacted by these changes. In response to a supplementary question regarding the removal of cameras in Totton and Hythe Towns, the Portfolio Holder said that she would investigate this matter further.

Question 3:**From: Cllr D Harrison****To: Cllr Cleary, Housing and Communities Portfolio Holder**

“Could you please outline your priority actions for ensuring the future of community safety in our New Forest towns & villages”

Answer:

The Portfolio Holder replied that the New Forest remained a low crime area and the Crime and Disorder Reduction partnership “Safer New Forest” continued to work with partners to ensure that remained. The current priorities of the Partnership included: the reduction of antisocial behaviour, the reduction of domestic violence and re-offending. The Portfolio Holder had been pleased to see that the Crime Commissioner had commissioned an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate which residents within the Forest would have access to. To ensure that the Council’s priorities remained current, the Partnership would work on a refresh of the Community Safety Strategic Assessment which the Council was lawfully obliged to produce. This would be available in June. From that document the Council would develop a multi-agency partnership plan to deliver on the identified priorities.

The Portfolio Holder had instigated a review of the Joint Action Group. This was to consider whether any changes were needed, to ensure it remained fit for the future. The reduction in Police numbers in the area had caused debate in the press, but the Area Commander had been clear that he could deliver an appropriate Policing response within available resources. The Council would continue to work with him on any emerging issues. In response to a supplementary question regarding the retention of CCTV cameras in towns, the Portfolio Holder said that town councils would need to continue to financially contribute to this service provision. She would have further discussions with town councils to determine their current position on this matter.

Question 4:**From: Cllr D Harrison****To: The Leader of the Council**

“I noted the squirming discomfort of several Conservative Councillors at the budget setting meeting when you praised the Council’s workforce but failed to commit to paying them a living wage. How soon before you seek to rectify this?”

Answer:

The Leader of the Council replied that the new administration would consider all priorities following the May elections. Over the past four years the administration had delivered priorities whilst responsibly managing the Council’s business with less financial resource. This would continue. Support and encouragement would continue to be given to staff. One of the high priority projects within the Fit for the Future programme was pay and reward. The living wage would be a key consideration for this particular programme. Proposals were likely to be made to the Pay Panel at the start of 2016.

Question 5:**From: Cllr D Harrison****To: The Leader of the Council**

“In the unlikely event that the Conservatives hang on to enough seats to keep control of the Council after the elections, will you undertake to consider moving back to a committee system of governance rather than the unpopular system of rule by Cabinet?”

Answer:

The Leader of the Council said that should the new Council wish to consider new ways of working, a Task & Finish Group would be established. For the time being, the current method of governance would remain.

64. NOMINATIONS FOR APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN AND VICE-CHAIRMAN OF THE COUNCIL**RESOLVED:**

That Cllr Mrs A J Hoare be nominated as Chairman and Cllr G C Beck as Vice-Chairman of the Council for the following Municipal year.

65. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

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

Chairman