

10 DECEMBER 2018

NEW FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

Minutes of a meeting of the New Forest District Council held in the Council Chamber, Appletree Court, Lyndhurst on Monday, 10 December 2018

- * Cllr M J Kendal (Chairman)
- * Cllr A T Glass (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors:

- * A R Alvey
- * Mrs D E Andrews
- * W G Andrews
- * P J Armstrong
- * G C Beck
- * Mrs S M Bennison
- * J E Binns
- * G R Blunden
- * D A Britton
- * Mrs D M Brooks
- * Mrs F Carpenter
- * Mrs L D Cerasoli
- * S J Clarke
- * Mrs J L Cleary
- * I C Coombes
- * Ms K V Crisell
- * S P Davies
- * A H G Davis
- * W H Dow
- Ms L C Ford
- * R L Frampton
- * A A Gossage
- * L E Harris
- * M R Harris
- * D Harrison
- * E J Heron
- * J D Heron
- * Mrs A J Hoare
- * Mrs M D Holding

Councillors:

- * Mrs C Hopkins
- * Mrs E L Lane
- M Langdale
- Mrs P J Lovelace
- * Mrs R Matcham
- * Mrs A E McEvoy
- * A D O'Sullivan
- J M Olliff-Cooper
- * N S Penman
- * A K Penson
- * D M S Poole
- * L R Puttock
- * B Rickman
- * W S Rippon-Swaine
- * Mrs A M Rostand
- * D J Russell
- * Miss A Sevier
- M A Steele
- M H Thierry
- * Mrs B J Thorne
- * D B Tipp
- * D N Tungate
- * A S Wade
- * Mrs C V Ward
- * J G Ward
- * M L White
- * C A Wise
- * Mrs P A Wyeth

*Present

Officers Attending:

R Jackson, Miss G O'Rourke, C Read, Mrs R Rutins, Mrs M Sandhu and Mrs K Wardle

Apologies

Cllr Ms Ford, Mrs Lovelace, Olliff-Cooper, Steele and Thierry.

44 MINUTES**RESOLVED:**

That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2018 be signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

45 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Cllrs Mrs Carpenter, Harrison, E J Heron, Kendal, Mrs McEvoy, Penman and White in Minute No 48 item 1 of the Report of the Cabinet dated 7 November 2018.

46 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman announced with great regret the death on 23 November of Tina Harwood, a former employee of the Council, who was known to many Councillors. Tina had been employed by the Council for 29 years. Her most recent position had been Electoral Services Officer. Tina had retired on ill-health grounds earlier in the year. Her funeral was to be held on 11 December at Test Valley Crematorium.

The Chairman extended the Council's sympathies to her partner, Roger and to her family.

The Council stood as a mark of respect to Tina Harwood.

The Chairman reported that he had been busy with a number of engagements including:

- National Coastwatch Calshot Station, attended by HRH Princess Anne;
- Annual public meeting of the New Forest Disability Information Service at New Milton Community Association;
- Annual General Meeting of New Forest Mencap and Community First New Forest;
- Armistice Commemoration for Councillors and Officers at Appletree Court, attended by Veterans of the Armed Forces alongside serving soldiers from 17 Port and Maritime Regiment RLC and Lyndhurst British Legion;
- Attended the Leader of Hampshire County Council's concert to mark the centenary of the end of World War 1, held in Romsey;
- "Pack up your troubles" concert at New Milton Memorial Centre;
- Veterans' Christmas party held at the 17 Port and Maritime RLC Officers' Mess in Marchwood. The Chairman thanked all those who had been involved in organising the event;
- Starting the Santa Dash event in Lymington, attended by over 1,400 people dressed in Santa costumes, to raise funds for Oakhaven Hospice;

- Chairman's charity dinner at Beaulieu Palace. £1,400 had been raised for the Chairman's charity, Oakhaven in Totton. The Chairman thanked those who had attended and been involved in selling raffle tickets; and
- Beaulieu Estates Dinner hosted by Lord Montagu.

The Chairman also thanked Totton Town Council for raising funds for the Chairman's charity. Derek Biggs, the Town Clerk, had taken part in a sponsored one mile run and one mile swim. This had raised £384 for Oakhaven in Totton. This had been an amazing achievement.

47 LEADER'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Leader announced the following:

- Annual Brilliance in Business Awards 2018/19 held at Careys Manor Hotel in Brockenhurst. The awards showed the quality and diverse nature of businesses in the New Forest. Forest Foot and Health Clinic had been presented with two awards, one for "Outstanding Customer Care" and the other "Business of the Year";
- "49" had recently opened in Lymington. "49" offered space for small businesses as well as mentoring and support with the aim of helping New Forest businesses to start and to grow. The project had received a grant of £75,000 from Hampshire County Council and from the Local Enterprise Partnership;
- The Leader would show his support for Post Offices in the New Forest over the Christmas period by visiting Lymington Post Office on Thursday morning. He invited other members to join him;
- The replacement beach huts in Milford had won a further global award. This was in the Landscape Architecture category of The Architecture MasterPrize;
- The Council's Smarter Working project was progressing well. The renovation of the ground floor of the south wing at Appletree Court had been completed. The Revenue and Benefits team had moved from Lymington to Appletree Court; and
- The first Safer New Forest Conference had taken place on 7 November 2018, attended by over 200 partners. The event had been a great success.

48 REPORTS OF CABINET

Cllrs Mrs Carpenter, Harrison, E J Heron, Kendal, Mrs McEvoy, Penman and White disclosed non pecuniary interests in item 1 (Civil on street parking enforcement and transportation – agency agreements) of the report of the Cabinet dated 7 November 2018 as members of Hampshire County Council. It was noted that they had been granted dispensations which allowed them to speak and to vote on the matter. There were no recommendations on this item.

The Leader of the Council, as Chairman of the Cabinet, presented the reports of the meetings held on 7 November and 5 December 2018.

Item 2 (5 December 2018) - Homelessness Task and Finish Group – Report of the Task and Finish Group

Cllr Harrison raised the issue of the consultation Hampshire County Council had carried out which proposed a reduction in the level of support available to the homeless. This matter had been considered by the Task and Finish Group. He expressed concern regarding the proposed budget reduction and the implications for vulnerable homeless people. He sought assurance that New Forest District Council would increase the budget, with funding received from Government, in this area to make up the expected shortfall.

Item 5 (5 December 2018) New Forest District Council Property Holding Company Business Plan

Cllr Harrison expressed concern regarding the risk to the Council of setting up a Property Holding Company to purchase residential and commercial properties. Hampshire County Council and Eastleigh Borough Council had both borrowed significant sums of money for commercial investments with high risks.

Cllr M Harris, the Portfolio Holder for Finance, Local Economic Development, Property & Innovation, acknowledged that discussions had taken place regarding the borrowing of funds for commercial investment. Eastleigh Borough Council had borrowed £60 million for assets situated around the country. The proposal in relation to New Forest District, however, proposed investment only within the District area, where there was a clear economic benefit. All risks would be carefully evaluated. Cllr Harris reminded the meeting that the Property Task and Finish Group had proposed a strong set recommendations. No extreme risks would be taken and it was anticipated that a return would be made on any investments.

Item 7 (5 December 2018) – Health and Leisure Review

Cllr Tipp sought confirmation that the proposals relating to the health and leisure service did not include privatising or selling the centres. He also asked for assurances that the Council would engage with stakeholders throughout the project.

The Portfolio Holder for Leisure and Wellbeing, Cllr Binns, confirmed that following the review, a partnership arrangement was proposed rather than privatising the health and leisure services. Should a preferred partner for the operation of the centres not be found, it was likely that an arms-length company would be established. The proposals were aimed at offering the best possible services at the centres and that the service would be fit for the future. The Council would maintain the integrity of the buildings and any partner would manage staff, programming and marketing, as well as investing in the services. A Board of Directors would be responsible for monitoring the contract.

Engagement with staff representatives and customers through forums had taken place in each of the leisure centres.

Cllr Harrison expressed the view that more public consultation should have been carried out before the decisions had been taken. He considered that the proposals were a form of privatisation and that the Council would lose democratic accountability.

Cllr Clarke, Chair of the Health and Leisure Task and Finish Group, reported that the group had worked very hard at assessing the options in order to put forward a set of recommendations. After thorough examination, a partnership arrangement was considered the best option.

On the motion that the reports be received and the recommendations adopted, it was:

RESOLVED:

That the reports be received and the recommendations be adopted.

49 QUESTIONS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22

There were none.

50 QUESTIONS TO PORTFOLIO HOLDERS UNDER STANDING ORDER 22A

Question 1

From Cllr Maureen Holding to Cllr Jill Cleary, Portfolio Holder for Housing Services:

"Can the Portfolio Holder confirm that those within our community who perform an essential public service for the New Forest community, for example our wonderful fire fighters, will still be eligible for Council housing under the council's proposed new Allocation Policy?"

Answer

The Portfolio Holder reported that the draft new Allocation Policy specifically dealt with key workers, which included fire fighters. The policy gave appropriate priority to such groups when allocating Council housing. No change had been made to the Allocation Policy in relation to key worker housing.

Question 2

From Cllr David Harrison to Cllr Edward Heron, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure:

"Where do things now stand with regard to Traffic Management arrangements in the New Forest District?"

Answer

The Portfolio Holder reported that details had been set out in the report to the Cabinet dated 7 November 2018, which had agreed to reject the proposed terms for the agency agreements for on-street parking enforcement and traffic management.

Cllr Harrison asked a supplementary question regarding the safety concerns which would arise if no agreement was reached between the District Council and Hampshire County Council. The Portfolio Holder felt that there would not be any safety implications as Hampshire County Council would resume responsibility for traffic management.

51 MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES AND PANELS

There were no changes.

CHAIRMAN